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The mission of the JVBL is to promote ethical and moral leadership and behavior by serving as a forum for ideas and the sharing of “best practices.” It serves as a resource for business and institutional leaders, educators, and students concerned about values-based leadership. The JVBL defines values-based leadership to include topics involving ethics in leadership, moral considerations in business decision-making, stewardship of our natural environment, and spirituality as a source of motivation. The JVBL strives to publish articles that are intellectually rigorous yet of practical use to leaders, teachers, and entrepreneurs. In this way, the JVBL serves as a high quality, international journal focused on converging the practical, theoretical, and applicable ideas and experiences of scholars and practitioners. The JVBL provides leaders with a tool of ongoing self-critique and development, teachers with a resource of pedagogical support in instructing values-based leadership to their students, and entrepreneurs with examples of conscientious decision-making to be emulated within their own business environs.

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The JVBL invites you to submit manuscripts for review and possible publication. The JVBL is dedicated to supporting people who seek to create more ethically- and socially-responsive organizations through leadership and education. The Journal publishes articles that provide knowledge that is intellectually well-developed and useful in practice. The JVBL is a peer-reviewed journal available in both electronic and print fora (fully digital with print-on-demand options). The readership includes business leaders, government representatives, academics, and students interested in the study and analysis of critical issues affecting the practice of values-based leadership. The JVBL is dedicated to publishing articles related to:

1. Leading with integrity, credibility, and morality;
2. Creating ethical, values-based organizations;
3. Balancing the concerns of stakeholders, consumers, labor and management, and the environment; and
4. Teaching students how to understand their personal core values and how such values impact organizational performance.

In addition to articles that bridge theory and practice, the JVBL is interested in book reviews, case studies, personal experience articles, and pedagogical papers. If you have a manuscript idea that addresses facets of principled or values-based leadership, but you are uncertain as to its propriety to the mission of the JVBL, please contact its editor. While manuscript length is not a major consideration in electronic publication, we encourage contributions of less than 20 pages of double-spaced narrative. As the JVBL is in electronic format, we especially encourage the submission of manuscripts which utilize visual text. Manuscripts will be acknowledged immediately upon receipt. All efforts will be made to complete the review process within 4-6 weeks.
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2) The editor will submit the manuscript to two reviewers emanating from the field of the paper’s topic, unless the submission is invited. Once reviews are returned, the editor may: a) accept the manuscript without modification; b) accept the document with specific changes noted; c) offer the author(s) the opportunity to revise and resubmit the manuscript in response to the reviewers’ and editors’ comments and notations; or d) reject the manuscript.

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This paper argues that, while the imperative to find global solutions to complex problems like climate change and resource management is agreed, dominant ethical and intellectual thought leadership in many western nations impedes progress. The Cartesian binaries of western post-Enlightenment culture tend instead toward oppositional binary divides where each ‘side’ assumes to be the whole and not a part. And the present and future similarly assume precedence over the past. The paper points to systems thinking as both a method and a practice of wise leadership of past western and eastern societies, including their conservation of natural resources. Two historical case studies, one of President Theodore Roosevelt, the other of ancient Chinese sages, explore common features of a social vision and the thought processes that created these.

74. **LEAVING YOUR MARK: SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR INDELIBLE LEADERSHIP**  
James Welch — Tampa, Florida, USA

One of the major concerns within contemporary leadership consists of the myopic view many leaders and followers have regarding leadership success. In the modern context, there are countless firms engaging in some variation of myopic management simply to drive short-term results. To counteract
this restricted view of leadership, this article presents a leadership construct focusing on seven strategies designed to help facilitate long-term leadership impact and organizational sustainability. The seven strategies examined in this article consist of the following: embracing organizational diversity, encouraging positive change, displaying emotional intelligence, possessing a long-term orientation, casting a strategic vision, developing a strong corporate culture, and emphasizing ethical decision-making. The research design for this article consists of a hybrid literature review and case study approach examining previous leadership research regarding long-term organizational effectiveness as well as contemporary leadership examples. In the long run, leadership effectiveness is better determined by long-term organizational sustainability and an “indelible” leader as one who is able to precipitate a greater sense of permanency to organizational achievement and to help ensure that success can continue long after their leadership tenure has concluded. Each one of these seven leadership strategies deals with the long-term viability of a leader and their organization and implementing each of these strategies often represents the more difficult choice. This article presents an original leadership approach – the indelible leadership approach – implementing seven proven leadership strategies designed to help achieve long-term organizational vitality and effectiveness.

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102. REFLECTIONS ON HUMANITY’S MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS
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Mary Kovach – Oxford, Ohio, USA
After reviewing nearly 70 years of research, this manuscript seeks to compile study results to better understand leader influence by employing French and Raven’s (1959) power dynamics. Divided into two categories (i.e. formal and informal), these five power dynamics include referent, expert, legitimate, coercive, and reward power. Each power dynamic is categorized accordingly and dissected between scholarly research and applicable workplace settings between supervisors (i.e. leaders) and employees. Behavioral outcomes from a subordinate standpoint are discussed, and this manuscript concludes that the power dynamic that characterizes different workplace relationships between supervisors and employees has significant effects on work productivity and employee motivation.
ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP: GATEKEEPING OR GROUNDSKEEPING?
Beronda Montgomery — East Lansing, Michigan, USA
Common approaches to academic leadership include serving as assessors of the progress of individuals towards organizationally-determined milestones and markers of success. Likewise, leadership development often focuses on leadership skills and tactics, rather than on cultivation and enactment of leadership philosophies and progressive vision. Here, I discuss the importance of cultivating leadership for progressive faculty and academic staff development through strategically tending the cultures and systems that one leads, in addition to tactical supervision of people. I describe this as systems-engaged leadership manifested as groundskeeping, or as attending to the individuals in an organization while simultaneously actively tending the ecosystems in which the work of the organization occurs. Groundskeeping contrasts with more traditional approaches of leading, which function as gatekeeping, or primarily via guarding who gains access and who advances based on conceptualizations and assumptions about who can function and thrive.

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, FIRM PERFORMANCE: HOW ARE THEY LINKED?
Mostafa Sayyadi Ghasabeh – San Diego, California, USA
This paper analyzes the theoretical relationships between transformational leadership, knowledge management, firm performance, and information technology. My analysis of the literature in this article demonstrates that although past empirical research confirms the importance of these theoretical relationships for building organizational performance outcomes but they have failed to present these theoretical links in an integrated model. This article develops arguments on the impacts of transformational leadership on knowledge management, firm performance, and information technology. A review of the existing literature illustrates that transformational drive performance through improved use of data, information, and knowledge to increase speed, lower cost, and meet customer expectations to secure competitive advantage. More specifically, this research shows that transformational leaders not only directly impact knowledge management, but more specifically, foster more effective information technology use, which can positively contribute to the effectiveness of knowledge management as a significant driver of firm performance.

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The Coronavirus: A Personal View from the Eternal City
— Emilio Iodice

March 25, 2020

At 6 pm each evening, I take two flights of steps to the top of my building, turn a key, open a metal door and walk out into the sun, setting over Rome. St. Peter’s Dome is in the distance, glowing from rays slowly slipping into the horizon.

From my apartment complex, I see scores of balconies and people on rooftops. Guitars and violins accompany voices that echo across the buildings and streets. Neighbors are singing and music pouring from the heart of Italians coping with self-imposed house arrest. The quarantine is to protect the public, especially the elderly from contagion.

On March 9, 2020, the government locked down the nation into a silent, paralyzed fortress to keep the virus from spreading. It worked. Cases and deaths are growing at a decreasing rate, at this writing.

Italy has been, for ages, among the most attractive destinations. Its climate, cuisine, scenery, history, and culture and remarkably creative and lively people make it a natural magnet for those who want to enjoy the best of what life offers.
The coronavirus changed that. It is as if the country underwent a collective stroke that demanded measures to save the patient from death.

It started in Lombardy and specifically in towns with connections to China, where factories work to produce all sorts of products for Italian companies. Business leaders and travelers carried the virus, which spread like wildfire.

The Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, acted as quickly as reasonably possible, realizing that shutting the cafes, restaurants, cinemas, stadiums, theatres, factories, and schools and blocking transportation to and from and within the country would disemploy millions overnight and overtax the hospitals. It was a courageous and inevitable decision to save society from hundreds of thousands of elderly and infirm, falling victim to the coronavirus.

Incomes suddenly evaporated, particularly for workers who lived from paycheck to paycheck. The situation became critical, disastrous, and in many cases, tragic for millions of Italians.

Each family had to cope with a new reality: isolation, in order to survive and prevent contagion.

Most huddled together where young people, without homes and little means, resided with parents and grandparents. Personal protocols were created to deal with living together to maintain order, sanity and avoid excessive contact, while eating, working, and sleeping under the same roof.

My daughter is a doctor. She is in the front line fighting to save lives. She no longer comes home.

Her sanctuary and inferno are the hospital. She comes by, at times, to receive a “care package” of food, wave to her children from a distance, converse briefly with her husband from 6 to 8 feet away, and return to work.

In our home we wrote “house rules,” to keep sanity and order for the weeks and, perhaps, months, of living together.

My son-in-law and two granddaughters are with us.

First rule was to “stay out of the kitchen.” My wife prepares three meals a day for us and sometimes for the families of caregivers in our area. She needs space and time to concentrate, cook, and clean up.

Second directive is “do not make a mess.” The children study, play, and exercise in the house. They continue music and gymnastic lessons. The space is small. Order is mandatory.

Third rule is no one from the outside can come in. Our cleaning lady is off limits. This makes it harder to maintain strict hygiene and puts more pressure on my wife.

Fourth regulation is all packages and goods are to stay outside for a day. The virus can be picked up on anything touched by an infected person. Today, our next-door neighbor went to the market to buy us fruit and vegetables. We had to empty the contents and put the bags in quarantine, in the hallway.

Fifth is to wash hands regularly and any time there is a concern about contact or contagion.
Two dozen calls come into our home each day. Internet lines are hopelessly overloaded with students and adults working online. Social media crashes constantly. Communication, the lifeline and mental safety net, is fraying.

We receive regular calls from my daughter in London. She and her husband imposed a quarantine on their family long before the Prime Minister woke up to the fact that this virus is deadly and dangerous to society, the economy, and way of life. My daughter and her husband and friends organized food offerings to the elderly in the neighborhood who are too weak to move. The situation in the UK will get worse before it gets better, which, of course is the same as elsewhere.

The news, all day long, is about the virus. We search for numbers. How many died today? How many were infected? How many survived and went home?

The other quest is to know when this will end.

An interview with a noted Italian virologist says viruses of this sort last 90 days. If so, it should end in Italy by the end of May. Another expert claims we will continue to be in quarantine until October, when the regular flu season begins.

Remedies go “viral” by the hour. This morning reports came in from Brazil about a “cocktail” of malaria drugs mixed with anti-inflammatories were working miracles. The Japanese claimed the same. Social media shows the Japanese treating this as any other flu, which is baffling and surprising while scrambling to find a vaccine or a cure seems to be occurring around the globe.

Italy chased after the virus vs being ready for it. Leaders were in denial at the early stages as the virus spread rapidly and beyond control. A lack of adequate communication and organizing of experts exacerbated the situation.

Finally, action was taken after hospitals and caregivers were nearly overwhelmed.

Eventually, this crisis will end.

What leadership lessons do we learn from the Italian experience for our leaders around the world, businesses and we common mortals?

What do we do the next time?

1. **Act to fit the Crisis:** The next calamity will be different, requiring improvised responses. A mindset must be created by first responders and top leaders to prepare for that which cannot normally be prepared for. Predefined responses will not work. Looking ahead while navigating in perilous waters will. Essential to this is getting the facts, quickly and making decisions on truth and not conjecture.

2. **Bring in the Experts:** Teams from different fields will be needed to organize parts of the firm or sections of society led by specialists to deal with each group. They collect information, create solutions, and implement them and determine what works and does not. The teams form a network of leaders who report to the top. Authority and responsibility should rest with them. Leaders will need to empower others who are calm, have character, and self-control to handle with the crisis. Such a multidisciplinary approach deals with complex organizations and companies. Information must be shared and transparent and not controlled on a “need to know”
basis. No room should be allowed for bureaucratic responses. Leaders should promote “psychological safety nets” to allow the free and open expressions of concerns, ideas, and solutions.

3. **Be Calm before you Decide:** Constant assessments of the situation require looking at various vantage points, watching what is ahead, what may happen next, and maintaining a deliberate sense of calmness to avoid overreacting as new data arises. Obviously, some instances will demand immediate decisions but a time to pause, think, and reflect is mandatory to gauge further moves.

4. **Show Sincere Compassion:** Employees and people in general need empathy, concern, and sincerity from leaders. Survival for them and their loved ones is on their minds. Lock downs, school closings, and the inability to help family and friends create a sense of impotence and fear for the future as they deal with economic and social challenges. Leaders must project a feeling of security and “we are in this together.”

5. **Reassure with Frequent Communication:** Stakeholders at all levels need information, facts, and honesty. Initial reactions to a crisis, like the Coronavirus, of overconfidence, matched with upbeat tones creates cynicism, suspicion, and doubts as to the ability of leaders to understand the state of affairs and realistically respond. There is no shame on the part of leaders to admit they do not know all the facts but are searching for them before they make critical decisions and will respond as they learn more. Each audience will have concerns and needs to be addressed, which is where the experts come in.

The Coronavirus crisis imposed extraordinary challenges on public and private sector managers, employees, and stakeholders from owners to customers to suppliers to taxpayers and revenue collectors.

The outbreak came with lightning speed. It was filled with unpredictability resulting in disorientation and a feeling of losing control. Emotionally and physically, firms, individuals, and governments felt weak. A top-down approach to leading will not be enough. We need to work from the bottom and listen, learn, collect facts, and prepare for the next emergency.

The economy and society will never be the same. We will look back and recall and remember these days of lockdowns, fear, panic, and uncertainty and hope that we are prepared for the next one.

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**About the Author**

**Emilio Iodice** is a former American diplomat, business executive, university administrator, professor of leadership, and best-selling writer and public speaker.

He can be reached at efiodice@yahoo.com.
Welcome to New York City, COVID-19 Capital of the World

— Linda Weiser Friedman and Hershey H. Friedman

May 28, 2020

We write to you from the epicenter of the United States coronavirus pandemic, New York City, more specifically from the deadliest zip code in Brooklyn, where we are “sheltering in place” although, being New Yorkers, we prefer to call it “lockdown.” New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo likes to say we are on PAUSE, an acronym for Policies Assure Uniform Safety for Everyone. Thank goodness, an acronym. We’re in good hands.
The first COVID-19 death in New York City was reported on March 1st. In the ten-day span between March 16 and March 26, the day we went on PAUSE, New York City saw a 5000% increase in confirmed cases (from 463 to 23,112), while in the same period we watched as deaths rose from 7 to 365. In fact, by March 26, New York City had about 28% of the 81,782 confirmed cases in the U.S. We didn’t know it at the time, but the horror was yet to come.

**Life and Death During the Pandemic**

Our own personal experiences begin with what we might call the Stage of Denial. During the early part of March 2020, we thought there was nothing much to worry about. After all, we’d heard catastrophic warnings before. The City University of New York (CUNY), where both of us are on the faculty, switched all its offerings to distance learning on March 11. Then over the next couple of weeks there were small breaks ordered by CUNY (1) to allow faculty some time to create online course materials and (2) to help give students the time to get up to speed with the needed technology; sadly, our scheduled Spring Break took a hit. However, many of us still thought that this was an overreaction by the Chancellor and the Governor, and that all would return to normal at some point during the semester.

By March 26th denial gave way to horror. By March 28, we found out that a very close family member, who had been in excellent physical shape, passed from this illness. In our neighborhood where we were, thankfully, able to work from home, the siren call of ambulances sounded practically non-stop for several weeks. In shout-out porch visits with our closest neighbors, we discovered that every one of them knows at least a dozen people who perished from this pandemic. Oh, and here’s a fun activity we never did before: sit on our porch and have a loud socially-distanced conversation with our neighbors.

We all discovered that we could have events – like weddings and funerals and birthday parties – using Zoom. It turns out that weddings really do not have to cost anywhere from $30,000 to $230,000. And, for those of us who no longer need to go to work in an office or to weddings or other events, we are now also spending less on clothing – except maybe pajamas.

As the April holidays of Passover/Easter/Spring Break were approaching, the number of deaths was skyrocketing all over Brooklyn. The disease went through our daughter’s large family – happily all survived – and our son-in-law was hit especially hard to the point that it was not at all clear that he would pull through.

For a while there was absolutely no traffic. In New York City! What was typically a 50-75-minute trip (Brooklyn to Manhattan) took us 20 minutes. While, some residents managed to escape the city, tourists knew better than to come visit, and with us locals sheltering in place, New York City had become a ghost town.

**Community Response**

Government tried to do its job, with varying degrees of mostly moderate success. However, it was at the community level that we really saw impressive response to this catastrophe. The community was fighting back. We have an excellent local volunteer ambulance group. We didn’t even realize until this crisis how excellent it actually is. This group of volunteers arranged for donations of oxygen tanks and oximeters that they delivered to those afflicted.
They even arranged for home doctor visits, rather than forcing patients to hospital emergency rooms. Hospitals had quickly become overwhelmed and, sadly, during those first weeks, hospital protocol was to immediately intubate COVID-19 patients and place them on ventilators without checking their oxygen saturation levels.

If you kept up with the news coming out of New York City, you saw that the bodies were piling up, sometimes to overwhelming proportions. Hospitals used refrigerated trucks as temporary morgues. Some funeral homes simply couldn’t handle the sheer number of bodies brought to them daily. They had to bring in refrigerated trucks just to have a place to store the bodies. In our own community, the funeral homes put out a call (by word of mouth, WhatsApp, and social media) for individuals with SUVs to help out by bringing the dead to the cemeteries for burial. Twenty burials in one day was not unusual during this critical period.

People were out of work and they needed basic essentials for their families. Of course, we had heard of the long food lines during the Great Depression but we hadn’t seen it ourselves until now. Just a few blocks from our home, there is a soup kitchen, now closed due to the state PAUSE order. Still, each day, a long line of people waits patiently for the offerings from that organization – food pantry items, as well as meal vouchers for local takeout shops. The line, which follows social distancing rules, often stretches across two city blocks.

There were organizations bringing food to people’s homes. Food to shut-ins was boxed and delivered under sanitary conditions. Our own daughter, during the time that her family was dealing with the illness, woke up one morning and found a huge case of food delivered anonymously in advance of the Passover holiday. She still doesn’t know where it came from.

Since all places of worship were closed, it was interesting to see how people dealt with their need to participate in prayer services. Many religious services and classes all over the city were switched to Zoom, much like education. Throughout the neighborhood we saw “porch prayer groups.” Those who wanted to participate stayed on their own porch, in front of the house, or even in the road (there were very few cars on the road much of this time). Many wore prayer shawls. This was a sight to behold.

**The Takeaway: What We Learned**

New Yorkers love to complain and both of us are true New Yorkers. However, writing about our experiences in what has been termed the epicenter of this pandemic (yes, New Yorkers have to be the best), we have come to realize that the biggest takeaway for us is gratitude.

**Teachers.** All over the country, of course, parents suddenly became appreciative of their children’s teachers. Turns out it’s hard to keep working, even if you are in the enviable position of still having a job you are able to do at home, when the kids are supposed to be Zoom-ing their classes too, and they need your help.

**Volunteers and health workers.** All the individuals and organizations who provide essential services, whether or not they get a paycheck for doing so.

**A place to shelter in place.** We have learned to be grateful that we have our own home with a porch and backyard so we can enjoy the world from within in our own property line.

**Family and friends,** even if we can only see them on screens. Each of us is grateful that we live with someone else. People who live alone have been alone for over two months now. We
know someone who simply fell down and couldn’t get up. He was stuck in his apartment on the floor for two days before someone found him.

Jobs. So many people had great jobs and are now out of work. Industries that were booming before – hotels, travel, retail, real estate – suddenly took a nosedive. We are grateful we are among those who are able to continue working from home. Also – great commute!

And perhaps the most important lesson, for all that we complain a lot about this lockdown, is to be grateful for life itself.

Lessons that Society Should Learn but Probably Won’t
Every individual should have a disaster cushion – savings available to live on for one year. We live in a society in which consumption is stressed and, unfortunately, many people live paycheck to paycheck. This is a disaster in the making, no matter how large that paycheck is.

Every organization – health, education, government – needs this cushion too and, in addition, must have a disaster plan in place for future pandemics, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, etc.

Compassion and caring for others. No man is an island. Where would we be without our online retailers, delivery persons, mail carriers, food producers/packers, and all the other essential services that remained open during the crisis? No matter how wealthy you are, you found yourself relying on others who might have been risking their own lives to save yours.

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Trondheim, Norway, Courtesy, Michelle Maria

**NORWAY: Leading in times of crisis: Who is working on a dream?**

— Tom Karp

June, 2020

Who has the “best” strategy?
The author of this commentary is based in Norway, a small, rich country in the far north of the world. As in many other countries, Norwegian society is being put to the test, and our political leadership, or lack of it, is coming under the spotlight. The coronavirus crisis certainly requires value-based leadership on many different fronts, involving not only medicine and economics, but also political leadership. This latter area is the subject of this commentary.

In times of crisis, political leadership becomes more like military leadership. In Norway, as in many other countries, there has been much focus on the strategy to control the spread of the virus. It may feel as though we have entered ourselves into a global competition for having the best coronavirus strategy, and the media are giving this a lot of attention. The political leaders in Norway have implemented decisive measures, exercised leadership, and adopted a restrictive strategy to combat the pandemic. In addition, owing to its oil wealth,
Norway has a large pension fund, which has been used to implement a number of measures to reduce the impact of the crisis (currently, we have spent 43 billion USD, approximately 14% of the GDP). In the Norwegian media, there is a constant debate comparing Norway’s strategy to those of other countries. This is particularly relevant because we are a neighbour of Sweden, which has opted for a more liberal strategy.

In addition, there has been debate in the media about political leadership. In Norway, we have a female prime minister who has chosen, to a large extent, to listen to experts, but who has made decisions, taken responsibility, and assumed a prominent role. This is perhaps why some have claimed that countries whose governments are headed by women have more trust in science and listen more to experts. There are also leadership researchers who claim that women on average are more inclined to listen to experts. Thus, it is argued that this explains why countries with female heads of government have so far done well in tackling the crisis. In my opinion, our knowledge-oriented culture and a strong democracy are more probable reasons why the results in this part of the world have been good up to now—but the pandemic is far from over, nor are other crises.

Of more interest than gender (I say as a male) and coronavirus strategies is leadership in times of crisis. When experiencing a crisis, people often call for “strong” men or women. The ideal leader (which is a very difficult, almost impossible, standard to live up to) is to be robust, calm, and clear, and have the ability to take action without necessarily having all the facts at hand and the ability to create order in the midst of chaos. People want leadership when things get difficult. People are more willing than usual to follow a leader when they experience an external threat. In a research project we conducted a few years ago, we found that it was especially when difficult situations occurred that people felt they needed leadership (Karp & Johannessen, 2010). It was the ability of leaders to do the difficult things in hard times that often made a difference.

Who has got what it takes?

Leaders, political or otherwise, are tested during times of crisis. The English poet John Keats believed that people, and in this case leaders, should develop what he called negative capability. By this, he meant that one must be able to live with uncertainty and doubt without constantly relying on facts and reason. The American psychiatry professor Nassir Ghaemi has written about the mental health issues of great military and political leaders, including Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr., the prominent American civil rights leader. King, who was an icon of his era, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. However, less known is the fact that he also had his inner demons to deal with. Ghaemi (2011) claims that King suffered from depression and was at times mentally unstable. At the start of his public life, he managed to keep his demons in check, but later they strongly influenced him, as he found it more and more difficult to tame what tore and gnawed at him. King believed anger was a driver of the civil rights movement, but he felt that they had to be aggressive “in a non-violent way,” and that one had to be able to tolerate suffering, unhappiness, and dark thoughts. As he said, “the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” However, attempting to understand people using hindsight does not always constitute robust knowledge, and Ghaemi’s research has clear methodological weaknesses. Nevertheless, he postulates the following controversial hypothesis: In difficult times and
crises, it is the leaders with mental health issues who function well, as they have better prerequisites for dealing with the challenges they face.

I will not extend this argument too far by speculating if this concerns political leaders today whose leadership abilities are now being tested, although there are political leaders on the global arena who show signs of having mental health issues. Nevertheless, it is scientifically interesting to reflect upon whether people who have been tested in life are better equipped than others for dealing with challenges and changes. Their weaknesses, Ghaemi argues, are the source of their strength. The psychiatrist’s claims are consistent with other studies. American sociologist Aaron Antonovsky (1987) has studied the quality of life of Jewish women who had survived the concentration camps of World War II. Despite their trials, many of these women later in life believed they had a sense of well-being in their lives. From this, Antonovsky developed a theory of how people cope with hardship. He believes that understanding what happens in one’s life, creating meaningfulness, and being able to cope and manage are all important attributes for tackling adversity. In psychology, the term resilience is often used to describe such abilities.

Much great art, poetry, and fiction has been written about human resilience. One of literature’s most studied and debated works, Dante’s 700-year-old masterpiece The Divine Comedy, dramatizes the inner and outer struggles of man. The narrative poem relates Dante’s journey through the “dark woods” and the “realms of the dead” in his search to find the meaning and purpose of life. Dante’s journey is both external and internal, but the more important is the internal one, wherein Dante changes and grows in wisdom through his trials. Man’s inner struggle was also an important theme of the American philosopher and psychologist William James. He wrote several influential books in the late 1800s within the then-new field of psychology. James drew a contrast between two different personality types, what he called once-born and twice-born people. Once-born people are characterized as having lived relatively unproblematic lives. They have adapted to a stable environment, their development has followed a familiar path, and their identity has been formed in a safe socialization process. Twice-born people have had to struggle more to get their lives organized. They take nothing for granted and have been “born again” through life experiences. They have learned to deal with difficulties and cope with what has happened in their lives; for them, shaping their identity has been a personal struggle in their encounter with their surroundings.

It is an oversimplification to categorize people into two personality types. Nevertheless, James was one of the first scientists to make an important psychological discovery: the fact that coping with life can be related to how people deal with difficulties and hardships. Some of the research literature supports the idea that children who experience adversity in their upbringing are more likely to achieve something as adults (McCrae & Costa, 1984). The explanation is that difficulties experienced in childhood force some children (not all) to develop coping strategies. Children who have experienced adversity in their upbringing have thus been subjected to unconscious leadership training from infancy: either they learn to develop social survival strategies or they will experience problems.

**Where is the hope in all this?**

Why we are more likely to follow leaders during times of crisis? Because we are. Well, they have power, which is part of the picture, but beyond that? One explanation is that we follow leaders who give us hope (Karp, 2019). The hope of a better future—the hope that we will
get through this crisis that has affected all of us. Hope has to do with social expectations. People let themselves be led by those who match their expectations of a better future (Vroom, 1964). When someone says or does something that increases the likelihood of people’s expectations being fulfilled, the likelihood of them following that person increases. It concerns the longing for something better, the hope of a trouble-free future. We also follow leaders when they let us be part of something greater than ourselves, when they create a meaning dimension that extends beyond us (Pyszczynski et al., 2005). This can be explained by the fact that many of us need to cultivate role models and have something larger than ourselves to believe in. We believe that the good leader will be able to sort out all the unpredictability, uncertainty, and insecurity. He or she will press on and make good, wise, and moral decisions. Simply put, we want heroes who can make us feel safe and save us in difficult situations. The tendency to admire heroes is deep-rooted in most of us. Many folk tales, stories, epics, myths, legends, movies, and electronic gaming are constructed around the hero’s struggle to create order from chaos on outer and inner planes.

The concept of the “leader as hero” is, however, a controversial topic in the field of leadership studies. Some argue that we need heroes; others believe heroes are just an illusion that has nothing to do with leadership. I believe hero identification leads to us giving some leaders a “right” to lead. We cultivate heroes, although we will not necessarily admit it, and the hero myth is an effective illusion for leaders as long as it works. The dark sides of hero identification are closely related to the ideas presented in Zimbardo’s The Lucifer Effect (2007). The narcissism of “heroic” leaders, the absence of conflicting positions, the few critical questions asked, and blind obedience are some of these dark aspects. However, during difficult times, it is not heroism in the form of bold deeds that is needed. We do not need demigods; we only need people who can take action when needed and who can really “knuckle down” to tackling problems. The “heroism” we experience in such situations is from the leaders who have the courage and will to deal with adversity (Karp, 2014), and who as leaders do something while at the same time creating hope.

The pandemic will change the world, that much is certain. Moreover, we will get through this crisis. A crisis is the mother of all changes, as we say in my part of the world. However, it will be interesting to see whether our political leaders have what is necessary to “stand firm” but at the same time succeed in pointing towards a better future. What will that post-coronavirus future look like, and on what values will this future be based? There has been much talk about how the coronavirus crisis should lead to a shift in values in relation to business, trade, supply chains, and consumption—and whether we can take lessons and experiences from the crisis that we can use to address the vast, underlying crisis of climate change. The current test our political leaders are experiencing is as nothing compared to what is needed to deal with the climate crisis. We will need a fundamental shift in global and national societal structures and forms of government and business, a price that most countries have so far not been willing to pay. Are we now witnessing a shift in values that will make more countries willing to pay at least part of this price? And who has the moral backbone to foresee a new order of things? Who is “working on a dream,” in the words of Bruce Springsteen?

Please lead us there.
References


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The Coronavirus Pandemic Supports the Case for Benevolent Authoritarian Leadership

— Dr. Mark Manolopoulos

June 23, 2020

What, if anything, has the coronavirus taught us about leadership?

In Australia, at both the federal and state levels, governments have shown unusually strong leadership during the pandemic. Unlike the UK and the USA, our governments responded quite quickly. They speedily and quite uniformly implemented the standard measures (border closures, traveler quarantine, physical distancing, massive financial support to the unemployed and at-risk businesses, etc.). The state and federal governments even formed a “National Cabinet”: whatever the practical benefits, it also showed a front of unity between governments whose relations are typically marked by bickering and disunity.

The results of such efforts have been exceptional: rather than having massive numbers of infections and deaths – in the last week of June 2020, the globe is approaching ten million infections and half-a-million deaths – Australia has experienced around 7,500 infections
and just over 100 deaths (Worldometers 2020). Obviously, there is a range of factors contributing to the low numbers of infections and deaths, including our relative remoteness from other countries.

However, I contend that the major reason why we in Australia have achieved good results thus far (I say “thus far” due to the ever-present threat of a second wave) is precisely due to the “strong” leadership displayed by the federal and state governments – indeed, the style of leadership may be described as “authoritarian.” It has been authoritarian in a number of ways.

First of all, there has been minimal consultation with the broader electorate: the governments have mainly liaised with the health experts. This is a wise move: liaise with those who know the most. This is a crucial point to which I shall return. I assume there has also been consultation with other groups, but I think it has been quite minimal. The governments did what they had to do – they did the smart and right thing (this point will resonate as I proceed) – without garnering the support of the masses. There has been nothing really democratic about the way our governments have been operating – and that’s been a good thing. That is why I claim that the governments have acted in an authoritarian way.

Next, not only have Australia’s governments acted in an authoritarian way with regard to the pandemic, they have acted in a distinctly socialist-authoritarian way (and we note here that contemporary authoritarianism is mainly/often associated with socialist states). Australia’s federal and state governments have acted in a distinctly socialist-authoritarian manner in terms of supporting those most disadvantaged by the coronavirus crisis. Our unemployment benefit (affectionately known as “the dole”) was almost doubled from its paltry $40-a-day amount to a more livable wage. Furthermore, the federal government quickly established the “JobKeeper” scheme, whereby the government has been paying the wages of those employees in businesses that have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

The profound irony here is that Australia’s current federal government is stridently conservative – infamous for its climate-change denialism – so it is remarkable that a right-wing neoliberal government is acting in a socialist-authoritarian way. But, as I say, the results have been impressive.

Now, one might respond that the Australian governments have only been behaving in a left-authoritarian way only because we are facing an emergency – “desperate times, desperate measures” and all that. But COVID-19 is not the only global crisis we are experiencing: we are also facing the multi-pronged environmental crisis. We could also reference here other global crises like religio-political extremism, unchecked immigration flows, the continuing oppression of females, and so on – and what is arguably (or unarguably?) the most catastrophic crisis of all: global neoliberal hyper-capitalism.

My “preposterous” thesis is that only a strong – socialist-authoritarian – form of global governance is able to meet these kinds of crises/catastrophes. But how, exactly, do I envisage this kind of governance?

I have written about this form of global political system in my two most recent books, *Radical neo-enlightenment: Passionate Reason, open faith, thoughtful change* (2018) and *Following Reason: A theory and strategy for rational leadership* (2019). (You may note that I capitalize the word “Reason” – for good reason, as will become clearer as I proceed.) Indeed, I had
also written about it in a 2016 article in this very Journal, titled “The greater planetary good: From a precept to a program.”

As you can tell from the titles of the books, rationality is the key player here. The name I have coined for this form of governance is “logicracy” – rule by Reason. Allow me to quickly describe it.

To begin with, we note that the variety of existing political systems, from theocracies to dictatorships to democracies, have all failed in varying degrees and ways, so we require a new global political system. It needs to be global in order to combat truly global crises like climate change and unbridled capitalism. Now, rather than being swayed by insane theologies or massive egos or populism, this new system needs to be solely informed by rationality. Reason could be literally embodied by a group of the world’s brightest people, from thinkers to activists and artists and so on.

I have called this body of the brightest an “oligarchy of the wise(r).” It would exemplify the best form of benevolent authoritarian leadership.

Of course, this idea is not new: the logicratic oligarchy is akin to Plato’s “philosopher-rulers” (1974; Plato employs the word “kings” but obviously the logicratic oligarchy would be stridently gender-inclusive).

This logicratic oligarchy would likely need to be supported by a mass movement of followers – followers who love Reason. Leveraging people power might/would be required to install the oligarchy as the world’s supreme ruling body: force might be necessary to dislodge the existing power elites. although logicracy infinitely favors peaceful means over violent ones, so the aim is peaceful transformation to logicracy.

Collectively, the logicratic oligarchy would consider problems and find solutions. It would be odd-numbered so that any particularly vexing or “wicked” problems would be resolved democratically, by vote (and so, a democratic element would be inscribed in logicracy). One could say that logicracy is “deliberative democracy by the smartest.”

Just as the coronavirus pandemic has been navigated by health experts, logicracy is the form of government most guided by that expert of experts: Reason. There would be no recourse to deities, or outdated political ideologies, or “the markets,” or nationalism-populism, and so on. We would be ruled by rationality, pure-and-simple(ish).

The logicratic oligarchy would rule in an authoritarian way – but in a benevolently authoritarian way, given that its decisions would be informed by Reason rather than greed, power, or fame. And, as I have argued extensively in my books, the logicratic oligarchy would not be against things like moderate religion, for the oligarchy would recognize that such phenomena are not antithetical to it but compatible with it. Reason recognizes and embraces its other-than-rational others: what rationality opposes is that which is anti-rational, such as fanatical religion, greedy economic systems, racism, sexism, the oppression of non-human others, and so on. We begin to perceive just how benevolent logicratic leadership would be.

While the notions of Plato’s “philosopher-rulers” and “benevolent authoritarianism leadership” have been ridiculed – most recently Anastasia Filipiddou called the latter an “oxymoron” (2020) – the coronavirus pandemic has clearly and powerfully shown that only strong intelligent leadership – that is, some kind of logicracy – could properly navigate us
through crises and catastrophes, which are fast becoming (have already become) the way of the world.

References


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Juana Reyes Bocanegra tells us her story from the small rural village of La Luz, located on the outskirts of the central Mexican municipality of San Miguel de Allende – a place that was twice named “The World’s Best City to Live in” by Condé Nast, while achieving similar applause from Travel + Leisure, CNN Traveler, and countless other outlets.

“**There are times we go one to two weeks without water. I can go down to the river with my daughters when it has water, but when it doesn’t have water, we are all struggling. We are always without water.**”

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Mexico: *Water in the Time of Coronavirus*

— Dylan Terrell

June 8, 2020

A woman washes her hands with rainwater in the rural village of Agustín González, central Mexico. Courtesy Melissa Landman, Caminos de Agu. March 2020
Just 15 minutes from the historic center of this picturesque and sought-after city, in a small village called Los Ricos, Rosario Ceobio ponders, “Water is life. It’s a human right, but not all of us have [access to] it.” She tells us this as she recounts her last week, staying up till midnight most nights, waiting for the water to arrive from the local well. While already severely compromised by this lack of water, the Coronavirus arrived here in central Mexico in the heart of the dry season, with health officials telling people like Rosario, who already have little water to begin with, that they need to be using more water to combat the spread. Rosario tells us that people in the neighboring village are, in fact, using far more water. Unfortunately, that means her village, which is higher up, receives even less water than usual. One well can often serve several villages – turning access into a game of tug of water: when one village gets water, it could mean they are “pulling it away” from another.

Along with social distancing, the principal recommendation from public health officials to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to wash your hands frequently. Washing surfaces and remaining hydrated remain high on the list as well. These seemingly simple actions can become an infinitely harder-to-attain luxury for so many around the world living with water scarcity.

“Water is life. It’s a human right, but not all of us have [access to] it.” — Rosario Ceobio

How do you tell a family to wash their hands 10 or 20 times a day when they only receive water once a week and for just a couple of hours?

Further down the road, in the rural community of San Antonio de Lourdes, Doña Esperanza recounts the reality for many in this region. When she was young, there was plenty of good water available – just three shallow wells were needed to serve the entire community. But over the years, as large-scale agricultural production started in the region – sucking up more and more water for export crops – the water table dropped. Those shallow wells dried up, and the community needed to install a well 10 times deeper. By 2010, that deep well went dry too – actually collapsed in on itself – and the village has been without water ever since. To survive, families buy plastic tanks and fill them at neighboring villages or irrigation wells.

I know how difficult the simple act of washing your hands can be in a community like San Antonio de Lourdes. I remember working on a project at the kindergarten there a number of years ago. I had plumber’s glue all over my hands, so I went to the bathroom to wash up, only to find that the school had been without running water for nearly three weeks. At the time, it did not occur to me what such a reality could mean in the face of a global pandemic.

Cities like San Miguel de Allende (San Miguel) have been able to piece together water from 20 urban wells, creating a type of house of cards that keeps the booming tourism industry flush and visiting foreigners and local residents alike none-the-wiser. Meanwhile, hundreds of outlying rural villages – many of which are governed by the same local administration as the city of San Miguel – struggle every day to have enough water to meet their most basic needs. This fragile situation only creates further risk for all of us during the pandemic, when slowing the spread of the virus is closely tied to the amount of water we have available. To
make matters worse, the little water that remains is often contaminated with toxic levels of arsenic and fluoride, but that is a story for another time.

San Miguel is located in the central state of Guanajuato, about four hours north of Mexico City. Guanajuato was recently slapped with the label of being in “extremely high water stress” by the World Resources Institute (WRI) – meaning we use more than 80% of our available water supply every year. The Laja River, which flows directly to the San Miguel de Allende dam, is only seasonal now – remaining dry 8-10 months out of the year. This makes it even more difficult for people like Juana, Rosario, and Doña Esperanza to have enough water to meet their basic needs, much less excess water to meet the increased hygiene requirements to help combat the spread of COVID-19. Official state estimates show that the underground aquifer, which accounts for almost all of the water use in the region, is dropping 2-3 meters (6-10 feet) per year. To give context, WRI states that more than just 8 centimeters (3 inches) of water table loss is considered “extremely high.” Well over 85% of the water extracted is being exported to US, Canadian, and European markets in the form of high-water-intensive vegetables. In fact, Guanajuato alone is one of the largest exporters of broccoli in the world.

The case of Guanajuato is not an anomaly. WRI has labeled Mexico as a whole as having “high water stress.” Mexico City, with a population of well over 20 million people, is classified as having “extremely high-water stress,” second only to New Dehli in India, in terms of population, for urban areas to hold that title. Throughout Mexico, there are over 47 million people – or more than a third of the total population – who do not have daily or continuous access to water. And, somewhere between 9 and 11 million people in the country have no water service at all.

This is by no means simply a Mexico problem either. From 2017-2018, Cape Town, South Africa, with a population of over 4.3 million, was on the brink of “Day Zero” – or the day when almost no water is left. Just last year, Chennai, India, with a population of more than 7 million, actually declared “Day Zero” when their reservoirs dried up and their taps stopped running. WRI estimates that more than one quarter of the global population, or roughly 2.2 billion people, live in extremely high-water stress conditions. The implications of this to lower the spread of COVID-19, or any other pandemic in the future, are horrifying. The United Nations made water access one of their top worries as the pandemic broke, saying that COVID-19 will not be stopped unless we find ways to provide enough safe water to these vulnerable populations.

In fact, the UN Human Rights Council said plainly way back at the end of March that:

The global struggle against the pandemic has little chance to succeed if personal hygiene, the main measure to prevent contagion, is unavailable to the 2.2 billion persons who have no access to safe water services.

As I write this, one major hotspot of COVID-19 cases is shifting towards Latin America. Mexico once seemed largely spared from the pandemic, but cases are growing fast now, expecting to reach their peak in the coming weeks. Hospitalizations throughout the state of Guanajuato grew 20% in just the last 24 hours alone.

In terms of the pandemic, the lack of water affects us all. Infections will rise in communities with water scarcity, which will further the spread to all of us. This is compounded by the fact
that “sheltering in place” is a luxury far too many simply cannot afford. So, where do we go from here?

As the pandemic started ramping up, recommendations focused largely on basic hygiene measures, like washing your hands frequently; however, these recommendations did not include strategies for the billions of people with limited water resources. So, in my organization, Caminos de Agua, we pivoted our focus towards creating print materials and virtual educational workshops, disseminated through digital networks, to help create strategies for communities with water scarcity to help combat the spread of infection.

Organizations like my own, or Isla Urbana in Mexico City, or Watershed Management Group in Tucson, Arizona, or countless others around the globe, are focusing on working together with water-scarce communities to decentralize water supplies by harvesting rainwater. This kind of solution has proven extremely effective, even in arid environments with limited rainfall, and can give families control over their own water supply. For our region in central Mexico, it can mean that families worry less about dwindling water tables beneath their feet as their water supply literally falls on their head.

The scope of the problem, however, goes well beyond the means of small organizations like ours. We will continue to fall short. While the National Water Commission (CONAGUA) here in Mexico has promised to work to “guarantee water access for compliance with hygiene and hand washing measures” for all during the spread of the pandemic, they too will fall short.

Whatever the next global crisis is, we can be assured that those living with extreme water scarcity, will be impacted much more acutely. Finding creative ways to supply the global community with sufficient, safe water, will better prepare us all for the inevitable catastrophes to come.

About the Author

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Los Angeles
The City of Angels/COVID California’s Center Stage County

– Olivia N. R. Leyva

June, 2020

I remember reading a comment in early June about how residents of Los Angeles were behaving as though we had all simply grown bored with the coronavirus that we collectively decided to start act like it no longer existed. This theory seemed plausible, when on every street families could be seen walking around without face masks and young adults were suddenly socializing again in close physical proximity to others who clearly were not members of their households. Bars, beaches, and gyms began to reopen as Southern Californians seemed eager above all else to “get back to normal.” On June 24, however, with more than 88,500 residents diagnosed, Los Angeles officially become the county with the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States (Gutman et al, 2020). Furthermore, as of June 22, the U.S. itself was currently registering the highest number of deaths from COVID-19, despite accounting for only 4% of the world’s population (Elflein, 2020).

As the largest state in the U.S. with a population of over 40 million people and the world’s 5th largest economy, it is important to note how California and its leaders have been responding to the recent pandemic. Our state’s governor, Gavin Newsom, reported during
his June 25th news conference that COVID-19 hospitalizations had jumped 32% in the last two weeks alone (Newsom, 2020). He urged Californians to wear face masks and practice social distancing, but interestingly did not reinstate the initial restrictions of his March executive “stay-at-home” order, nor roll back the state’s current scheduled re-openings. Newsom said at the conference, “I cannot impress upon people more the importance at this critical juncture, when we are experiencing an increase in cases that we have not experienced in the past, to take seriously this moment” (Luna, 2020).

For now, it seems, we find ourselves pushed forward by a desire to resume our lives as authorized by our government to start doing so, yet simultaneously pulled back by the impact of the newest data and by the fear of what may happen if our advancement is not properly measured.

The Warning Signs
My husband Nick and I live in Pasadena, a city in Los Angeles County about 20 minutes northeast of downtown L.A. I work as a realtor in the City of Los Angeles, and Nick as a CAL FIRE firefighter-paramedic. Of course, he and I had been keeping up with the news of the novel coronavirus as it spread aggressively throughout China and then carved its tragic path through Italy. However, even when Governor Newsom officially declared a state of emergency on March 4, the virus still somehow felt distant to many of us.

Reflecting on it now, I think this may have been indicative of the main message that we Americans were consistently getting straight from the top; President Donald Trump, in a well-documented series of comments, kept most of his early discussion about the coronavirus within the general spirit of this partial tweet: “The Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA.” In fact, he repeated those exact words on several other occasions throughout January and February.

Funnily enough, the very first thing that I distinctly remember making the coronavirus start feeling closer to home for me was...toilet paper. Shortly after, the Southern California real estate market began to plummet. I suddenly started noticing dramatically bare grocery store shelves that had been ransacked by panicked shoppers. Southern Californians were starting to get scared — and that fear was palpable.

Nine days after Governor Newsom had already done so for our state, President Trump declared a national emergency in what many viewed as a notable shift in tone (FEMA, 2020). The gravity of the situation only intensified for us personally, when Nick ran his first 911 call on a suspected COVID-19 patient.

The Day the Old Ways Died
March 19 stood out as the first day of the “new normal” in Southern California. It was on that day that Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-33-20 — a stay-at-home order for the entire state of California which is still in effect today (albeit in a new “phase”). The order mandated all residents to immediately heed the directives of the state’s Department of Public Health in order “to protect public health and safety, and ensure that the healthcare delivery system [was] capable of serving all, and prioritizing those at the highest risk and vulnerability” (Newsom, 2020). We were told to stay in our homes except to obtain
necessities such as food, prescriptions, and health care. When anyone had to leave, the order specifically instructed us to practice “social distancing.”

The stay-at-home order also highlighted the federal government’s identification of 16 critical infrastructure sectors. A linked website page in the order provided a complexly laid-out list of “essential” jobs: jobs considered absolutely necessary for people to keep working while the country was on lockdown. Nick’s job was considered essential. Mine was not.

On the evening of March 19, clients called me to cancel a real estate closing. They were afraid of how difficult the stay-at-home order would make the closing process (the County Recorder’s Office building had already been shut down, for instance) and how difficult the order would make their move (could they even hire movers during this time?). Furthermore, the U.S. economy was tanking, and they had no idea what would become of the stock market – as well as the outlook for at least one of their jobs. I saw this as a bleak forecast of real estate market viability – and of the general California workforce and economy – to come.

**Testing, Testing 1 2 3…**

Both the cities of Los Angeles and Pasadena released their own versions of a stay-at-home order. I stayed home while Nick went to work as usual, only now he was dealing with multiple COVID-related 911 calls a day. On March 23, he transported his first patient to die from the virus.

It was during this time of heightened fear that I began to feel ill and experienced high fevers for about three weeks. My doctors told me to assume that I had COVID-19 and ordered me to self-quarantine for two weeks. These initial weeks of lockdown were an incredibly lonely time for everybody, but especially those who were sick and quarantined, those who discovered that their loved ones had perished in hospitals and nursing homes without the ability to connect one last time, and those who simply lived alone. One became acutely aware of how important human touch and physical interaction really were.

Despite my symptoms, my doctors did not offer me coronavirus testing. As far as I knew at the time, there were a couple of testing facilities in Los Angeles County, but there were hurdles pertaining to who was actually allowed to get tested. Some places, I was told, would only test symptomatic patients who lived within a very close radius of the testing facility. Others were apparently only testing symptomatic members of the “at-risk” population specifically, such as the elderly or those with compromised immune systems.

Even my husband’s fire department had strict rules about which employees would receive tests. There was one period of time when they would only test firefighters who were themselves symptomatic and whose face-to-face patients had not only tested positive for the virus, but whose complaints warranted hospitalization. The obvious issues with such a policy were that 1) the vast majority of patients with COVID-19 symptoms were being instructed to stay at home under self-quarantine rather than go to the hospital (where they might infect others); 2) testing was being done so infrequently that many of the symptomatic 911 callers in Nick’s community never even received an official test in the first place; and 3) the virus was known to be present in completely a-symptomatic patients for days, or longer. Nick never received a test.
It was shortly after my symptoms starting disappearing that Los Angeles greatly expanded its testing capabilities. I had to wait a week for the first opening, however, and by then my symptoms had resolved. I tested negative. Since then, testing capabilities have greatly improved both in Los Angeles and throughout the nation, better revealing the harsh impact of this pandemic, and giving Los Angeles County and the nation the dubious roles of being the world’s current COVID-19 new case and recorded death epicenters.

**Coming Back to Life**

Feeling better, I started to notice certain things in L.A. doing the same. It appeared that others were returning to work with some adopting a new service-at-home strategy. Business owners had taken a financial toll, particularly in a city where so many people hold hourly jobs or work in restaurants, in nightlife venues, and within the entertainment industry.

I’ve been showing homes again – in-person (the government changed my job to “essential”). There are strict new rules in place, however, including extensive COVID-19 disclosures that must be signed by every single visitor to every single property. We all wear masks, and my work tote is now full of hand sanitizer and disposable nitrile gloves for my clients.

As people were beginning to shed their precautionary behavior, Governor Newsom reemerged in his official capacity on June 18, and made masks mandatory for all Californians in public places (with a handful of exceptions). The rule is currently legally enforceable, and one can be charged with a misdemeanor for failing to adhere to it.

Perhaps the biggest resurgence we are witnessing in L.A. is the traffic. It had been so unbelievably nice driving down “the 134” or “the 110” during the early days of the pandemic, when the freeways – and the air – were both clearer than I have ever seen them in my 16 years in this county.

**A Teaching Moment**

The COVID-19 pandemic offers us some important lessons, if our county, state, country, and world are willing to learn them. I’ll briefly highlight just three.

First, we have witnessed the undeniable need for socio-economic safety nets. For so many people who were living paycheck-to-paycheck before the onslaught of the pandemic, the sudden cessation of their jobs threw their finances into full-blown crisis mode. In an ideal world, of course, we would all have significant savings accounts upon which to fall back. Practically, however, this is not always possible. Measures like the $1200-per-person stimulus checks proved effective, but they did not come soon nor frequently enough to provide consistent relief. I saw former restaurant coworkers of mine – waitresses, managers, and bartenders – post on Facebook their Venmo account usernames alongside ashamed pleas for help buying groceries that month. A society such as ours should not have to simply “rely on the kindness of strangers.”

This brings me to a second, related takeaway: the utmost importance of healthcare, and our need for a healthcare system that is affordable (and, ideally, free) for absolutely every American citizen. Of the 36 industrialized countries that make up the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United States stands as the only nation not to offer its citizens some form of universal healthcare. So, what happens if you are hospitalized from COVID-19, but you are uninsured? You might have been lucky enough
to live in a state that expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, or you might be one of the 2 million people living in the 14 U.S. states that did not. Healthcare – like the guarantee of a living wage or protection from eviction due to financial hardship during a pandemic – should not be a game of chance.

And, finally, many of us have learned the lesson of gratitude. How grateful we are to have had homes in which to quarantine, pantry goods on which to stock up, and – for so many of us – jobs we could continue working, either from the field or at home. The task ahead of us seems to be to take this gratitude and let it guide us into creating more of the same good fortune for the rest of our neighbors, for if and when another pandemic strikes.

References


About the Author

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Responsiveness is one of the most often used terms in business to represent a primary source of agility in organizational systems. Firms that respond quickly to uncertain situations often succeed. However, responsiveness under a higher level of uncertainty is challenging. Another way of looking at uncertainty is to define an opportunity within the crisis. Put differently, uncertainty is not an everyday routine and hence determines an opportunity to demonstrate leadership through responsiveness.
The COVID19 situation is a classic example of a highly uncertain context. Ever since the World Health Organisation (WHO) characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020, the routine life across the world has been disrupted. Several countries have gone into a state of lockdown, leaving significant economic disruptions around the world. As social organizations, nations have been under a compelling need to demonstrate responsiveness, not merely to safeguard the respective economies, but also in the interest of the safety of the citizens. This article describes a few initiatives that the Government of India has undertaken as a response to the COVID19 crisis. Being the second-largest country in terms of population, with a wide area of 3.2 million square kilometers, it has been a mammoth task for the Indian government to respond to the pandemic, within a thriving demographic setup. But in our opinion, the government has done a splendid job amid the crisis. The United Nations and the WHO have praised India’s response to the pandemic as “comprehensive and robust,” for containing the spread and building necessary healthcare infrastructure.

**Nationwide Lockdowns**

India experienced a 14-hour voluntary public curfew on 22 March. Two mandatory lockdowns followed it. First, on 24 March, the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in consultation with the state governments, ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion population of India. As it was apparent that the COVID infections in other nations have been increasing exponentially, on 14 April, a decision to extend the nationwide lockdown till 3 May was administered. According to the WHO COVID19 tracker, India has been able to control the pandemic growth compared to other developed countries like the US and the UK due to this timely measure.

However, lockdown is not a permanent fix. It had its adverse side effects on the Indian economy. The chief economic advisor to the Government of India (GOI) said that there is a drop of 3.1% in India's growth quarter of the fiscal year 2020 due to this effect. Nevertheless, the health and safety of the Indian citizens was prioritised, and several parallel initiatives have been taken by the GOI. The responsiveness in decision making and timely implementation is a true example of leadership under crisis.

**Economic Package**

With the adverse crisis that COVID19 has brought into every nation, the operations in India have been severely affected. In some way, the large corporations could come back quickly due to their diverse portfolios, and the crisis serves a significant attack on small and medium enterprises. The PM, addressing the citizens of the country, announced Rs Twenty lakh crores (Rs. 20,000 billion) package to various sectors of the country. During the announcement, it was mentioned that “the COVID19 pandemic has brought an opportunity for India to be self-reliant....21st century belongs to India.” This echoes with the management quote — Where others see obstacles, leaders must see opportunities. The GOI package has given some relief to the micro, small, and medium enterprises to recover back from the COVID attack.

While the state governments led by leaders of several political parties supported the GOI in effectively responding to the crisis, the federal leadership played a significant role. The common man’s problems were understood and empathized. Under a special provision, the
GOI had announced that citizens could withdraw three months’ salary from the Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) account amid the coronavirus crisis.

During the lockdown, an estimated 140 million people lost employment while salaries were cut for many others. This has created a significant disruption among the middle-income segment of the Indian population. To address the situation, the government declared a plan to set up a chain of 2 million retail shops called “Suraksha Stores” across India, to provide daily essentials to citizens while maintaining stringent safety norms.

On 28 March, the Prime Minister’s Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund was set up to provide relief to the affected people. Towards helping rural India that constitutes about 70% of the population, GOI declared that the poor households using 5 kg cooking gas cylinders would be entitled to eight free refills in three months as a relief from the disruptions due to the COVID19 outbreak. Further, GOI has been determined to provide providing free cooking gas cylinders for three months to over 83 million economically poor women. A large number of farmers around the country who grow perishables also faced uncertainty. As an initiative by GOI, 60 million farmers of India received a total grant of Rs.138,550 million as loans with a waive off of the first instalment of credit payback. Over 20 million construction workers received financial support worth Rs 30,660 million under the Building and Construction Workers’ Fund.

**Shramik Special Trains**

As it became apparent that the lockdown would continue beyond the second phase too, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) was concerned about the migrant laborers in India. Limited job opportunities in a few economically weaker states of India had led laborers to migrate to other states for their livelihood. The COVID19 lockdowns have disabled the migrant laborers’ movement back to their native states, a major concern to the MHA. Amid the social distancing norms imposed during the lockdown, transporting 6.3 million migrant laborers across different destinations in a country was a major challenge. However, GOI demonstrated a high level of responsiveness to overcome this challenge.

Indian Railways, a public sector enterprise established under the leadership of GOI, decided to run special “Shramik trains” to transport migrant laborers across India. By providing two meals, drinking water, and personal protection equipment, Indian Railways coordinated with all major states of India to safely transport 6.2 million migrant laborers in a record time of 48 days. Amid the political pressures and time constraints, this challenging project was executed without compromising on the safety of laborers. One success metric of the project was that none of these migrant laborers were infected during the transit. More than 5,000 Shramik special trains, with each train carrying about 1,200 passengers, carried out the mammoth task. State governments and non-government organizations provided their support to this initiative. The key highlight of the initiative was that 36 pregnant women delivered babies during the travel, with utmost health care provided to both mothers and the kids under the complex situation.

With growing infections, Indian Railways has put their train coaches into an effective purpose in a timely way. More than 50% of coaches were converted into COVID19 coaches towards providing treatment for the COVID19 positive patients. In each of these isolation coaches, the four toilets have been turned into two bathrooms. Ventilators, oxygen tanks, and other medical items were arranged with each coach mapped to a hospital in respective
Indian towns from which doctors were scheduled to attend the COVID19 cases. This paved the way to create more beds to accommodate the growing number of infected patients towards supplementing the other health infrastructure initiatives taken by the GOI.

Building a Health Infrastructure
The public health facilities in India dedicated to COVID19 case management were classified into three. First, dedicated COVID hospitals offer comprehensive care primarily for those who have been clinically assigned as severe. Second, dedicated COVID health centers offer care for all cases that have been clinically assigned as moderate. Finally, dedicated COVID care centers offer care only for cases that have been clinically assigned as mild or very mild cases. The responsiveness that the GOI has demonstrated on this front has resulted in 7,740 such facilities across the country. 656,769 isolation beds, 305,567 beds for confirmed cases, 351,204 beds for suspected cases, 99,492 oxygen supported beds, 1,696 facilities with oxygen manifolds, and 34,076 ICU beds were created in less than two months as an outcome.

Further, the GOI has been investing heavily in health research and development to discover a vaccine for COVID19. A top scientific advisor to the government, in an interview about health infrastructure, said, “efforts that normally take 15 years and cost US$300 million were being condensed into a 12-month period.” Additionally, GOI is also providing medical insurance cover of Rs.0.5 million per person to health workers fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

While the physical infrastructure development efforts have been significant, a major concern on creating awareness among the people towards health and hygiene was dominant. On 2 April, GOI released “Aarogya Setu,” a mobile app to spread awareness of COVID19 and to connect essential COVID19 related health services to the people of India. Aarogya Setu has been available in both Android and iOS app stores. The app is enabled with contemporary technology and has the capability to work with Bluetooth to determine the risk if one has been near (within six feet of) a COVID19 infected person by scanning through a database of known cases across India. The app reached more than 100 million installs in 40 days. While speaking about the Aarogya Setu, the CEO of the National Institute for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) mentioned, “the app has been able to identify more than 3,000 hotspots in 3-17 days ahead of time.”

Alongside these developments, social distancing norms have been advertised in television channels. Police cops and railway security officers were involved in conducting awareness sessions on health safety measures and their importance to adhere under crisis.

Key Takeaways
The complex problem of COVID19 has been the same across countries, with no exception. However, how every country responded to the crisis helps us learn a few management lessons. Being the second-largest country in population, with a high population density and low literacy rate compared to several developed counties like the US and countries in the European Union, India responded to the crisis in an agile way. Under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India, comprising of 28 states and 8 union territories led by various political parties, came together and operated as a corporation. Participative leadership paved the way for responsive governance and timely decision making.
Three important management lessons that one can derive from India’s COVID19 response landscape are as follows. First, responsiveness includes flexibility. The GOI demonstrated a great level of flexibility to put things into different purposes during the crisis. Converting train coaches as COVID19 facilities is a classic example of such an effort. Second, responsiveness includes agility. While flexibility denotes “willingness to change” — agility is beyond flexibility and denotes “timely responsiveness.” The way GOI developed the health infrastructure to accommodate the increasing number of cases has been recognized as a great example of agility by WHO.

Finally, another key management lesson one can learn is the “adaptability” exhibited by GOI. It is the excellent support and adaptability exhibited by various stakeholders, including 1.3 billion citizens of India that determines a true transformation, a crisis demands. In line with systems thinking research, the efforts of the system may be incomplete, unless all the sub-systems adapt themselves to inherit the system characteristics. While the leadership of the prime minister in terms of flexibility and agility has been commendable, the adaptability of other sub-systems like state governments, private sector firms, citizen communities, etc. has supported the leadership efforts.

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Editorial Comments

An Explication of Our Collective Moral Consciousness

— Joseph P. Hester, Independent Scholar

As the public square fades into the void of the past, many remain insulated within their personal spheres of social media ambivalent about their nation’s future and reluctant to converse with others about ethical norms and the issues such norms unearth. Not wanting to offend or be questioned, some have kept their opinions quietly within acquiescing to the popular notion that ethics and truth are personally relative and privately their own. This is a situation of self-centering believing that “we” are the center of our own universe becoming tools of our own tools, independent and self-reliant. The moral culture of the United States (of the world) is obviously pluralistic and situationally relative, making opening a dialogue about spiritual leadership a difficult road to traverse. Yet, yielding to our normative imaginations and moral consciousness, a discussion of spiritual leadership is an avenue from which we should not shrink.

I began this discussion with “Advancing a Philosophy of Spiritual Leadership” in the 2020 winter issue of the Journal of Values-based Leadership. The purpose was to open a conversation and invite a variety of opinions and rationally articulated insights. I continue here by discussing the “Salience and Substance of Spiritual Leadership.” Clearly, attaching “spiritual” to “leadership” and identifying “spiritual” with “moral acuity” poses a problem as it raises the issue of moral exclusiveness and, parenthetically, moral relativity, especially when “spiritual” is correlated with religious beliefs and the moral values such beliefs support. Many remain unresponsive to such discussions. Compliant and unmoving, some say, “It is what it is”; yet, in reality, it is what we think and say it is exposing personal and social contingencies all requiring reassessment. “Reality as it actually is” is based on interpreting, evaluating, and explaining the activities and events around us, usually with some sort of intent often exposing our assumptions (opinions) and self-directing our moral effort. Our tendency is to project our beliefs and collective insecurities onto the screen of reality, making “reality as it actually is” — a product of our limited personal narratives casting a delusional glow over our lives.

My statement that human beings are entities both biological and social in character accounts for the possibility that they are also spiritual in character. If human beings are spiritual entities, then their spirituality is an aspect of their sociality.

—Michael J. Perry, Morality Politics & Law, 1988

Almost all the spiritual traditions recognize that there is a stage in man’s development when belief – in contrast to faith – and its securities have to be left behind.

— Alan Watts, 1953, Myth and Ritual in Christianity
About the spiritual, what I write is but a small leap into these waters — a snapshot, a conjecture, a continuing discussion. As we are well aware, the spiritual is intrinsic — not seen, touched, nor heard; yet, an energy lying at the core of our humanity directing our behavior and, hopefully, unlocking our moral veracity. Noticeably, the spiritual is subject to cultural influences requiring understanding, reassessment, and cultivation. From this base, we work out our cognitive claims about things, relating them, describing them, and giving them value. There is a good deal of selective and exploratory activity here including the discernment of our physical and social environment, the pressures to conform and find stability among the subgroups to which we assign importance, and the growth of convictions, especially those to which we assign moral value. Fundamentally, “reality as it actually is” is a by-product of, or culmination of, a way of thinking; albeit, this generalization doesn’t do justice to the complexities of thinking, whether cognitional or valuational.

What then of the spiritual? Admittedly intrinsic, “spiritual” is not a descriptive term, for what would be describing? Rather, “spiritual” is more energy than thing, meaningful in a referential way directing our introspection and pointing to the need to help people live together. This provides “spiritual” with its normative and valuational import.

“Spiritual” has become ingrained in our religious consciousness, carried over in a practical sort of way into secular discussions about human essence and now about values-based leadership. Importantly, the spiritual is more than cognition; being evaluative, it is conceptual as well as verbal exploring how events, objects, plans, and patterns of human living fit into our lives. The spiritual then is representative of our normative consciousness. Verbally, the spiritual within responds to what is happening around us and is expressed in words such as “right” and “wrong,” “good” and “bad” — the language of morality — and in terms of acceptance and rejection respectively. In real life this represents a kind of balancing affair, an interplay of feelings and purposes, which issues in choices of goals and actions.

And whether spiritual is natural, metaphysical, or purely a conceptual referent lies outside our more practical concerns. Philosophers have discussed these issues for many hundreds of years. Simply put, the spiritual is recognized by many as an intrinsic energy definitive of human life. More often than not it has moral connotations, but we should remember its vulnerable nature as it lies within the subterranean features of our outward appearance.

Subsequently, spiritual energy is the essence of life, a natural proclivity, and we can be sure that nature does nothing in vain. Given the social and communal nature of spiritual, any comment about its intrinsic nature will be suspect yielding more to our cultural heritage and unexhumed assumptions, subjective, many times acquiescent, and perhaps receptive more to what people may think of us rather than to personal introspection, rational inquiry, and the courage moral veracity compels. We can hardly avoid this, but we should make an effort.

Ours is a time of scientific rationalism and our rational nature wants to pull us away from this conversation, but intuitively we feel there is something deeply within called “spiritual” that is not only personal, but communicative, requiring illumination; something that is natural, but unreceptive to scientific investigation. Of course, even the idiom “rational nature” admits of the intrinsic marking our cultural encapsulation and often undisclosed commitments, perhaps exaggerated certainty. These unexposed assumptions often tint our experiences with personal preferences making impartial judgments unachievable. That the spiritual admits of a communal and evaluational nature, listening to others and engaging in
open dialogue are necessary for extending our ethical choices beyond self to an expanded moral humanity that we are.

Everyday common usage reveals the spiritual is as an imperceptible capacity centering us morally, sometimes religiously and other times not. We are tasked with driving this capability well and carefully and with intellectual prowess, tempered by sympathy and compassion, using experience and reasoning to control its normative impulse and often unarticulated suppositions. Care must be taken as scientific rationalism wishes to reduce our values to facts, generalizations, and explanations, or to the nonsensical products of belief, faith, and sentimentality known only through our words set to the rhythm of a coherent materialism. Reason, not unlike belief, wishes to objectify the un-objectifiable making the spiritual a lifeless adherence to logical rationalism or to ancient doctrines bound by biases of our own choosing. The practical benefits of reason and science are obvious, but their conjectures about the inner workings of the intrinsic are dubious. However, one can understand the negative reactions to religion per se – to religious expressions and their manifold interpretations – and how the religious use authoritarian jargon, set to the rhythm of a mythological past, to project belief on the screen of reality claiming absolute truth.

So, with a presumed absolutism and being intrinsic, “spiritual” is a commonly used metaphor found mainly in religious discourse, but religious exclusivity cannot be allowed to harness this energy nor narrow its scope. Also, with some questions about their own assumptions, utilitarian rationalism cannot be allowed to dismiss the spiritual as useless and inconsequential. For the devout, when this occurs, the spiritual becomes little more than an agent of manipulation, sanctioning some behaviors and condemning others under the guise of religious belief. This we commonly see that both Christian Evangelicals and Islamic radicals have aligned their moral (spiritual) impulse with specific political goals in a quest for control over their adherents, thus strangling the flowering of a collective moral humanity.

The broadened view of spiritual offered in this paper is not bound by established religious rules, yet, not divorced from the religious either. Thus, a case will be made for enlarging “spiritual” beyond its religious confines, redefining it as an essential moral capability definitive of a shared humanity. Given that the spiritual is distinct within each person, it follows that it is personally relative and, paradoxically, normatively universal as it is common to us all. Introspection and courage are required to unhinge this capacity in the service of others. Thus, as a distinct moral energy, the spiritual labors to expand and enrich our view of

Philosophers…ask one another for definitions to be sure they’re thinking clearly, and they push one another to pursue the implications of their ideas and statements. They prod themselves and others to examine the basic assumptions upon which their beliefs and arguments rest. Philosophers are persistent explorers in the nooks and crannies of human knowledge that are commonly overlooked or deliberately ignored. It is an exciting but restless adventure of the mind…Only disciplined study with an open mind will produce philosophic awareness. Insight and consciousness will come only with relentless labor. In this age of instant everything; there is still no instant wisdom, unfortunately.

— James L. Christian, 1973, Philosophy: An Introduction to the Art of Wondering
others, our communal interdependence, and the importance of human decency and service. It encourages a morality without conceptual borders, sacred in both a religious sense and a secular sense as well, but not subject to, or bound by, religious rules, racial or gender divisions, or political ideals.

A problem we face is over-inflating “spiritual” with unwanted rhetorical expressions – theological or philosophical, psychological or sociological – decreasing its meaning and devaluing its common usage. This poses a risk for common usage normally takes precedence over more theoretical nuances in everyday discussions, especially moral discourse. Institutionalized religion is pervasive both East and West but, for some, religion has become a tool of manipulation in which the spiritual is overshadowed by an objectification of the intrinsic, the moral, and the experiential. Religious beliefs, stained by inconsistent interpretations of ancient texts, often impound the spiritual and negate its moral value.

Care must be taken for when we objectify “belief-in” our beliefs often become an encrusted shell, fixed and unquestionable, verifying our behavior and often demonizing others. “Belief-in” reveals an unbending enclosure of our ideologies, sacred or secular and moral or amoral. People are thus standardized, divided, and sloganized as either “believers” or “atheists,” “Democrats” or “Republicans,” and much more. This describes much of our society today and we eventually pay a price for such arbitrary divisions, divisions which deny our commonalities while accentuating our differences. We prefer our religion and, parenthetically our politics, in the black and white not in shades of grey, for it’s in the grey areas where we struggle the most. Fear of blurring our identity and recognizing our common humanity, our moral discernment – our spirituality – languishes in the backwaters of our faith and commitment to a moral humanity.

In summary, the spiritual defines the essentialness of our humanity, a normative consciousness or spiritual sensibility stirring us morally. The substance of the spiritual is principled and evaluational, directing behavior and stirring our moral veracity. The spiritual within us must be intentionally recognized as a personal and collective moral consciousness challenging us to positively restore our virtuous and noble authenticity. Although an internal energy, the spiritual is also communal and interconnected to others as it is strengthened by civil dialogue, respect, and tolerance. No claim is made for the spiritual being unconditional as we are impressionable and pliable creatures susceptible to both moral and amoral influences. This admits, among other things, that the spiritual is contingent and contaminable building character that is sometimes moral and other times yielding to influences that are less so. Precaution must be taken as moral reassessment should be, prudently and socially, an ongoing task. Within these cloudy and moving waters, waters definitive of our diversity and our collective humanity, is where the spiritual is cultivated and advanced.

Thus, it is no easy task to discuss this topic and even more difficult to apply spiritual to values-based leadership. What is called “spiritual” – our collective moral consciousness – is not a thing-in-itself and doesn’t belong to a few no matter how forcefully they make their claim. It cannot be confined as it is an energy seeking release in the moral commons we call “humanity.” On the other hand, to talk about the “spiritual” in terms of “substance” poses a risk. Such talk has led some (notably utilitarians) to dismiss such intrinsic nomenclature as nonsense. Yet, philosophical dialogue has shown that utilitarianism per se relies upon some
theory of intrinsic value — something is held to be good “in itself,” apart from further consequences, and all other values are believed to derive their worth from their relation to this intrinsic good as a means to an end. In other words, utilitarianism has reached conclusions its own theory is unable to support. Thus, no apology is made for this discussion. My views represent my cultural eccentricity requiring clarification in the dialectic of conversation. Such clarification is a major purpose of this writing.

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Climate Change, Racial Injustice, Unemployment, Crumbling Infrastructure – Time for Creative Leadership

– Elizabeth Gingerich, JVBL Editor-in-Chief

The U.S. is adding one Wuhan a Day while other parts of the world are opening up. Lives and livelihoods are on the line daily with the virus unabated without more stringent COVID-control plans – on a federal scale. During the time of COVID, other problems have either risen to the surface or have finally commanded the attention so desperately warranted:

Climate Change

What has been the effect so far on greenhouse gas emissions as the world has shut down? Is there hope for a reversal of CO2 emissions if certain practices are permanently altered – e.g., less air travel and the provision of alternate forms of clean-fuel technology?

The Good News.

Thanks to COVID, foot traffic is on the increase, flights have been limited in passenger bookings and destination choice, and skies have been noticeably clearer – from Shanghai to Los Angeles. And global CO2 emissions are on track to drop by 5.5%. Such a drop in carbon
dioxide emissions would still be the largest yearly change on record, beating out the financial crisis of 2008 and World War II. Air pollution levels have taken a marked decline worldwide as a result of stay-at-home rules and guidelines in a way not seen before the Industrial Revolution.

The Bad News.
Even with the global economy gridlocked, science indicates that the world is still on track to release 95% of the carbon dioxide emitted in a typical year, continuing to heat up the planet and driving climate change even as so many of us are stuck at home. Where are greenhouse gases still coming from and who are they impacting? Energy, ground transportation, consumption levels, factory farming, rising populations, landfills – all contribute to increasing greenhouse gases and the overall warming of the planet. And according to the U.S.’s own Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) projections, the Trump Administration’s repeal in 2019 of the Obama era “Clean Power Plan” – America’s first and only nationwide limit on carbon pollution originating from existing power plants – will make air even more toxic for years to come, causing the greatest harm to the most vulnerable communities.

Racial Injustice
Ever present, but continually glossed over, is the disparate treatment of, and opportunities available to, people of color. The filmed killing of George Floyd in the Spring of 2020, with the whole world watching, brought to light literally centuries of abuse and denial of rights to those who originally established the American economy – and so many other economies throughout the world that engaged in the slave trade. Systematic injustice extends to the provision of basic services – healthcare, education, occupation, transportation. Adding insult to injury is the fact that marginalized communities are often more harshly impacted by climate-related disasters – from the 9th Ward in New Orleans to the back streets of Houston – and have been disproportionately impacted by the virus.

The evidence is unrefuted that COVID-19 is deadlier in people with preexisting health conditions, particular those which weaken lungs and immune systems. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that COVID-19, a respiratory disease, is disparately impacting the poor and communities of color – a large percentage of whom are already suffering from respiratory ailments associated with exposure to air pollution. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services in 2014, Americans were already more than 3 times more likely to die from asthma-related causes. In 2017, the NAACP reported that African Americans are exposed to air that is 38% more polluted compared to white Americans.

The Good News.
Criminal prosecutions have been launched and several recent killings of Black men and women submitted to new investigations. Corporations are forcing revised marketing and staffing compliance standards and many Confederate memorabilia and vestiges of the past are being questioned and, in many cases, removed.

The Bad News.
Institutionalized racism is close to impossible to eradicate under current conditions – especially while prime employment and educational opportunities continue to be reserved
for privileged individuals and the current administration is ever more insistent on supporting – and often instigating – race-baiting political ploys.

And COVID has virtually shut down so much of urban infrastructure, exposing its years of neglect to public inspection, and further denying its users even the most basic of reliable services.

**Unemployment**
The global economy is under pressure and reminiscent of the Great Depression era of the 1930s. But now is also the time to plan ahead to create public-works jobs with a vision of the future.

**The Good News.**
The June 2020 Jobs Report in the U.S. indicated that nearly 4.5 million Americans returned to work. Large swaths of European Union nations, the United Kingdom, and parts of Asia are reopening their doors in a fervent effort to restart their respective economies.

**The Bad News.**
With borders closed and trade stifled, private sector manufacturing jobs have been compromised and many who were already close to retirement age have decided not to return to work. Others simply have given up any viable search.

**Crumbling Infrastructure**
Without question, there is widespread consensus in the U.S. that its infrastructure – highways, water supply and filtration systems, bridges, and country roads – is in gross disrepair and wholly inadequate to face increased traffic and the onslaught of new destructive weather events. Marked by decades of indifference and budgetary shortfalls and straining from overdue maintenance, this problem can no longer be ignored.

**The Good News.**
Less traffic produces less negative impact to existing infrastructure.

**The Bad News.**
Less taxed income generates lower budgets for infrastructure repair and rebuilding. Roads less traveled often reveal structural shortcomings that signal disastrous consequences if further ignored – especially as climate-related disasters take a rapid toll on its ability to withstand further stress.

With massive overhaul needed – and keeping in mind the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs – particularly #11 which, in part, refers to “making cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable”) – wouldn’t it make sense to embark on a course of revision and reinforcement that seeks to render infrastructure more resilience to the forces of climate change – preferable using sustainable construction methods – and design them in a more equitable way of providing basic human services to the populace? As Wisrd founder and Denver-based civil engineer Mark Reiner PhD, PE expounds in a June 18 2020 blog, “Achieving sustainable outcomes from a city’s system of systems requires a reliable and resilient infrastructure foundation. But it is important that urban planners and, all system stakeholders, have their own indicators for better reporting and quantifying the relevance of infrastructure for achieving sustainability.” In this context, shouldn’t this feat be
accomplished by so many of the unemployed and underemployed – particularly in hard-hit minority communities – under the tutelage of competent leaders with a vision of achieving more equitable, sustainable, and resilient outcomes?

**Novel Coronavirus Calls for Novel Leadership**

To responsibly and equitably create a post-COVID-19 economy, governments, businesses, and individuals must do their part to re-calculate their consumption habits and look for alternative ways of providing public services. The administration must avoid implementing environmental regulatory rollbacks. Decisions concerning supply chain relationships, arrangement of meetings, purchasing trends, traveling routines, and financing practices must be re-evaluated and revised accordingly. Energy suppliers and users must quickly transition to renewable sources. Online transactions and e-meetings must continue to be encouraged.

While a succession of COVID stimulus packages have served as a temporary band-aid to the harsh realities created by the pandemic, addressing the overload of problems – climate change, racism, unemployment, and crumbling infrastructure – might be best handled by resurrecting programs of the past. It appears that trillions of dollars in government assistance simply will not be effective – long-term. A Post-Covid Stimulus Policy designed to mimic the successful elements of FDR’s New Deal, namely the WPA (Works Progress Administration) and the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) might serve to address these multifaceted crises, however. Elements of these programs have been integrated into what has been termed the “Green New Deal” – largely authored by New York Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez – which attempts to parallel the FDR Administration’s efforts to reverse unemployment trends while focusing on infrastructure rebuilding. The added twist to Green New Deal objectives is to undertake efforts in concert with attaining climate remediation goals.

Regarded as one of the most successful work programs ever introduced in the world, President Roosevelt launched the WPA in 1935 and through the life of the program, put

_Circa 1939, Courtesy, US National Archives_
millions back to work. The program was responsible for building and staffing healthcare centers to address the millions who went without treatment for even the most serious of illnesses and accidents (providing an example of wartime mobilization needed to fight the current pandemic) and championed the arts.

The CCC, a voluntary public work relief program that operated from 1933 to 1942, was initially restricted to unemployed, unmarried men of a certain age range and was chief in producing ecological preservation projects and encouraging outdoor experiences. Minorities were included, but kept in segregated program sections. The CCC built much of the infrastructure servicing America today, including wildlife refuges, water storage basins, bridges, and campground facilities. Understandably, caution and social distancing today dictate a pause in the implementation of any grand projects now but the situation most assuredly should not slow planners, policy-makers, architects, and engineers who would lead these efforts.

Throughout the world, as nations respond to the exigencies of COVID in different ways, perhaps we can proverbially make some lemonade out of lemons as we have the rare opportunity during this uncertain pause to assess the salient problems and challenges of the day and move to address them – hopefully, in an integrated manner. New infrastructure can feature more pedestrian-friendly and mass transportation options and a greater – and faster – transition to renewable energy sources to replace fossil fuel usage. Urban structures can be retrofitted much like New York’s Empire State Building has already been and all
people be part and parcel of such nationwide investment. Who wouldn’t love to see this happen – with cleaner skies, water, and ground to boot? Without widespread change in policy and individual behavior that takes the situation of marginalized groups seriously, those who do not make such changes are truly part of the problem – and not the solution.

With the ball in our court, let’s get to work.

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Introduction

In November 2019, the Director of Harvard University’s Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Professor Michael Szonyi, expressed his cautious optimism that China and the United States would work out where the best areas for their future bilateral cooperation and competition lie. He invents the name ‘coopetition’ for this dynamic of apparent opposites. One area where such activity is vital, he asserts, was climate change (Szonyi, 2019).

It is unsurprising that, as the world’s two largest economies engage increasingly with each other on the global stage, scholars should write about the need for reconciliation of their powerful cultural differences as a first step for these negotiations. The literature from across the disciplines has become prodigious (see, for example, Brezina & Ritomsky, 2010; Rošker, 2008; Lin, 2011; Tierney, 2018; Liu & Macdonald, 2016; Pan, Valerdi, & Kang, 2013). Two major cross-disciplinary themes emerge. The first is the historic tendency toward increasing specialization in Western knowledge construction; the second, the apparent exclusion of affect and experience in the knowledge-making process. In contrast, it is argued, Chinese thought traditions have continuously valued the specialized parts within the larger whole,
while the dimensions of affect and sensory experience are incorporated with the rational, to produce an integrated knowledge of phenomena.

The paper presents an exploratory cross-cultural case study that challenges this binary position between Western and Chinese thought and supports Szonyi’s cautious optimism.

The method employed in the development of the paper also endeavours, in microcosm, to enact the spirit of macrocosmic bilateral cooperation Szonyi encourages. It presents a piece of collaborative action research which aims to identify some shared first principles of historical, ethical leadership in the United States and China within the constraints of the authors’ backgrounds.

The paper begins with a description of the method and its rationale. The paper’s operating principle is that exploratory, cross-cultural research effort ought to support the identification of commonalities, against the popular political assumptions of negativity and otherness more typically portrayed in the media. Systems thinking is a sub field of leadership theory, in which scholars have reflected on cross-cultural practice between the West and China (Pan et al., 2013). It offers a theoretical rationale for this operating principle. This is also outlined in the method section.

Two cross-cultural case studies of ethical leadership follow. These aim to draw a direct, descriptive comparison between the shared first principles of United States and Chinese civic and conservation leadership thought. The first is drawn from the more philosophical writings of President Theodore Roosevelt. The second from comparable writings of traditional Chinese philosophy. The sole focus of the comparison will be to locate shared principle rather than to critically analyse the texts or to draw on competing textual evidence within or between the two cases.

**Methodology: Theoretical, Practical and Ethical Considerations**

1. **Systems Thinking**
   Leading systems thinker and trainer, Peter Senge, asserts that:
   
   *There is nothing that is going to connect us around the world with the extraordinary variety of social and economic conditions in which we live, except our commonality* (Senge, 2003).

   The first principle of mining and acknowledging our often invisible “mental models” is one of five essential practices Senge identifies in his seminal leadership text, *The Fifth Discipline* (Senge, 1991). That practice becomes even more imperative when the tenets of leadership must be considered across cultural boundaries. The implication of his quote is that, in circumstances where commonality appears least likely, the first principle should be the generosity – and harder work in our often-competitive political economies - of identifying common ground.

   The rationale for using systems thinking as a framework for selection and interpretation of the textual evidence for the paper is explained, before proceeding to an outline of the paper’s method.

   Systems thinking is a field of leadership theory increasingly recognized as essential to addressing complex global problems, including climate change (OECD, 2017). Both Western and Chinese scholars are active in the field. Some debate between them has been
competing, contesting, for example, the ancient Chinese cultural origins of core precepts, or an overly mechanistic approach by Western researchers (Pan et al., 2013). Some argue the need for greater inclusion of the principle of “Ren,” of Daoist disinterest, of the intuitive and introspective, and the relational in systems thinking. Jifa Gu and Zhichang Zhu have formulated a Chinese-specific approach. They call this WSR, or Wu-li, Shu-li, Ren-li, which translated, “means to know, to sense and to care for.” They argue that this will resonate with Chinese leaders because:

compared with their Western counterparts, the Chinese uphold a cultural tradition which focuses more on Guanxi (social relationships), which may be among members of a family, within or between organizations, and within society as a whole. This is in contrast to Western thinking, which focuses more on relations between humankind and the material world. Oriental culture is also primarily concerned, at the very start of any action, with moral considerations of the consequences of social interactions. As we see it, the result of this tradition is that, in social life, the East extends greater respect to the “common good” and/or “group benefit”. Chinese philosophy since ancient times has been characterised by its belief and intention toward harmony and holism. The three major ancient Chinese philosophical traditions (Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism) all emphasize harmony: e.g... the unity of Yin (the negative, lunar, feminine, soft, etc.) and Yang (the positive, solar, masculine, hard, etc.); the unity of Zhi (knowing) and Xing (doing), etc.

Although they argue strongly for the recognition of deep cultural difference between Western and Chinese systems thinking, their approach shares a good deal with the systems thinking principles of Senge and his colleagues.

Senge, an M.I.T. scholar, represents a sub-field of systems thinking which assumes an ethic of care as fundamental to problem-solving. He also enjoys an established reputation in, and knowledge of, Chinese leadership practice. Regarded as one of the 25 leading strategic thinkers in the West, Senge was named one of China’s 1000 leading talents. Indicative of this cross-cultural reach, The Fifth Discipline, was a best-seller in both the West and China. His scholarship is grounded not only in his work with leading United States’ private organizations, such as Walmart, GE, and Unilever, but also with government organizations (Senge, 2006).

Senge’s systems thinking argues the need for both the West and China to return to the leadership wisdom of their histories. He argues that this is vital in the West to correct the dominance of 17th Century Cartesian dualism, reinforced by the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions of the 19th Century. So, standardized has the habit become of focusing on the part rather than the whole, and on the intellect alone in problem-solving, that Senge has shifted his attention more recently to education to remedy this. He argues that:

the first fundamental goal, the real aim of all true systems of education, is to help each person realize their possibilities as a human being. Second is to help societies evolve to foster social and ecological well-being. Healthy economies are only healthy in the long term if they are in harmony with the larger social and ecological systems on which they depend. Economies do not exist in a vacuum, even though our current dominant indicators like GDP pretend that they do. This is not just a romantic ideal — in today’s world of worsening social and ecological imbalances, it is now a pragmatic imperative (Senge, 2018).
In summary, he declares, we need to re-learn how to comprehend phenomena with our “head, heart and hands.”

2. Applying a Systems Thinking Approach

Background
Academic research and teaching have an epistemological culture located firmly in Enlightenment thinking and reinforced by the Scientific Revolution of the 19th century (see for example, Immordino-Yad & Damasio, 2007). That tradition accounts not only for the highly specialized nature of disciplines, but also for the binary and adversarial nature of debate within and beyond the academy (Meadows, 2001). But the method selected for the paper runs contrary to that tradition. It offers an exploratory account of one approach to finding commonality, rejecting at this exploratory stage, the traditional academic imperative of negative critique in the early search for common ground. This approach reflects the ‘real world’ of management and leadership where both theory and practice are in play in unfamiliar settings where establishing trust is an imperative first step.

Choosing Co-Authorship
The practical determinants of theoretical framework, authorship, evidence base and structure proceeded from a four-week research visit by the Australian author to the Chinese university where she first met the co-author. The original intention had been for sole authorship using the findings of the research in China. But this changed to a choice of co-authorship when the opportunity to practice the principle of finding commonality became a real possibility. The visit itself permitted the nuanced exchange of information, impossible in non-face-to-face collaboration between strangers. It also allowed the building of trust between the researchers. The bilingual proficiency of the Chinese researcher, especially in written English comprehension, allowed for the emergence of the unanticipated choice of the evidence base for the case studies, including the more expansive choice of Chinese texts, written in Mandarin, inaccessible to the principal, monolingual author.

Comparative Approach
The research question was: Does Theodore Roosevelt’s thought about civic society and conservation have some resonance with traditional Chinese thought?

The evidence base of primary sources, core to historical enquiry, was decided as it became clear that the shared possibility was text. Both Roosevelt and ancient Chinese philosophers were prolific documenters of their practical philosophy, allowing for a comparison of like with like source. (The dissimilarity of comparing an individual leader with a broad-based cultural leadership was clear. But it seemed justifiable based on the well-established difference of the relative cultural emphasis based on the individual in the West and the collective in China).

Historical Approach
An historical approach based in comparative literary, philosophical text enabled the search for commonality in leadership thought, as it promoted simultaneously the trust between the collaborating researchers. It avoided the possible contention, misunderstanding and offence involved in comparing contemporary issues of civic and conservation ideals in China and the United States. But an indirect contemporary comparison remained implicit because of the prominent role played in present leadership by traditional Chinese culture and wisdom A
similarly implicit comparison with contemporary Western civic leadership is offered by Roosevelt’s thought.

**Selection of Case Studies**

Senge’s first discipline of interrogating and rendering explicit ‘mental models’, or the often-hidden assumptions individuals bring to conversation, demands a level of articulate self-knowledge that is highly challenging between people well-known to one another. The complexity is considerably amplified when the following dimensions are added: cross-cultural socialization, language, gender, age, professional background and disciplinary training. The principal author is female, in her sixties, an English-speaker, has a professional background in educational strategy, with a doctorate in the history of environmental science. The co-author is male, in his thirties(?), has Mandarin as his first and English as his second language, and is a young career academic with a doctorate in ancient Chinese philosophy.

Apart from the comparability of the text-based evidence, the choice of case studies was based also on the pragmatic need for the two authors, coming from such different backgrounds, to be able to find common mutually intelligible ground.

In summary, the method of the paper seeks to enact Senge’s call for the “search for commonality” within the constraints of language, culture, and discipline.

**Case Study 1: Theodore Roosevelt: Thinking With “Head, Heart and Hand”**

**Introduction: The “Conservationist President”**

President Theodore Roosevelt has been called the “Conservationist” President (U.S. National Parks Service). The sweeping changes wrought during his administration in the management of the nation’s natural resources have been widely documented (see, for example, Schullery, 1986, Brinkley, 2010). But the risk of concentrating on any one facet of Roosevelt’s presidency is that it segregates that part from the whole of his way of seeing and acting in the world. Attention can also slip too quickly into an examination of the “what” and “how” of leadership, rather than the deeper “who” or “why” of leadership thought (Senge et al., 2005). This case study will focus on the latter, beginning with Roosevelt’s large civic vision. It will reveal why he thought about the natural environment in the way he did. The evidence is his direct voice, as expressed in his non-political writing. He was a man of letters who published and presented in places accessible to a reflective general readership as well as a scholarly one. The multi-volume collection of his writings illuminates the first principles of Rooseveltian thought, demonstrating the inseparability of his view of the natural and social worlds (Roosevelt, 1926).

The comparison presented by the paper may well have appealed to Roosevelt himself. He was both a nationalist and an internationalist, seeing these as mutually reinforcing positions (Roosevelt, 1910). His brokering of peace in the Russo-Japanese War was in part enabled by his extensive knowledge of those countries, as well as China. His willingness to persuade Congress to return the United States’ share of the Boxer Rebellion Indemnity, in order to foster cross-cultural exchange between China and America, also points to a proclivity for seeking the common ground between apparent binary, cultural divides. For him, juxtaposing opposites highlighted distinctive features of both while also suggesting how these might fit inside a comprehensive whole. We will see Roosevelt doing this with a variety of themes, implicitly and explicitly challenging a Western epistemological bias toward binary and adversarial position-taking, unless the moral weight of opposition made this imperative.
This is not to deny the singularity that was part of Roosevelt's modus operandi. But even in those circumstances when a measured consideration seemed far from the reality of single-minded assertion of the right – most obviously at times of war – there is evidence in the writings, which articulate his views comprehensively, of his need to reach a balanced resolution of his own opposing perspective.

Roosevelt may also have approved of an historical narrative approach to the comparison. He read fiction and non-fiction voraciously from an early age, using the accessibility of story in his own writing to ground abstract concepts. He sought to persuade the full range of his potential audience by offering examples of experience with which they could identify. The rigor and impact of story in cultivating social change is increasingly acknowledged by scholars (Griffiths, 2017). Roosevelt was himself a President of the American Historical Association. He saw the past, present, and future as a natural, cyclical continuum of learning about the human condition – a temporal system.

The Writings of Theodore Roosevelt
The name Theodore Roosevelt can conjure a popular caricature of a bellicose warmonger and avid wildlife hunter. This draws on his time as rancher in the Dakota Badlands, as Rough Rider in the Spanish-American War, and as big-game shooter, nationally and internationally. It is a caricature which captures his disciplined, nineteenth-century manly vigor, but belies the complexity of his social and political leadership (Gable, 1986).

Roosevelt was also a voracious reader and learner as well as a prolific and accomplished writer for a range of audiences. A reasonably distinguished Harvard graduate, he had entered college with the intention of becoming a natural scientist. He left with his interest in the natural world intact, but his concerns about the specialization of the sciences had led him to identify his other talents in literature, history, and political science. He headed toward his political destiny. The writings on which this paper will draw are taken from essays and lectures he gave after leaving office, when his thoughts were well-honed by direct experience of the body politic. Penned in the final decade of Roosevelt's life, they reflect a distillation of his thought from the preceding five. The selection is representative of the fourteen-volume collection of his published works. Grouped into three themes, the first highlights the core elements of his civic vision. The second points to the distinctive method of his thinking process. The third focuses on his leadership of environmental reform. The purpose is to demonstrate how the third was a distilled part of the holistic vision of the first two. He was a systems thinker long before the term was coined, and in ways described above by Senge, Gu, and Zhu.

1. Civic Life
“Citizenship in a Republic”
This lecture, delivered to an audience at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1910, outlines the characteristics of ideal citizenship in a republic. He saw the process of industrialization as a necessary distraction from civilizing influences on a society, beyond its economic well-being. The U.S. industrialised decades later than most of Europe, arriving at the end of that process in the second decade of the Twentieth Century (Yi, 2015).

Once in place, the American people could “turn back to try to recover the possessions of the mind and the spirit,” argues Roosevelt. In that process, leaders of thought and action
(inseparable to Roosevelt) see that the “life of material gain” for the individual or for the nation can only ever hope to be a foundation from which to reach for higher ideals.

The formative unit of a republic, he declares, is the average man and woman. But the responsibility for encouraging their right duty rests with leaders whose standard must be much higher. That standard includes “cultivation and scholarship,” but these run second to more essential qualities. A sound body is important, but less so than a sound mind. Most vital is character, “the sum of those qualities which we mean when we speak of a man’s force and courage, of his good faith and sense of honor.” He nominates self-restraint, self-mastery, common sense, courage, and resolve, alongside a readiness to accept individual responsibility while acting cooperatively with others. Individual initiative is a worthy quality but, he argues, must be kept in balance with collective goals:

As society develops and grows more complex, we continually find that things which once it was desirable to leave to individual initiative can, under the changed conditions, be performed with better results by the common effort.

A sense of duty is the guiding principle of the good citizen, demonstrated before all else in the home and the family and earning a living to support those who materially depend upon him. (The historical reality of a traditional family structure at that time is less important here than the exercise of the principle of loving duty). Only after that can he “help in the movements for the general well-being.” Roosevelt has no grievance with the multimillionaire if he has earned, and is willing to expend, his wealth in the service of the public good. But he believes that “beyond a certain measure of tangible success,” increasing wealth slides in importance to other things. “It is a bad thing for a nation to raise and to admire a false standard of success; and there can be no falser standard than that set by the deification of material well-being in and for itself” he asserts.

He respects neither the pride of the self-styled “practical man” who eschews all talk of morality or decency, nor his opposite number, the man of impossible idealism, who constantly “makes the impossible better forever the enemy of the possible good.”

Active class hatred, in either direction, he regards as forms of arrogance. To dismiss or seek to crush a man because he is poor is abhorrent. But so is any destructive effort, driven by envy, to damage the life of the wealthy.

A sense of citizenship was not to be contained within the nation. “The state, the aggregation of all individuals, owes [a duty] in connection with other states, with other nations,” he asserts. But, as one must first exercise duty in relation to the home, so a “man must be a patriot before he can be, and as the only possible way of being, a good citizen of the world.” And the basis of that engagement with other nations by statesmen should be “on the same basis in which an honorable man would treat other men.”

“The Home and the Child”

In this lecture, delivered as part of a series titled “Realizable Ideals,” Roosevelt expands on the home as the central location of citizenship. (Again, it is necessary to focus not on the content of the traditional roles he describes, which will always reflect the specifics of historical circumstance, but on the first principles governing relationships.)

He was strident in his view that “everything in our civilization rests upon the home; that all public achievement rests upon private character.” Every man and woman were duty bound
to realize their ideals primarily “with those most intimately thrown with him or her.” He practised what he preached as the volume of Letters to his Children testifies (Bishop, 2006). Neither great public service nor great material acquisition could hope to “atone for the lack of a sound family life.” An important part of that was to have a good time. Roosevelt, like his parents, was no Puritan!

In that historical context, he conceived the ideal of womanhood as the bearing and rearing of “a number of healthy children.” But a man should also be disqualified from the suffrage, he believed, if he did not make his first duty that of “efficient home-maker,” a good and loving husband, a wise and loving father. This meant teaching children to fulfill the duties of American citizenship to themselves and to others. Daughters should not be encouraged to be simply pretty and idle in comfortable families. Nor should fathers treat their sons with undue harshness. This was a distorted type of Puritanism; men should be loving and affectionate towards their sons:

Make him your companion, make him your friend; do all you can for him; and then make him understand that in his turn he must do all that he can for you and for the rest of the family.

Whatever the content of the familial roles he prescribes, the more profound substance is the loving and respectful reciprocity between intimates. That generous spirit could then be expanded into the public life of the citizenry.

2. The Balance of Opposites
In the examples above it is Roosevelt’s ethic, his rational heart, which is most on display. The following examples point highlight the workings of his rational mind. But there is ethical argument here too. The heart and the mind are not to be segregated. In fact, his discipline of invoking opposite perspectives can be seen itself as an ethical principle. His belief in democracy means giving a generous hearing to both sides of a matter.

“The Thraldom of Names”
In this essay, he argues that there is a need to look beyond names to their substance. Descriptors, such as “socialism,” “liberty,” “democracy,” can mean different things to different people. He argues that equal amounts of violence can be done by rampant corporatism as by militant unionism. In his words, “despotism is despotism, tyranny tyranny, oppression oppression whether committed by one or by many individuals, by a state or by a private corporation” (Theodore Roosevelt Center, 1909). It is the action taken that has value, not the name under which it is taken.

Government should be at arms-length from the influence of the rich who use it improperly for their own interests. Though corporations are vital to modern business, he argues, the courts and the public have allowed them to debase both politics and business. That said, he argues it would be equally wrong to place the control of government in the hands of demagogues who seek to penalize business enterprise and destroy wealthy businessmen. That would be the undoing of the entire community. “The tyranny would be the same in each case, and it would make no more difference that one was called individualism and the other collectivism,” he asserts.

Striving for a healthy social system will represent the sum of many moral, intellectual, and economic forces, he declares, and each force must depend partly on the whole system.
Each of these forces is needed foremost to “develop a high grade of character in the individual men and women” who comprise the nation. As simple as it may sound, he does not pretend the job of improving society is other than challenging. It is infinitely painstaking, he says, “full of stumblings and disappointments but can also contain deep satisfaction in the striving after betterment.”

“Biological Analogies in History”
Roosevelt read broadly and deeply about natural as well as human history. In this essay, he draws analogies between Darwinian evidence of non-human species’ survival or transformation, and a vast array of ancient human civilizations. His thesis is that, for all the great advances in science in the previous half century, the field has begun to assume an explanatory role in human affairs that goes well beyond its capacity, and that the public has believed this false assumption.

Applauding the work of Darwin and Huxley, he uses this to frame the stories of various ancient and modern civilizations. He argues that over time every civilization rises, declines, morphs or collapses, as do species in the natural world, but with a complexity of cause and effect inexplicable in terms only of the natural sciences.

Despite, or because, of his comprehension of human history, he argues the value of citizens striving for the ideals of a civic society. Worthy civilizations are remembered and revered, looked to for future learning of principles that are sustaining, if not permanently so.

The record of human history confirms him in the view that deep respect is owed cultures and systems of government different from that of the United States, or of other European-based societies. The test of mutuality, of sustainable co-existence, is not the imposition of the elements of one culture on another, he argues, but the respect shown between nations, the same that ought to be shown between one person and another.

“The Search for Truth in a Reverent Spirit”
In this essay, based on his review of several books by scientists and philosophers of science, Roosevelt reiterates his argument of the danger of looking to scientific materialism (or economic materialism) for the solution to all the mysteries of human existence. Such a claim reveals the same hubris as religious extremism, he argues. Instead true scholarship is founded on the humble principle of not knowing, and of perseverance driven by that uncertainty.

He worries that the general public is inclined to accept a claim to certainty science seems falsely to offer but does not doubt that “advance in scientific discovery...has been...of such priceless worth to mankind,” although he believes this has been largely in the field of technical and mechanical invention, or natural history. The prominence of the Western scientific revolution means the country is “in greater danger of suffering in things spiritual from a wrong-headed scientific materialism than religious bigotry.” he concludes.

Scholars who are men of both science and philosophy are the true sages, Roosevelt believes. William James is one. He argues the paradox that:

...physical science, if studied properly, shows conclusively its own limitations...that beyond the material world lies a vast series of phenomena which all material knowledge is powerless to explain...ordered by religion...which...if loyal to itself, work[s] according to
its own nature as a spiritual activity, striving to transform men from within and not without, by persuasion, by example, by love, by prayer, by the communion of souls…and such a religion has nothing to fear from the progress of science, for the spirit to which it is loyal is that faith in duty, the search for what is for the universal good and for universal love, the secret springs of all high and beneficent activity.

Bishop Brent is another. He declares “the only setting for any one part of the truth is all the rest of the truth” and further that “the only relationship big enough for any man is all the rest of mankind.” Scientific knowledge has no power to decide, for example, that the “prime articles in our universal faith” are the “doing of duty” and the “love of our fellow men.” Science alone is an imbalanced leader.

3. The Natural World
“The Conservation of Wild Life”
In his writing on conservation, Roosevelt continues the theme of the role of both science and the humanities in thought leadership. In this essay, he reviews three books on wildlife conservation.

He laments the scientific trend to reductionist descriptions of majestic forms of wildlife to their mere physical characteristics in the “driest of dry books.” The growing association between the clinical language of science and what society is coming to view as truth is a concern for him. In Ruskin’s prose he sees a valuable counterpoint. On display, he says, is:

a delight in nature which can never be felt save by the man whose pulses throb with sheer delight in the spring sense of budding things, in the music of birds, the rustling of trees, the running of brooks, and in the wind-flaws in glassy lakes; a delight which can never be interpreted to others unless by one who is also master of the great art of putting fine thoughts into simple, clear, and noble words.

He abhors the fact that the extensive slaughter of the nation’s wildlife happened coincidentally with the century which witnessed the “greatest advance in material civilization.” But he is relieved that early in the new century, there is a general international awakening of the need for “keep(ing) for our children’s children, as a priceless heritage, all the delicate beauty of the lesser and all the burly majesty of the mightier forms of wildlife.”

Similarly, society was “fast learning that trees must not be cut down more rapidly than they are replaced”; that neither beasts nor birds are the property of the people living today, but of unborn generations “whose belongings we have no right to squander.” He applauds those who are beginning to understand that wildflowers “should be enjoyed unplucked where they grow” and others who concede it is “barbarism to ravage the woods and fields.”

Roosevelt welcomed the international conservation movement. He delighted in the fact that America had led the way in the creation of the world’s first national park, Yellowstone, but equally that the British, German, African, and Asian, countries were creating similar sanctuaries, and now overtaking that initiative. However, he warns against complacency, likening the effort to “warfare against the forces of greed, carelessness, and sheer brutality” which could still inflict “literally irreparable damage.”

True to his non-binary thinking and ethic of utility, he declares that the nation’s first duty is to protect its beautiful or useful mammals and birds from excessive killing, or “indeed, from all killing.” But, once genuinely protected, species will increase so rapidly that it then
becomes imperative to kill them. He insists on the distinction between those “true believers in hunting as a manly and vigorous pastime” and the “game-hog” or “wealthy epicure.” (Again, the historical context of manliness needs to be kept in mind. The conservation principle here is the ethic of hunting).

Writing in 1915, he ends the piece wistfully. The preservation work being done in Africa by Germans, English, French, and Belgians demonstrated how much these societies resembled one another. In the present state of world war, it was, he said, “cruel to think that their splendid purposes and energies should now be twisted into the paths of destruction.”

“Our Vanishing Wild Life”
Reviewing another book on the destruction of wildlife, Roosevelt compares a contemporary complacency with the willingness of the same “civilized people” to regard disdainfully their medieval ancestors who destroyed great works of art, or “sat slothfully by while they were.” The public treasures Attic temples, Roman triumphal arches, and Gothic cathedrals, but he considers it a reflection of a “low state of civilization” when they do not also appreciate that it constitutes “vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit to the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird.”

But he remains heartened by the expansion of the conservation movement in the country. A growing awareness of the need for drastic action rightly challenges the “folly and wickedness” of having permitted “perhaps two to three per cent” of the people to destroy the animals and birds in which “the other ninety-seven per cent have an equal ownership.”

He is not immune to the aesthetic of great art, but concludes emphatically that the nation’s purchase of a Rembrandt or Raphael is “in no way or shape such a service at this moment as to spend the money which such a picture costs in helping...the missionary (conservation) movement.”

“The Conservation of Natural Resources”
A primary function of Roosevelt’s autobiography, published in 1913, was to recount the significant achievements of his administration, to name and thank key advisors. Chapter eleven, The Natural Resources of the Nation, begins with an expansive tribute to Gifford Pinchot who he declares to be the single most important figure in formulating and realizing policy in forestry and public land management (Roosevelt, 1913). This innovation stimulated the rise of a broad-based conservation movement based on the same principles of stewardship of public resources.

But running through the descriptions of fighting for forestry, for irrigation in the West, for legislation to protect and preserve wildlife and birds, and to create national parks, is a single set of principles. He led the setting of a balanced policy agenda, considering various, often opposing points of view, filtered through the umbrella principle, articulated by Pinchot: achieving “the greatest good for the greatest number, in the long run” (Miller, 2001).

In what Yi Wen terms, the “detonation” of the Industrial Revolution in America from 1850 to 1920, Roosevelt's ability to reconcile powerful opposing rights and goods was vital to realizing the above principle (Wen, 2015). At the time of his first inauguration in 1901, he declared that:
...it was as little customary to favour the bona-fide settler and homebuilder, as against the strict construction of the law, as it was to use the law in thwarting the operations of the land grabbers. A technical compliance with the letter of the law was all that was required.

The public viewed the nation’s natural resources as inexhaustible. Yet there was no real knowledge of what these resources were. And the relationship of conservation to the nation’s welfare was embryonic. This included the place of the farmer in society, who was seen simply the producer of food, with no government attention paid to the broader quality of his and his family’s life.

It was not surprising that Roosevelt then used his first address to Congress to declare that “the forest and water problems are perhaps the most vital internal problems of the United States.” In 1902, Congress would approve an act to enable irrigation of the arid west, but funding for the United States Forest Service took a further three years of persuasion, as the data collected on the country’s natural resources was being disseminated to the media to muster public support.

During his administration, national forests grew from 43 to 194 million acres, with a workforce of 500 increasing to more than 3000. All land that was found to be suitable for agriculture was opened to settlement. The railroads and other corporations were strictly regulated in their use of the forests. Irrigation began to transform “the social aspect of the West” replacing “huge, migratory bands of sheep herded by the hired shepherds of absentee owners” with “actual homemakers, who have settled on the land.” In addition, the creation of five national parks, fifty-one bird sanctuaries, and national monuments such as Muir Woods, established his presidency as defined by the innovation of conservation.

By 1908, the conservation movement was so embedded in the public consciousness that Roosevelt called together the governors of all states and presidents of relevant national societies for a conference on the theme at the White House. The National Conservation Commission of 1909 was the result, and its report to Congress described by Roosevelt as “one of the most fundamentally important documents ever laid before the American people.” A subsequent suggestion by the Commissioners “that all nations should be invited to join together in conference on the subject of world resources, and their inventory, conservation, and wise utilization” was accepted, but allowed to lapse when Roosevelt left office.

Each of these measures was noteworthy, he believed, in “its material accomplishment” but even more so for its contribution to the civilized society he and his advisors sought. This is declared unequivocally in the principles he enumerates, and which inform much of his other writings.

Firstly, the principle of a nation “handling its own resources and exercise(ing) direct and business-like control over them.”

Secondly, “that the rights of the public to the natural resources outweigh private rights and must be given first consideration.”

Thirdly, that “it is better for the Government to help a poor man to make a living for his family than to help a rich man make more profit for his company.” (He said that this principle
was too sound to be fought openly but was challenged in closed quarters by Congressman in the sway of special interests).

Fourthly, that “whoever (except a bona-fide settler) takes public property for private profit should pay for what he gets.” (This, he said, caused the bitterest of antagonism of all amongst the special interest groups).

But, in the end, it was not simply efficient and sustainable public utility that was at stake. It was the spirit of a civilization that mattered, and the country’s natural resources played a sustaining role in that. In Roosevelt’s words:

\[
\text{The things accomplished ...were of immediate consequence to the economic well-being of our people. In addition, certain things were done of which the economic bearing was more remote, but which bore directly upon our welfare, because they add to the beauty of living and therefore to the joy of life.}
\]

Roosevelt has been described by many sympathetic biographers as containing dualities, as a renaissance man, as a man full of contradiction (Dalton, 2001; Ricard, 2011; Cullinane, 2017). Leading the nation wisely meant for him depending upon a synthesis of his affective, intellectual, and experiential knowledge. It meant depending upon a capacity to establish the merits of opposing, perhaps multiple, points of view to arrive at decision with rigorous integrity. But, paradoxically, arrival at an ultimate decision was framed by a singularity, an ethic, a disciplined compassion for the ordinary man, one which was the foundation of his whole worldview. It was this consistent application of “head, heart and hand” that saw the nation take great strides in conserving its essential resources and their beauty. But conservation sat within a suite of progressive measures taken to advance the collectivism of his democracy, built on the back of the individual citizen’s duty and love.

How does this exploration of the essential features of Roosevelt’s thought leadership compare with those of traditional Chinese culture?

The second case study draws its evidence from ancient philosophical texts. The themes of Roosevelt’s thought are used as the basis for this exploratory comparison.

**Case Study 2: A Comparative Snapshot of Ancient Chinese Thought Leadership**

**A Selection of Writings from Traditional Chinese Culture**

**1. Civic Life**

Like Roosevelt’s advocacy of the ethical elements of an ideal citizenry, Confucians aimed to shape personal virtue. Of all the Confucian virtues, Ren, a concept similar to benevolence in Western culture, is the primary ideal in shaping an individual’s view and practice of their own life, and their contribution to family, national, and international life.

**The Virtue of Ren**

Sage and Junzi are the two Confucian terms used to describe a morally ideal person and a moral person respectively. How does one become a Sage or a Junzi? The key is the practice of Ren.

From this virtue flows other Confucian virtues. Of these the most important are respect, tolerance, sincerity, diligence and generosity. Mencius, a Confucian philosopher, believed
that human compassion was the critical starting point for the development of Ren (Confucius, 1983).

Though Ren is the ideal goal of a person’s life, one cannot realize it simply through its exercise in individual isolation. In traditional Chinese culture, family is the foundational environment for the practice and development of Ren.

The Great Teaching (Daxue), a classic Confucian book, locates the first duty of an individual’s ethical practice within the family. Family happiness is realized through the individual’s efforts to perfect self-cultivation. The exercise of balanced, impartial judgement is key. One must allow for the co-existence and resolution of beauty and ugliness, of good and evil (Zeng, 1983). Only by exercising this mental discipline, informed by compassion, can one live a right life and play a part in nurturing respectful family life. The Book of Changing (Zhou Yi) describes how family happiness is achieved by the contribution made by father, mother, son, daughter, and so on. It offers a practical guide to exercising the virtue of Ren (Ji, 2011).

However, the practice of Ren ought not to be limited to the family alone. Confucians believe that Ren is exercised by the individual in relation to the nation, and ultimately to the world. Yi Jing, for instance, declares that “correction in [the] family results in stability in the world” (Ji, 2011). The Great Teaching enumerates the steps to be taken as one expands their practice of Ren from family to nation to world: “the correction of heart-mind leads to physical self-cultivation; physical self-cultivation leads to family happiness; family happiness leads to good governance of the nation; good governance of the nation leads to world peace” (Zeng, 1983).

If family happiness is the core purpose of the practice of Ren, a state of world peace is its aim. As the ethical scope of an individual citizen expands from family to nation and finally to the world, the meaning of Ren shifts from being the exercise of practical daily virtue to the principle of an enlightened human spirit practised on the global stage.

2. Zhong Yong and Tai Ji: The Balance Between Opposites in the Human World

The spirit of Ren is achieved through a mastery of balancing opposites in the search for truth. There are two terms for describing this practice: Zhong Yong, the Confucian golden mean, and Tai Ji, the operation of Ying Yang.

Zhong Yong: The Balance Between Ethical Opposites in Society

The highest goal of Confucianism is to become a Sage, a leader able to take the virtue of Ren from family practice into the world. Ren demands the practice Zhong Yong, a method of defining and balancing ethical opposites.

Zhong Yong is the process of finding the balance between two opposing extremes in order to find an inclusive state. For example, in the functioning of the family the Great Teaching warns against preferential treatment of family members according to one’s personal bias.

Zhong Yong helps to achieve family harmony through the exercise of acknowledging and respecting individual difference. Family happiness is the domestic reflection of Ren; Zhong Yong is the method of achieving Ren.

Confucius himself spoke highly of the practice of King Shun (2287-2067 B.C.). He commended his commitment to balancing opposites by asking probing questions about
complex matters of state and investigating ways in which ordinary citizens could achieve a sustainable quality of life for themselves while also contributing to collective well-being (Kong, 1983).

By extending the practice of Zhong Yong outwards from the family to the nation and the world, citizens are encouraged to actively contribute to achieving the same harmony on a national and global scale as they aim for on a domestic level. Zhong Yong refers principally to the functioning of social relationships. But it has an equivalent in striving for the same balance in the natural world.

**Tai Ji: The Balance Between Opposites in the Natural World**

*Tai Ji* refers to *Ren’s* method of balancing opposites in the natural world. There are two essential opposites in the natural world: *Yin* and *Yang*. Translated literally, *Yin* is the dark experienced when a cloud blocks the sun, while *Yang* is the light when the sun shines through (Kim, 2018). *Yin* and *Yang*, in the book *Zhou Yi* mentioned above, are likened to the positive power of *Heaven* (*qian*) and to the negative power of *Earth* (*kun*). *Yang* (*Heaven*) is also likened to “father” and *Yin* (*Earth*) to “mother”; through their interaction, they are responsible for the creation of all life (Ji, 2011). So, *Yin* and *Yang* symbolize the creation and continual changing of all things in the natural world. And *Tai Ji* describes the process of locating a state of balance, or harmony, between *Yin* and *Yang*.

3. **Tian Ren He Yi: The Balance Between the Human and Natural Worlds**

Traditional Chinese culture regards the *Tian Ren He Yi* as the highest pursuit. It means the harmonious state between man and nature and is the umbrella term encompassing Zhong Yong and Tai Ji.

*Tian Ren He Yi* encouraged the ancient Chinese to balance the interests of the human and natural worlds to achieve their mutual, harmonious, and sustainable development.

In Confucianism, Mencius pointed to examples. “Observing the laws of planting results in plenty of cereals; not putting fine nets into fishponds leads to sufficient fishes and turtles; observing the law of felling brings about enough woods.” Mencius defined the laws of nature and encouraged people to observe them for aesthetic as well as practical reasons. If people cut down trees excessively, nature would lose its natural beauty and harmony would be broken. His simple principle declared that “if nature is properly protected, everything will grow well; if not, everything will die.”

Daoism and Buddhism also promote the balance between man and nature. Laozi (571-471 B.C.), the founder of Daoism, declared that “man imitates the earth, earth imitates heaven, heaven imitates the Dao, the Dao imitates nature” (2006). In the Dao, (“the Way”) heaven, earth, and humans are the four key elements of the universe. As the final component, it is ultimately man’s responsibility to learn from and imitate heaven, Dao, and earth, or nature, in order to realize the Daoist harmony between the human and natural worlds.

Buddhist eco-philosophy has been widely researched. Many books, such as *Dharma Gaia: A Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*, *Buddhism and Ecology*, and *Dharma Rain: Sources of Buddhist Environment* insist that Buddhist philosophy remains inherently eco-friendly and attune to the natural environment (Swearer, 2006). Buddhist Chan master Yi Cun (822-908B.C.) picked a snakelike branch in a mountain and declared “it’s natural, not fake.”. Another Chan master, Da A praised Yi Cun as a real man because of his ability to
appreciate and preserve natural beauty (Puji, 1984). Buddhism, especially Chan Buddhism, opposes man’s excessive consumption of natural resources. It demands striving for the harmonious coexistence of man and nature.

China’s leadership in the twenty-first century increasingly refers to the wisdom of traditional Chinese culture as the philosophical rationale for the choices it makes about balancing the needs of the nation’s social, economic, and environmental future. Xi Jinping has said:

*Building an ecological civilization is vital to sustain the Chinese nation’s development. We must realize that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets and act on this understanding, implement our fundamental national policy of conserving resources and protecting the environment, and cherish the environment as we cherish our own lives. We will adopt a holistic approach to conserving our mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, and grasslands, implement the strictest possible systems for environmental protection, and develop eco-friendly growth models and ways of life.*

In so doing, he relies not only on the ancient principle of reconciling, what some consider the opposites of, the human and natural worlds. That holism has a temporal dimension, too. The past, the present, and the future each offer their own perspective on wisdom and mutually inform one another. At a birthday celebrating the birth of Confucius Xi he declared:

*We should stick to the principle of making the past to serve the present and combine excellent traditional culture with modern culture, so that we can strive to have innovative development of traditional culture.*

It is not inconceivable to imagine Roosevelt expressing similar sentiments.

**Conclusion**

This paper used systems thinking, as developed by Senge and his colleagues at M.I.T., to both frame its method and analyse its subject matter. In both it sought to enact the ethical imperative, declared by Senge, of searching for commonalities.

**1. Method**

But, in so doing, the findings of the paper can only claim an exploratory status. The necessary constraints of the research method had an impact on its analytical depth. Choosing co-authorship rendered the method its own form of case study; it was a deliberate exercise in collaboration which enacted Senge’s call for a search for commonality. But differences between the authors that were not only linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural, but also professional and demographic, imposed natural limits on the choice of primary sources and the depth of analysis within and between texts. However, those same constraints offered the benefits of widening the selection of Chinese texts, as well as deepening their analysis from a lens from inside the same cultural heritage. The approach was a deliberate enactment of the opposite of the binary, adversarial, and Cartesian one more typically employed in political and popular media commentary on the relative virtues of Western and Chinese culture – and the more sophisticated form this approach takes in most academic research.

**2. Case Studies**

The exploratory nature and limitations of the research are acknowledged. But the systematic alignment of Roosevelt’s writings with their common elements of ancient Chinese
philosophy offers preliminary evidence of the potential for bilateralism in the search for commonality. It also reinforces the first principles of systems thinking argued by Senge, Gu and Zhu.

These textual examples highlight many common civic principles. Most notable is the shared social vision from which conservation principles are derived. There is a recognition of opposing points of view on conservation, as on other social and political matters. But, when couched within an articulated view of the civic whole, this opposition becomes a constructive dynamic informed by what, in Roosevelt’s terms, is “the greatest good for the greatest number, in the long run.” And that civic vision is determined, in both the Rooseveltian and Chinese cases, by invoking the integrated wisdom of the “head, heart and hand.” The purely rational must be integrated with the affective and experiential dimensions of human understanding and knowledge-making. In both case the ideal of family acts as a training ground for new citizens in learning and practising the dynamic between managing self and common interest. The obligation and spiritual satisfaction of balancing individual and collective interest, initially learned and practised there, radiates outward toward a less personalized, but similarly careful, interaction between productive citizens and societies, having potential global reach for those who become corporate and political leaders.

But Roosevelt’s thought processes, as represented in these examples of his more philosophical writings, are not necessarily typical of contemporary corporate of government thought, where competition between ideas and political economies may push any cooperative principle aside. Roosevelt’s successful leadership offers an empirical and instructive challenge to the highly specialized, rational and binary thought, which Senge argues has become entrenched in Western societies by the dual impact of the Industrial and Scientific Revolutions. Senge also warns about its appearance in Chinese leadership. Adversarial, ideological debate may assume that it is working towards a synthesis derived from the pitting of a thesis and antithesis against each other. But the absence of a clearly articulated civic vision, within which this dynamic occurs, combined with an expectation that one side will dominate over the other, loses sight of Roosevelt’s proclivity to embrace the elements of apparent opposites, and to see the dynamic movement towards truth that this more complex thinking could offer. He had an appreciation of paradox and its function inside a civic ideal of society that reflects some of the features of ancient Chinese philosophy, such as Yin Yang, Ren and the ethical continuity between the private and public spheres. Recapturing his ethic and epistemology offers lessons in a more enlightened and constructive view of political and cultural compromise.

In Roosevelt’s conservation thought, a natural extension of his encompassing civic vision, there were similar first principles to ancient Chinese wisdom. As he fought for measures that would benefit the natural environment, he also promoted a sustainable economy. Where current debate can assume a mutual exclusivity between the environment and economy, he argued their interdependence, and shared civic framework. While born and raised in New York City, perhaps the densest urban environment in the West, he had an innate or learned view of the entwinement of humanity and nature, of the interdependent well-being of one with the other.

At the core of these textual examples of Rooseveltian and Chinese philosophy is a representation of systems thinking, of the kind of leadership thought and practice which institutions around the globe increasingly acknowledge as necessary to solve the existential
dilemmas confronting the world. Each prioritizes the whole over the parts, while acknowledging the interdependent dynamic between them. But “thinking” in systems implies the other elements of human understanding, named by Senge, and represented also in the textual sources, as “heart” and “hand.”

The principle of trust and human sympathy, which underpinned the choice of co-authorship of this paper, was an enactment of the call to search first for commonalities.

Michael Szonyi’s cautious optimism, that the United States and China would work towards a bilateral understanding of the best areas for their future cooperation and competition introduced this paper. Peter Senge’s imperative of searching first for commonalities was its driving principle. Its conclusion is that systems thinking, as exemplified in both the writings of Theodore Roosevelt and ancient Chinese philosophy, offers a framework within which that Szonyi’s and Senge’s pragmatic, civic ideal may be achieved, including the critical dilemma of climate change. It further suggests that the adversarial binary divide which could exist between ‘cooperation and competition’ has the potential to be a constructive dynamic of opposites leading to a middle, mutually beneficial middle way.

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Leaving Your Mark: 
Seven Strategies for Indelible Leadership

Abstract
One of the major concerns within contemporary leadership consists of the myopic view many leaders and followers have regarding leadership success. In the modern context, there are countless firms engaging in some variation of myopic management simply to drive short-term results. To counteract this restricted view of leadership, this article presents a leadership construct focusing on seven strategies designed to help facilitate long-term leadership impact and organizational sustainability. The seven strategies examined in this article consist of the following: embracing organizational diversity, encouraging positive change, displaying emotional intelligence, possessing a long-term orientation, casting a strategic vision, developing a strong corporate culture, and emphasizing ethical decision-making. The research design for this article consists of a hybrid literature review and case study approach examining previous leadership research regarding long-term organizational effectiveness as well as contemporary leadership examples. In the long run, leadership effectiveness is better determined by long-term organizational sustainability and an “indelible” leader as one who is able to precipitate a greater sense of permanency to organizational achievement and to help ensure that success can continue long after their leadership tenure has concluded. Each one of these seven leadership strategies deals with the long-term viability of a leader and their organization and implementing each of these strategies often represents the more difficult choice. This article presents an original leadership approach – the indelible leadership approach – implementing seven proven leadership strategies designed to help achieve long-term organizational vitality and effectiveness.

Introduction
Gus Levy, who was senior partner of Goldman Sachs from 1969 until his death in 1976, coined the interesting phrase “long-term greedy” when describing the outlook he wanted leaders at Goldman Sachs to demonstrate back in the 1970s (Berman, 2006). In his view, being long-term greedy was not necessarily an unethical or self-centered approach, but it was instead a way of looking at the long-term sustainability of a business. Essentially, he wanted to build a company that would last for generations and for the company to bring in clients that would be clients for fifty years, for a hundred years, or more. To Chairman Levy, effective leadership was best measured over the long haul. Unfortunately, this thought process of building for the long term has become outdated as many contemporary senior leaders of large and small firms alike are often too focused on their short-term leadership reputations.
To be clear, there is a distinct difference between long-term greediness and short-term greediness. Long-term greediness focuses on business sustainability and the desire to be financially successful over many years while short-term greediness focuses on the appearance of success over a much more limited time period. There have been numerous stories of modern-day leaders so focused on the short term that they may appear to be quite successful initially and receive early accolades for their performance only to be discovered over time to have failed their organizations (Fortune Editors, 2016). For the past thirty years, more longitudinal and complete examinations of leadership legacies have often revealed organizational inconsistency and longer-term problems (Jacobs, 1991).

In addition to the limited focus of many contemporary corporate leaders, followers within organizations in the modern context do not seem to mind this present-day mindset as they are often focused on the immediate as well. As a result of this relatively myopic view of organizational success, a good number of leadership theories seem to be centered on examining effective leadership based on a more short-term analysis and often give too much weight to the perceptions that followers have of their leaders in the moment. Leaders are often celebrated over a particular quarter’s results, even though any longitudinal analysis could reveal that one or two quarters do not necessarily equate to permanency. However, for the purposes of this article, the understanding of lasting effective leadership is to take a long-term view of the organization. It is one thing to discuss short-term examples of effective leadership and a very different thing to look at the permanency of that effectiveness.

To counteract the short-term view of leadership, this article presents a leadership construct focusing on seven strategies designed to help facilitate long-term leadership impact and organizational sustainability. The seven strategies examined in this article consist of the following: embracing organizational diversity, encouraging positive change, displaying emotional intelligence, possessing a long-term orientation, casting a strategic vision, developing a strong corporate culture, and emphasizing ethical decision making. Instead of providing a quick and easy recipe for short-term leadership success, these seven strategies are more vitally important for helping to build longer-term and sustainable organizational efficacy.

**The Seven Strategies**

I. **Embracing Organizational Diversity**

The first strategy centers on the leader’s role in encouraging, enhancing, and embracing organizational diversity. In examining the permanency of leadership effectiveness, research has indicated that to achieve a significant level of long-term viability within any organization it is important to incorporate diversity into all of the segments and processes of the organization. The importance of organizational diversity has been addressed in a variety of industries from education to manufacturing and studies have shown that diversity leads to marked improvement in many different measures of organizational performance (Choi, Sung, & Zhang, 2017). The importance of organizational diversity has received far greater attention in recent years as research conducted over the past decade has revealed that many organizations have learned to “manage diversity because of the ‘business case’ for diversity as it may assist in forging a competitive advantage and improving a firm’s innovative capabilities and overall performance” (Ng & Sears, 2012).
Indelible leaders need to recognize the vital role that they play in building and sustaining diversity throughout the organization. These leaders understand that they have to build accountability into the organizational system and take on leadership responsibility for creating a diverse and inclusive work environment. This can be achieved from a variety of different leadership perspectives as long as it is seen as a priority. Studies have shown that a deep leadership interest in organizational diversity can come from leaders representing a variety of leadership styles. In a 2012 study published in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, researchers found that transformational leaders as well as transactional leaders can have success in building strong organizational diversity programs. They note that: “While transformational leadership appears to be directly linked to the implementation of organizational diversity practices, transactional leadership appears yield a similar effect when combined with a value system that supports an appreciation for diversity” (Ng & Sears, 2012).

Regardless of a leader’s personal style of leadership, the recognition of diversity as an agenda item worthy of time and investment can seem to be a risky proposition. There are certainly challenges in building diversity within organizations initially and a leadership approach focusing on thorough and effective organizational diversity represents a much longer-term approach. Some leaders avoid pushing the envelope on organizational diversity since increased levels of diversity can bring about initial conflict and difficulty in building relationships in the short term. Still, studies have shown that greater diversity leads to greater decision-making and organizational success over the longer period and when dealing with more complicated issues.

The importance of leading with a diversity agenda does not end with the particular management direction of the chosen CEO, but should also be exhibited through corporate governance processes and procedures. One of the very first studies regarding the importance of board diversity was a 2003 study of Fortune 1000 firms which found that “a critical factor in good corporate governance appears to be the relationship between board diversity and shareholder value creation” (Carter et al., 2003). This article represented breakthrough research as the first comprehensive study using empirical evidence to examine whether or not board diversity could result in improved financial value of studied firms. After controlling for firm size, specific firm industry, and other corporate governance measures, the authors determined that there was a significant positive relationship between the number of women or minorities on the particular board and the firm’s ultimate value creation. Since that initial examination regarding the impact of board diversity, further studies have indicated that board diversity can not only increase firm value, but can also increase ethical behavior (Kakabadse et al., 2015), improve organizational commitment (Magoshi & Chang, 2009), and demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence (Báez et al., 2018).

II. **Encouraging Positive Change**

The second strategy represents the important leadership task of managing, directing, and inspiring organizational change. In recent decades, many organizations, including business enterprises, non-profit entities, and educational institutions, have faced the growing reality of organizational change at an ever-accelerating rate. The need to become more responsive to evolving technology and globalization impact has required organizations to continuously navigate through an often-challenging change management process. This reality, in turn,
requires leaders to provide both direction and inspiration in leading the organization through these changes. Leading through organizational change is one of the most difficult leadership tasks, but it is one of those inevitable duties which cannot be overlooked or underestimated.

Several recent leadership studies have revealed that there are some key behaviors that leaders can demonstrate in helping to build their sense of effectiveness and confidence in the organization throughout the changing landscape. These leadership behaviors include visioning, modeling, motivating, and coaching as well as using strategy to create an organizational culture that embraces change. Each of these behaviors is very important in leading throughout the change management process (Eisenbach, Watson, & Pillai, 1999). A true indelible leader has the understanding that when it comes to change leadership, the specifics of leader behavior can be very situational since “the requirements of leadership during periods of stability may be different from the requirements during periods of instability and organizational transformation” (Hechanova, Caringal-Go, & Magsaysay, 2018).

One very well-known example of leadership through organizational change is former CEO of Apple, Steve Jobs, who had a way of inspiring employees, despite being known as a demanding, take-no-prisoners type of leader. However, it was not just employees who Jobs was capable of inspiring through change. In many ways, he inspired an entire generation to think beyond the ordinary into a new world of expectant innovation. Jobs learned to leverage his public presentations to capitalize on the inspirational vision. Instead of being relegated to asking only employees to change the world, Jobs began to demand that kind of devotion from his audiences. “For instance, when he introduced the iPhone at Macworld 2007, Jobs passionately and logically argued that the iPhone [would] change how people interact[ed] with each other and the world. Past successful innovations, such as the invention of the personal computer, provided supporting evidence and credibility for his claim that his products exceed[ed] accepted barriers and change[d] the world” (Ivic, 2011).

III. Displaying Emotional Intelligence
The third strategy refers to the connection between a leader’s emotional intelligence and the lasting impact on organizational effectiveness. While any longitudinal research examining the link between a leader’s emotional intelligence and company long-term performance is non-existent at present, there have been a few studies that address the relationship between leader emotional intelligence and overall leader effectiveness. In one of the first articles relating the connection between emotional intelligence and leader effectiveness published in the Harvard Business Review back in 1998, journalist and author Daniel Goleman, who had published a book on the subject three years earlier, describes the importance of emotional intelligence stating that: “The most effective leaders are all alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence. Without it, a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive, analytical mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but he still won’t make a great leader (Goleman, 1998).” While this article did not suggest that emotional intelligence alone guarantees successful leadership tenure, it was one of the first articles including emotional intelligence as a major component of effective leadership.

In a more recent article published in the Journal of World Business in 2018 (Miao et al., 2016), the researchers discovered, through a meta-analysis, a positive relationship between leader emotional intelligence and subordinate performance and conduct. The study found
overall that a “leaders’ emotional intelligence (EI) demonstrates incremental validity and relative weight in predicting subordinates’ task performance and organizational citizenship behavior” (Miao et al., 2016). The research also revealed that emotionally intelligent leaders can help create a gratifying work experience for their followers in that emotional intelligence can be significantly related to a follower’s level of job satisfaction (Miao et al., 2016). Most certainly, task performance, organizational citizenship, and job satisfaction are key factors in long term organizational viability suggesting that organizations may be best served by “using EI assessments when recruiting leaders” (Miao et al., 2016).

There are several key reasons why a leader’s emotional intelligence is directly related to subordinate job performance, organizational citizenship, and job satisfaction. First and foremost is the level of self-awareness that emotionally intelligent leaders possess. Emotional intelligence is largely defined in terms of the capacity for one’s personal recognition of emotionality and the capacity to manage emotional triggers both inwardly and outwardly. As one organizational development consultant and ICF Certified Professional Development Coach, Anne Holland, put it: “the more you, as a leader, are aware of and the better you manage the elements to building and maintaining interpersonal relationships, the higher your emotional intelligence, and thus, it would stand to reason, the more effective of a leader you will be” (Holland, 2019).

Secondly, emotionally intelligent leaders are likely to have a better understanding as to what particular style of leadership should be matched to the particular organization with a certain organizational dynamic. This perceptive understanding can lead to high performance as leaders are able to share this understanding with their followers and adjust their own leader behavior to match the requirements of the specific setting. An emotionally intelligent leader is able to discern the most effective style of leadership which should be implemented within a given situation and possess the inward maturity to be willing and able to adjust their own leadership behavior.

Thirdly, emotionally intelligent leaders also have an advantage in motivating their followers because of their insight into the motivational aspects of human nature and their ability to influence both peers and subordinates. Emotionally intelligent leaders demonstrate a certain level of empathy which enables them to understand the different motivational tools available and to adjust those motivational tools depending on the particular organization and situation. Not only are emotionally intelligent leaders empathetic to given circumstances within an organization, they are also adaptable and positive, which are major motivational tools for both peer and subordinate job performance and job satisfaction.

As the aforementioned Miao study provides evidence that emotional intelligence is positively related to task performance and to the subordinates’ organizational citizenship behavior, other studies have shown that emotional intelligence by itself is not sufficient to bring about organizational success (Antonakis et al., 2009). It is certainly more accurate to surmise that EI is only one component of an overall leadership strategy. Despite the fact that some contemporary research has failed to determine any significant correlation between emotional intelligence assessment scores and business results (Grant, 2014), it cannot be underestimated that emotional intelligence as one component of leadership strategy does have its place in the overall scheme.
IV. Possessing a Long-Term Orientation

The fourth strategy considers the leader’s long-term orientation regarding strategic planning, corporate decision-making, and organizational investment. With this strategy, a long-term orientation refers to the leader’s long-term priorities and goals in combination with the organizational investment that the leader is willing to put forward. It is often the case that many types of organizational investment require a good deal of patience prior to the realization of any noticeable positive impact. In real world practice, a leadership approach oriented for the long term may mean that performance could suffer in the short term as the organization invests for the future or undertakes initiatives with significant up-front costs in terms of personnel and/or financial resources.

In an article published twenty years ago in the *Academy of Management Review*, author K. J. Laverty (1998) examined the importance of a longer-term orientation for management decisions. As described in the article, going with a course of action that is most desirable over a longer time period may not necessarily represent the best course of action for immediate success and may appear to be the far riskier approach. However, it is increasingly proven through results, that in order to be a good leader, one must have the experience, knowledge, commitment, patience, and skill set to negotiate and work with others in achieving more sustainable organizational goals. As Laverty defends in her article, leadership with a long-term orientation can be developed through an on-going process of self-study, education, training, but is most significantly achieved through the accumulation of experience (Laverty, 1998). As leaders gain experience they often learn, even if through hard knocks, that decision-making geared for more sustainable organizational success requires a longer time horizon.

Additionally, research has shown that CEOs with longer time horizons in relation to their own careers are more inclined to make longer term strategic investments for their respective organizations than CEOs with shorter term career horizons. It is unfortunate when leaders are so focused on their own short-term career success that the limited time horizon approach can also impact their organization. Some CEOs are hesitant to take on longer term strategies as they feel that they may not fully reap the rewards during their own leadership tenure (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2006). Leaders focused on their own short-term success may well avoid more significant organizational investments that would be better for the firm over time. Essentially, researchers have found that when a leader’s own time preferences are misaligned with those of the firm’s other stakeholders, these “time-based agency problems occur” (Le Breton-Miller & Miller, 2006).

Perhaps the final argument concerning the long-term orientation can, in fact, be summed up by Apple’s successor CEO. When Tim Cook, successor to founder Steve Jobs, presented his Stanford University commencement speech in May of 2019, he told the graduates that they should, more than anything else, “be a builder.” “Great founders,” Cook explained, “spend most of their time building piece by piece and believing their life’s work is bigger than them and will span generations. In a way, that’s the whole point” (Cook, 2019). This quote sums up very nicely the importance of that long-term orientation.

V. Casting a Strategic Vision

The fifth strategy focuses on the leader’s ability to cast a strategic vision. The ability to cast a strategic vision includes the capacity to look out to the longer-term potential and
possibilities of the organization and the willingness to address a much broader view of the organization. A truly strategic leader is able to define a distinctive and unique vision for the organization with an appreciation for the firm’s current and future competition and with an understanding of the current and future economic environment. Leaders with a pervasive and expansive strategic vision need to have a broad knowledge and understanding of business and the comprehensive economic environment and not simply focus on the narrow skills required for their organizational specialty. Their inner perpectivity and overall knowledge base enable the strategic visionary to make effective and well considered use of their power in helping the organization move toward achieving desirable, but realistic, future outcomes.

A major leadership decision based on this long-term visioning process also requires the potentiality for trade-offs with other possibilities. Michael Porter, Harvard business professor and creator of the five forces model of competitive strategy, describes this inevitability by stating that: “The essence of strategy is choosing what not to do” (Porter, 1998). With any long-term strategy, there are many difficult choices to be made in determining the most viable path for the organization. A leader must weigh and consider a multitude of opportunity costs prior to the final decision on the firm’s direction. This often can require short term sacrifices in order to put the company on a path toward greater and more sustainable future results.

Previous leadership research has examined some key elements of a firm’s strategic vision determining that such vision is most often presented in a top-downward model (Elenkov, Judge, & Wright, 2005). Therefore, this means that for most organizations, the leader is the primary source for casting that organizational vision. For a leader to effectively identify and communicate the overall direction of the organization is vital for the organization’s long-term sustainability. A visionary leader is a leader who is able to create and communicate a “realistic, credible, and attractive” vision of the firm’s overall goals and in line with firm's underlying mission (Elenkov, Judge, & Wright, 2005). In part contrived through the leader’s intuitive perception combined with a strategic analysis of the particular environment, the organizational vision is the first step in developing a long-term road map toward organizational efficacy. As the resulting vision is disseminated throughout the organization, it can then be translated into challenging and meaningful goals, connecting the overall big picture to more specific tactics and short-term processes.

A number of the other strategies previously mentioned in this article can also impact a leader’s effectiveness for strategic visioning. Not only does effective strategic visioning require a long-term orientation most obviously, emotional intelligence, in addition, helps a leader to understand their moods and emotions, as well as their impact on others within the organization. A leader’s own strength of self-awareness can help clear the environmental fog which can often get in the way of the visioning process. Strategic leaders are not impulsive but are more discerning before they act. They must have the potential to control any potentially distracting moods and desires within themselves or help mitigate such distracting moods within the organization. In a 2012 study, researchers examined the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in family business leaders and the results demonstrated how EI “can help lead to a shared vision throughout the organization and result in a significant increase in overall financial success of the business” (Boyatzis & Soler, 2012).
Of course, casting a strategic vision and developing the resulting strategic plan is not enough. The vision has to be communicated throughout the organization and, ultimately, has to be implemented. As one of the pioneers of the contemporary field of leadership studies, Warren Bennis, once explained, “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality” (Kruse, 2013). Strong visionary leadership requires communication skills that are articulate enough to effectively communicate the vision throughout the organization. Strategic leaders constantly convey their vision until it is melded into the organizational culture. Implementation is not likely to be successful unless the vision becomes a vital component of corporate culture. The implementation of the vision also demands a leader’s readiness to delegate activities and responsibilities. Effective visionary leaders have to be proficient at delegation, recognizing the fact that authorizing subordinates to make decisions is a very motivational tactic in having the vision take hold.

VI. Developing a Strong Corporate Culture

The sixth strategy represents the importance of the leader’s role in helping to develop a strong corporate culture. While a leader’s strategic vision is necessary to provide clarity and focus to an organization in establishing the organization’s direction, it is the development of the organizational culture that can embed values, beliefs, and mindsets for the organization to build upon well into the future. In an article published in the Harvard Business Review in 2018 entitled “The Leader’s Guide to Corporate Culture,” the authors describe the importance of organizational culture and the relationship to strategy. They explain that since culture often implies the organization’s informal social order and can shape overall attitudes and behaviors within the organization, it is a vital part of a firm’s implementation of strategy. As they state: “When properly aligned with personal values, drives, and needs, culture can unleash tremendous amounts of energy toward a shared purpose and foster an organization’s capacity to thrive” (Groysberg, B., Lee J., Price, J., & Yo-Jud Cheng, J., 2018). The article goes on to describe the role of the leader in developing this organizational culture by explaining that “the best leaders we have observed are fully aware of the multiple cultures within which they are embedded, can sense when change is required, and can deftly influence the process” (Groysberg, B., Lee J., Price, J. & Yo-Jud Cheng, J., 2018). Of course, the interesting caveat to this premise is that while a strong corporate culture is a vital ingredient to help the firm achieve its short term and long-term goals, success, by itself, does not necessarily develop a strong corporate culture (Dizik, 2016).

Contemporary studies have shown that a strong corporate culture can ultimately lead to organizational success due the benefits provided to organizational loyalty and employee satisfaction measures (Dizik, 2016). As these studies demonstrate, organizational culture has a direct relationship to organizational turnover, and this turnover, in turn, can impact an organization’s efficiency and productivity (Siu, 2014). In a 2013 Columbia University master’s thesis, the study found that turnover at an organization with a strong corporate culture is relatively low at 13.9 percent, whereas the job turnover in organization’s with weak corporate cultures is significantly higher at 48.4 percent (Medina, 2013). This is quite important for organizational sustainability since “job satisfaction is inversely related to turnover intention and low turnover has been shown to increase organizational productivity and performance” (Medina, 2013).

In addition to the contribution made to job satisfaction and productivity measures, having a great company culture can also encourage innovation and creativity. As at least one author
explains, these “solutions, inventions or innovations that might not have come to light in a more oppressive environment” (Siu, 2014). Most certainly, as employees feel valued, appreciated and respected, they are likely to be engaged with the overall mission of the firm and enabled to discover creative and innovative opportunities through that organizational loyalty. This impact seems to be an international one. In a 2009 study published in the *Journal of Marketing*, researchers examined the impact of organizational culture and innovation from a global perspective finding that “innovative firms, it would seem, are similar: They share the same cultural practices and attitudes despite differences in location” (Tellis et al., 2009).

For further evidence of the important link, leadership researchers John Kotter and James Heskett, examined corporate culture in large effective companies and found that over an 11-year period, companies with healthy cultures had a 682% average increase in sales versus 166% for comparable companies without such healthy cultures. The Kotter-Heskett study also discovered that these companies with healthy cultures saw stock increases of 901% versus 74% for comparable companies (Warrick, 2017). In recent years, additional studies have followed the Kotter-Heskett study demonstrating that, to a very large degree, healthy cultures are the direct result of effective leadership and management whereas unhealthy cultures are the result of ineffective leadership and management (Warrick, 2017).

**VII. Emphasizing Ethical Decision-Making**

The seventh and final strategy involves the leader’s direct input and indirect influence in emphasizing ethics throughout the corporate decision-making process and decision implementation. An indelible leader is one who practices ethical decision-making in both personal and corporate decisions and, through this consistent ethical decision-making, ensures that the organization remains on solid financial, operational, and reputational footing going forward. While modeling ethical decision-making for an organization has always been an important aspect of leader engagement, the emphasis on ethical decision making within the corporate world continues to be challenged. As witnessed over recent decades, there are far too many news items related to leader misconduct and unethical decision making which most often have significant negative impacts on the organization, in terms of finances, performance, and reputation. This is unfortunate as studies have indicated that very often it is the organization’s leader who establishes the standard for ethical decision making at lower levels of the organization (Wang, D. ed., Feng, T., & Lawton, A., 2017).

One such negative example in the modern context involves a formerly well-respected CEO of one of the world’s largest automobile manufacturers. On November 19, 2018, former Nissan CEO, and, at the time, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Carlos Ghosn (he had stepped down as CEO on April 1, 2017 while remaining Chairman of the Board of Directors) was arrested on charges relating to what sources called “significant financial misconduct” (Mullen & Shane, 2018). Immediately upon his arrest, the value of Nissan stock dropped more than 6% and the ongoing strategic alliance between Nissan and Renault was put in jeopardy. The charges filed indicated that Ghosn had underreported his income by millions of dollars and had used corporate money to fund portions of his lifestyle. While at the time of this article, the issue is still yet to be completely resolved, there have been major negative impacts to Ghosn personally and to the company that continue to be revealed.
Prior to this arrest, Ghosn had been known as a very successful and innovative leader within the automotive industry having previously served as CEO of Renault where his aggressive restructuring of Renault returned the company to profitability in the late 1990s. While it remains to be seen how this current litigation will resolve, his leadership reputation is certain to be tarnished and both the immediate and longer-term fortunes of Nissan threatened as well. In June 2019, the Renault Board of Directors began proceedings to attempt recovery of over $12 million dollars in unauthorized expenses that Ghosn had collected during the strategic alliance between Renault and Nissan (Reuters, 2019). Even though the long-term financial, operational, and reputational impact on Nissan is unknown, the proposed merger between the former strategic alliance partner, Renault, and Nissan global competitor, Fiat-Chrysler, certainly added insult to injury. In addition, following the company’s dismal 2019 3rd quarter earnings report, the company announced that it would be cutting 12,500 jobs globally and that there could be further significant changes in its executive leadership ranks, including with Ghosn’s replacement, Hiroto Saikawa (Dooley, 2019). This is just one recent example of the significant negative impacts that questionable leader behavior can inflict upon an organization that continues well after the leader’s departure.

In comparison to many negative examples, there are some relatively unknown examples of ethical leadership with one being Dan Amos, Chairman and CEO of Aflac, 13-time recipient of Ethisphere’s World’s Most Ethical Companies award. As Ethisphere CEO Timothy Erblich described when awarding the unprecedented 13th recognition to the company: “Companies like Aflac recognized long before acronyms like CSR and ESG became mainstream that operating your business under the premise of doing the right thing is not only purposeful; it demonstrates a certain business savvy” (AFLAC, 2019). Dan Amos has clearly been an integral part of helping to build that corporate reputation. In an interview published in Forbes in 2017, Amos describes ethics as a “mindset not an option.” He went on to explain that in the midst of a skeptical consumer culture, consumers respond much more favorably to those organizations operating with an ethical emphasis. Amos feels that the path to achieving this high reputational standard must begin at the top and that “building a culture of ethics will not work if leaders are not providing the moral compass” (Reiss, 2017).

**Conclusion**

Certainly, one of the major concerns within contemporary leadership examples consists in the myopic view many leaders and followers have regarding leadership success. In the modern context, there are countless firms engaging in some variation of myopic management simply to drive short-term results (Srinivasan & Ramani, 2019). To counter this myopic view, a different approach to leadership is proposed. Each one of these seven leadership strategies deals with the long-term viability of a leader and their organization and implementing each of these strategies often represents the more difficult choice. Very often it is easier to be homogenous rather than diverse, remaining stuck in the status quo rather than tackling organizational change, being emotionally reactionary rather than emotionally regulating, being short-term oriented rather than long-term oriented, remaining simplistically myopic rather than pushing forward a strategic vision, leaving the development of organizational culture to chance rather than helping to shape that organizational culture, or making unethical choices versus making the ethical ones. However, in examining leadership
history, the more difficult, and initially challenging decisions, can result in greater long-term organizational efficacy.

Unfortunately, many leaders are hesitant to make those tough decisions due to the immediate nature of the modern context. Followers, stakeholders, and investors are so focused on the quicker response that they are willing to sacrifice the long term. However, by focusing on these seven strategies, leaders may just be able to overlook the immediate gratification and think of success in years rather than months. In leadership, the ultimate legacy left behind is more important than we often realize and a new understanding of that importance is vital for the future success of our organizations.

While most leaders should first want to avoid leaving a negative legacy, the truth is that many leaders do not leave a legacy at all, either positive or negative. These leaders are easily forgotten and their organizational achievements are changed or altered beyond recognition and usually fairly quickly after their departure. However, some leaders are able to leave positive legacies that can live on for decades with subsequent leaders able to build upon that solid foundation. This theoretical examination of a new leadership behavioral construct can help leaders, regardless of particular leadership styles, implement specific strategies which can lead to long-term organizational viability and create a lasting leadership legacy.

For leaders to truly leave their mark long after their leadership tenure requires sufficient planning and forethought, and through being proactive in these seven areas, leaders can set a solid foundation on which to build. In the grand scheme of things, leaders are simply caretakers of the organizations to which they are entrusted. In the long run, leadership effectiveness is better determined by long term organizational sustainability and an “indelible” leader is one who is able to bring about a greater sense of permanency to organizational achievement and to help ensure that success can continue long after their leadership tenure is over.

References


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Understanding that there will arrive a time when workers return to their respective places of employment, it is imperative to be ready to review and if necessary, restructure and implement certain work policies that detract from social equities. For instance, flexible work arrangements (FWA) might be one way to improve the work environment, especially as they have increased in popularity in the past two decades. While FWA may represent a means to enable workers to manage their work and life commitments, it is important to note that they may also complicate prioritization of the organizational value proposition. Further, having an FWA program and effectively supporting it are not synonymous – and this bears impact on employees. This research highlights opportunities and implications for FWA management based on findings from a recent New England healthcare organization case study which illustrates how working mothers experience enacted flexible work arrangement policies. This article identifies methods for organizations and managers to improve the experience of workers who wish to or need to use FWA.

Introduction
Beyond the positive optics for staying current with workplace trends, there are many business drivers for creating and managing effective Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) programs. Broader in scope than short-notice or unplanned remote working systems which emerged as the new norm in times of the COVID-19 response, understanding FWA as a structured approach to work absolutely has relevance in our evolving workplace. Effective management of FWA facilitates on-the-job benefits such as reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and heightened job satisfaction (e.g., Putnam, Myers, & Gailliard, 2014; Shockley & Allen 2012). It has been well documented that to accomplish these desirable effects, providing FWA policies and procedures is not enough. Further, a lack of planning or clarity of leadership responsibilities also has potential to bear impact. For workers to feel engaged when working remotely, they need to perceive that their leaders support FWA.
policies and those that use them in a way that is consistent with the values of the organization they came to work for (Eaton, 2003; Eek & Axmon, 2013; Ladge & Greenberg, 2015).

The Value of Flexible Work
While workforce demographics are changing, there is evidence that flexible work arrangements continue to be valued by employees (e.g., Bailyn, 2006; Eek & Axmon, 2013). Employees find that FWA programs help them to both cope with work challenges and overcome the stressors generated by work-family conflict (Konrad & Yang, 2012). Upping the ante, there is an additional stakeholder in this discussion. The Department of Labor has stated that over 74 million women, nearly 47% of the United States civilian total working population (DeWolf, 2017, para 2), are in the American workforce. By its estimates, 70% of mothers with children under eighteen are working, 75% of whom are working full time (para 3). Meanwhile, employers in the United States are under no legal obligation to provide flexible work arrangements and general failure to support women in the workplace is predicted to impose serious costs to the U.S. economy over the next few decades (Adema, Clarke, & Frey, 2016).

Recognizing the role working mothers play in the labor market, it seems clear that those employers seeking to attract and retain members of this talent pool need to create a positive working experience which entails both organizational structure and leadership support of FWA. Working mothers are particularly vulnerable to the determination of how they measure up to organizational expectations (Ladge & Greenberg, 2015). When individuals perceive cultural support for maternal employment and work-life management, this may translate to a greater sense of institutional FWA support (Baird et al., 2012). On the other hand, if they do not feel supported or feel using FWA will come with negative effects on potential career growth, they may avoid FWA (Daverth, Hyde, & Caseell, 2016; Greenberg & Landry, 2011). Understanding what FWA benefits are afforded to employees is only the beginning – how leaders manage those using them and what this feels like tells the full story of how leaders enact the values of the organization.

So, the issue becomes: how do working mothers experience enacted flexible work arrangement policies? This was the question that shaped a case study at Acceber Health Group (pseudonym), a New England health care provider. At AHG, the Customer Care department launched a formal teleworking arrangement for a designated group of employees. This study discovered the impacts of organizational and leadership enactment of formal FWA programs.

The X-Factor: Enacted Support
Although more and more employers are implementing formal FWA structures and policies, management is not always consistent in their promotion or support (Konrad & Yang, 2012). Despite the fact that organizations tout these programs to become employers of choice (Kelliher & Anderson, 2008; Peters, den Dulk, & de Ruijter, 2010), employees still fear being stigmatized and worry that they will not be given comparable promotion or pay opportunities if they are used (denDulk & de Ruijter, 2008; Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010; Matos & Gallinsky, 2011).
For job seekers who prioritize flex work, basic web searches for the “best companies to work for with FWA” generate lists of companies that advertise having have these policies in place. Simply having FWA programs may signal that the employer is doing their part in the FWA movement, however intentions do not always match with experienced impact. What it feels like to be an employee using FWA is not as readily available to perspective employees, and even then, determining what makes a “best” scenario is relative.

Some of the obstacles employers and employees report include managers’ implicit biases towards employees who use these policies, which in turn affects if and how employees use them (Smith, Gilmer, & Stockdale, 2019). While these biases are difficult to eradicate, it has also been found that, despite the benefits that are well documented and understood, managers fear introducing even formally structured FWA programs due to what they consider ambiguous results (Cegarra-Leiva, Sanchez-Vidal, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012). Thus, their observed and experienced behaviors when managing flexible work policies can generate confusion among those they supervise as well as one another.

We humans pick up on the stimuli that bears meaning to us. When it comes to evaluating if a company really wants us to use the FWA programs they set up, we look for more than a mention in the company handbook. Using cues like facial expressions when leaders discuss flex work opportunities, employees socially construct the reality they are experiencing. Those who hope to see an organization that is supportive of FWA may bracket (Weick, 1979) their experiences to either see or not see behaviors that reinforce their interests. In other words, individuals create an enacted environment (Weick, 1979) around the reinforcement of their perceptions. Further, reading social cues they pick up from coworkers, employees go through a process of interpersonal sensemaking (Wrzesniewski, Dutton, & Debebe, 2003) which impacts all matters of business and their engagement therein. They sense if using FWA is really supported by the organization via their observations and experiences interacting with and among company leaders. So, for remote workers, what and how the organization does to enact formal policies may be scrutinized with a good chance of misinterpretation. When someone is working remotely and can only take literal cues from written emails or verbal cues like tone of voice over phone conversations, much is left to individual sense-making and rationale.

Put another way, simply adopting FWA to compete for valuable hires is not enough. Those companies that want their employees to believe they can and should use flex options may feel that asking managers to promote them is sufficient. However, to truly create a working experience that integrates the work-family experience and encourages FWA use, managerial support is critical (Daverth et al., 2016; Hammer et al., 2009; Kossek et al., 2011; Ollier-Malaterre, 2010). Furthermore, employees must believe the support is genuine and real. To create a reality where it will thrive and have impactful positive effects, FWA therefore must not only be formally endorsed when people are known to be watching, but enacted even when people are not.

A Case of Enactment: Acceber Health Group
To gain insight into how organizational leadership support impacts the working mother experience, a multiple embedded case study focused on two Customer Care Hubs of Acceber Health Group (AHG). AHG was founded over forty years ago and is currently the region’s largest provider of medical and diagnostic imaging services, offering imaging
modalities including MRI, PET/CT, CT, and Radiation Oncology. AHG’s Customer Care employees are empowered to facilitate all patient transactions including scheduling, insurance verifications, and billing. Customer Care employees have direct dialogue with patients via virtual interface, starting with establishing first impressions and addressing concerns of incoming patients.

**Background on the Case**

In 2011, AHG reorganized some functional work-flows as part of a Six Sigma initiative enabling customers to interface with one representative for all care and billing coordination. Hub offices were created, through which Customer Care employees were empowered to provide comprehensive customer service to patients from scheduling to insurance verification and billing. On a trial and informal basis, eight employees were offered the opportunity to become Home (Customer Care) Agents. There was not a formal policy or agreement as it was a trial endeavor.

AHG formally rolled out its Teleworking policy in 2015 in response to several trends. Concurrent with implementing the successful home agency policy, AHG realized that its physical space would be insufficient to house a growing staff. Also, as a New England employer, the company observed there was little loss of time and productivity for teleworkers when there was inclement weather. Home Agents were able to take calls and reschedule appointments for patients (and/or health providers) who could not safely get to imaging facilities or appointments. Thus, the wins telecommuting provided paved the way for greater interest and adaptation across the company.

Today, there are over eighty Customer Care employees that work in two locations, Hub A and Hub B, and who report in to six unique supervisors. Although a formal, company-wide teleworking policy has been implemented for the entire company, granting Home Agent status remains at the discretion of supervisors. This study focused on the teams of two managers; for simplicity of reporting these will be referred to as Manager A and Manager B, to also represent that they report to the two different physical office locations.

With the Teleworking policy in place, AHG formally espouses FWA structure. Beyond that, however, much is up to leadership enactment; the policy states that “each department will make its own selections” on who will be given the opportunity to participate. For example, full or part time formal telecommuting work agreements do not have standard eligibility requirements. The only written guideline requires that employees be selected based on the availability of the job, their performance history, and the support of the supervisor.

There is no training on nor formally established standards for managing Home Agents. While reporting functions can provide some analytics on performance, this is not used consistently across the locations. Along these lines, it is also not explicitly written that AHG employees need to report into an office to be eligible for promotion, however some managers believe that employees need to report into the office if they desire promotion. These differences bear potential impact to the mothers working in the Customer Care groups, and beyond.

**Data Collection**

Data for this research employed a multiple-embedded case study approach that studied supervisor/employee pairings in two AHG Customer Care Hubs. For the sake of anonymity and assured interview confidentiality, individual profiles were grouped: in both hubs studied, all interviewed agents were working mothers with at least one dependent child at home.
under eighteen years old. The minority of the mothers were Customer Care Specialists, which is a higher company rank than the other Customer Care Representatives. All of those interviewed work full time, and their AHG tenure ranges from four months to sixteen years.

This research also had access to company documents including the employee handbook, organizational charts, benefits guide, new employee orientation materials, standards and practices, and turnover data. Electronic correspondence from the Chief Human Resources Officer and the Human Resources Specialist was also analyzed. Thorough review of these documents in accordance with the applied coding protocol designed for this study yielded evidence that illustrates how AHG formally structures and supports FWA and family supportive supervisory behaviors.

**Findings**

Enacting formal structure may present in an array of possible behaviors and consequent interpretations. Leaders can demonstrate the value they place on and create a sense of work-life support via their willingness to openly communicate flexible work policies or encouraging employees to use them (Putnam et al., 2014). Moreover, when leaders demonstrate emotional support showing employees they are genuinely cared for and that they, themselves, integrate family responsibilities in their day to day self-conduct, they are enacting Family Supportive Supervisory Behaviors (FSSB) (Hammer et al., 2009).

At Acceber Health Group, the managers interviewed at both Hub A and Hub B personally believe they are supportive of FWA, and both state that they intentionally work to demonstrate this to their direct reports. Findings demonstrate that their direct reports agree: at the two sites studied, there is no hesitation to ask for flexible work because FWA is formally structured, and the enacted behaviors of both supervisors are perceived to be supportive of family management needs. Overall, the interviewed working mothers feel supported to telecommute and use other FWA options to be available when their families need them.

Company cultures that are perceived as family supportive are proven to drive employee retention (Hill, Matthews, & Walsh, 2016; Morganson, Major, & Litano, 2016). FSSB has also been shown to play a role in increased job satisfaction that, in turn, lowers turnover intentions (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010; Hammer et al., 2009; Ollier-Malaterre, 2010). The satisfaction and turnover intentions of working mothers at AHG is consistent with the literature: they are satisfied and plan to stay.

Where findings from the two sites differed stem from specific methods of enacted behaviors between the two supervisors. The Customer Care employees working at Hub A, both home agents and in the office, have performance metrics published each week whereas Hub B does not. Despite the fact that Manager A is known to seek confirmation of daily activity and productivity, employees in her span of control exhibited less anxiety about their performance than those at Hub B, where home agents report they often aim to exceed stated expectations to demonstrate that the investment and trust that AHG has placed upon them is warranted.

Those at Hub A also expressed comfort in allocating their time and efforts. Because they can see that their overall performance is meeting expectations against performance metrics, Hub A’s Customer Care employees are more comfortable taking the time refine their approach to their work. For example, they do not hesitate to consult peers (both in the office
and fellow home agents) when they are working on complex cases. The sentiment is that their work is documented and their results are on the board, so if they are delivering results, they can manage their time in between customer calls.

At Hub B, with no formal reporting or set frequency for evaluation beyond annual reviews, there is not an understanding if individual performance measures up to expectations. One interview participant even expressed sentiments of feeling isolated without the ability to understand how her performance measured up against others in her team, her role, or her department. This emotion was compounded by the perceived inability to reach out to peers for help because she did not want to be seen as non-productive by spending time on internal phone calls. Although she reported an appreciation for [Manager B’s] laissez-faire approach to getting work done, the lack of routine or predictable measurement analytics had emotional effects including waning loyalty towards the organization. The lack of structured performance expectations and/or policy at site B does not enable workers to feel confident in their performance and may become a more prominent distraction with performance implications.

Walking the Talk: Values-Based Leadership Implications
Employers can curate the perception that they value their employees’ abilities to manage work and family roles (Kossek et al., 2010). Leaders can create a sense of work-life support via their enactment of FWA policies such as their willingness to openly communicate flexible work policies and encouraging employees to use them (Putnam et al., 2014). What they choose to do and how they behave has the potential to affect perceptions among their team, and others in the organization. While enactment is a personal operating mode, and the focus of this study is flexibility, it is ironic that organizations can best demonstrate the value of FWA via structuring its support.

Recommendation #1:
**Establish formal FWA policies to create managerial opportunities for enactment.**
Having a formal structure to flexible work policies provides a common, shared framework and value proposition baseline for all employees. Employees at AHG have online access to the employee handbook for any inquiries of company policies and their parameters should they have questions or concerns about eligibility, elements of policies, or implications for their use. Likewise, managers have the same access to these policies and can refer to them at any time in the course of their regular supervisory activities.

Both as a practical impossibility and in an effort to empower those working at an organization, Human Resources policies do not indicate every possible opportunity when FWA may be appropriate. Nor does it explore every possible track for flex-work management. Leaving room for discretion which both employees and managers have to operationalize (and enact) how policies work, formal program structure serves as a common baseline to ensure leadership compliance. How employees experience these policies is the result of how they fit into the culture of each organizational sub-unit or work team.

Regardless of the formally structured policies an organization espouses, adhering to policy is only one aspect of FWA management. At AHG, the formal telecommuting policy orients both managers and employees to the basic parameters involved therein, however leaders are given the discretionary option to enact how these policies fit into the larger organizational operations. One AHG Manager, for example, has imposed her own 40% cap on the total
amount of direct reports she allows to work remotely. (There is no limit like this required or even suggested by AHG policy or by anyone in Human Resources). Many employees described the ability to “make up work” later in the day or during the same week if they had to take unplanned time off. Thus, leaders are individually enacting FWA and creating the environment in which they lead.

As a first step to fostering a positive FWA experience, Human Resources practitioners should be encouraged to clearly articulate aspects of formal FWA policies that are fixed as well as those which managers have discretion to implement. Clarity of some elements (e.g., percentage of a job-family population that may participate in tele-working at any given time or the application process is to work remotely) may facilitate smoother operations at the organizational, managerial, and individual contributor level. In terms of discretionary aspects, soft boundaries that can be altered to accommodate certain workflows or cultures should also be defined to offer maximum transparency of where the organizational expectations are firm. The more clearly structured policies are to all employees, the greater chances they will be enacted as intended and in alignment with organizational values.

**Recommendation #2:**

*Clarify expectations, then manage to them.*

AHG’s teleworking policy offers a structure for some elements of its administration. However, many details are left to managers’ discretion, including how these policies fit into the larger organizational operations. Employees want make meaning out of their surroundings (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002), and they are continuously exposed to signals indicating others’ appraisals of their worth in terms of personal contributions and the roles they fulfil (Wrzesniewski et al, 2003). However, when signals are not clear they cannot do this easily. Consistent with the literature, working mothers at AHG, who do not have a clear understanding of what they are expected to do, are displaying some signs of anxiousness and confusion when it comes to performance management.

Customer Care employees at AHG were frustrated because some aspects of the FWA policies and practices are still unclear. While it is unlikely that every scenario for eligibility can be covered in one policy, certain opportunities that stand out. For example, there is no clear understanding about who is selected to work from home (if it is based on tenure, shift, performance, or a combination therein). There also is not a clear process on how to apply for a remote worker role, or even the overall process for placement in formal teleworking positions. There is therefore an opportunity to refine and/or standardize eligibility for some jobs or job families to improve organizational clarity and FWA support.

Among the Customer Care teams, the frequency of reporting is another example of how performance management differs by site. At Hub A, all customer care agents, both home agents and those in the office, have their performance metrics published each week. At Hub B, there are no regularly published or discussed performance metrics. At Hub A employees experienced less anxiety about their performance than those at Hub B. Interestingly, Hub B home agents also reported that they often aim to exceed expectations to demonstrate that the investment in and trust that AHG has placed upon them is warranted. Knowing what is expected and what will be done with their performance data
settles work anxieties and normalizes the work experience for home agents as well as their office counterparts. No one in this study feels exploited or as if they need to supplement work capabilities beyond reason to assist those who are working remotely. This, in turn, enables a clear focus on the work at hand.

Clarity of performance expectations and transparency in the communication of results enables employees and managers to share a common baseline. Empowering managers to use their discretion is not to be discouraged, however establishing virtual guard rails for FWA program management promotes better chances of “success.” Establishing FWA eligibility criteria, a recruiting or transition process, and subsequent performance thresholds and management checkpoints, for example, may assuage confusion and ensure energy remains directed at the work at hand.

Perhaps the most impactful element of this process will be how managers enact expectations. To assist in this, structured parameters will be consistent and clear points for leaders to base their behaviors against. Knowing what is expected in the quantity and or quality of performance calibrates leaders’ expectations and, from there, organizationally endorsed rewards and consequences may also be established and allocated. Managing in alignment to these guidelines will assist in the interpersonal sensemaking cues that the company is truly committed to FWA.

Recommendation #3:
**Narrow the interpretation process: Train managers.**
As discussed earlier, employees who value FWA watch for cues of organizational and leadership support. They may observe enacted actions or reactions around policy elements, those using FWA, or those who manage them. The extent to which leaders have the flexibility to improvise versus align to company expectations is first codified in policy, then reinforced through training.

As stated above, managers at AHG may selectively apply elements of the Teleworking written policy while taking liberties where discretion is enabled. For example, current managers selectively discuss home agency possibilities during job interviews and/or mention remote working opportunities when they become available. Thus, AHG managers are thereby enacting the environment they lead and the values they hold.

The leaders of AHG Hubs A and B openly and actively show their FWA support on a regular basis. Through their willingness to grant home agency, to enable flex-time to make up unplanned time off requests, and their own use of FWA to manage family responsibilities, managers at Hubs A and B may be seen as “competence multipliers” (Weick, 1979) in their enactment of these policies. In other words, because they themselves willingly manage and personally take advantage of the FWA programs, these managers have built and maintained cultures that accept and promote flexible work where more people are likely to do the same around them. These happenings have been fortunate thus far since this support was never formally trained.

Formally developed and implemented training about managing FWA narrows the opportunities for leaders to create their own interpretations or impose their own value sets

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which may have adverse impacts on the workforce (Allen, 2001). AHG does not currently offer a training in this area, however a program is in development. While not negating the ability for departments to customize some aspects of policy implementation, training may include methods and behaviors for managing FWA and/or a remote workforce in aggregate. This opportunity also simplifies the unknowns and variables involved in the management of FWA, lessening the risk of negative interpretations or enactments.

Focusing on the daily management of FWA, employees benefit from fair standards and managed accountabilities. Deemed effective at Hub A, all employees on a team (office and remote workers) can be evaluated against the same metrics and have the same expectations for how performance reporting is communicated to them. Although performance management was not found to be an issue, adherence to rigorous standards as well as a predictable routine measurement against metrics was found to be beneficial.

Helping managers understand the importance of these elements of management as well as holding employees accountable for reaching results or coaching them to correct behaviors can be trained. How FWA programs are administered (including if and when FWA may be considered) should also be standardized to promote more routine enactment. To establish a culture where all team members feel included and know where they stand, supporting this type of fair management training can contribute to successful FWA experience for working mothers.

Recommendation #4: 
*Ask and then react.*

An annual employee engagement survey is a formal means by which Human Resources may ask all employees about their ability to manage work and life. Adding new data to the HR departments’ understanding of employee values and needs provides opportunities to further refine the tools management can employ to manage FWA and work-life management. The extent to which an organization is proactive in learning employee needs and possible additional accommodations is also an element that impacts worker engagement (Nohe, Michel, & Sonntag, 2014).

At AHG, while many employees recalled being asked for work-life management ideas in their annual survey, none had any notion of what is done with the data generated. There was slight confusion about what the company does with this data, and some sentiments of worry that because the company is asking about this, they are thinking about changing the Teleworking program. Employees shared the belief that if there are new FWA ideas, AHG is not sharing them or working to make any new accommodations. They also worry that changes may be made to what is already liked, otherwise why else would they be asked about these topics? There is a clear opportunity to adjust either the questions asked, the reporting of the survey results to explain themes of what has been heard and what the company intends to do in response, or both.

Through communication, employers have the opportunity to curate the perception that they care about their employees and their abilities to manage their work (Kossek et al., 2010). When employees are asked or formally surveyed for their input towards enhancing or refining FWA offerings, it is recommended that the organization communicates its responses
in a timely manner. This may take the form of assembled themes, action items that will be pursued, or explanations on why action will not be taken. Whatever the chosen option, having data and not appearing to use it causes some confusion among the employees who are sensitive to any changes in FWA and how company questions may therefore impact their (potential) use.

Summary
Espoused value sets inform organizational programs and policies. If work-life management is prioritized by an organization, leaders can create a sense of support via their enactment of FWA policies. Whether they are willing to openly communicate flexible work policies or encourage employees to use them, what leaders choose to do and how they behave has the potential to affect perceptions among their team and others in the organization. Those employees who want or need flexibility at work may therefore evaluate all leader actions as either supportive or not-supportive of FWA.

For an organization to demonstrate what it values, its leaders need to walk the talk. Company cultures that are perceived as family supportive are the result of leadership behaviors observed both publicly and directly between managers and employees. Family supportive cultures have been proven to drive employee retention (Hill, Matthews, & Walsh, 2016; Morganson, Major, & Litano, 2016), and much of this perception stems from leadership behaviors (McCarthy et al., 2013, Morganson, Major, & Litano, 2016). This was true at AHG, all employees interviewed articulated that the support of their supervisors for FWA has significant impact on them: they are satisfied and plan to stay.

When it comes to enacting FWA, the twist was in the guide-rails. While in some cases, a hands-off approach for management may seem desirable, for AHG it caused more apprehension and anxiousness for workers using FWA. Leaders who aligned their actions to structured routines positively impacted their direct reports work engagement as well as their ability to respond to family needs.

Author's Note: Post Script in the COVID Era
This case study and accompanying analysis was conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Early March, 2020, became a defining moment for many working parents as their home’s became office space as well as home-schools, often with little or no preparation. For those whose employers had enabled FWA prior, the transition may have been easier but not likely without hiccups. Programs and policies formally espoused by organizations were often leveraged. However, in many companies, FWA was commonly designated for specific situations and circumstances, not for universal deployment. For employees whose companies had not rolled out any remote-work policies prior to the pandemic, the gap was wider to overcome.

Subsequent research in the role leader and organizational enactment plays on the working mother experience is being carried out presently. Some studies are focusing on
gender norms, including which parent (mother or father) has assumed primary caregiving responsibilities. Others are looking at ideal worker models and the emotional labor required in pandemic times. There are clearly challenges beyond completing the work required by one’s job and family, but few models working mothers can liken these times to for reference.

The issues explored in this case study remain salient for employers of working mothers using FWA. Understanding what is valued by this employee group and responding to these ideas remains a strategy for employers to validate their working mothers, as does laying out clear expectations and managing to them. Meanwhile, supervisors who are suddenly being asked to manage remote employees may not feel comfortable managing performance or handling employee relations issues; however, it is never too late to carry out training on expectations and methodologies. Adopting or adhering to this article’s recommendations remain beneficial whether the organization enables FWA on a temporary basis, or more permanently.

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Leader Influence: A Research Review of French & Raven’s (1959) Power Dynamics

**Abstract**

After reviewing nearly 70 years of research, this manuscript seeks to compile study results to better understand leader influence by employing French and Raven’s (1959) power dynamics. Divided into two categories (i.e. formal and informal), these five power dynamics include referent, expert, legitimate, coercive, and reward power. Each power dynamic is categorized accordingly and dissected between scholarly research and applicable workplace settings between supervisors (i.e. leaders) and employees. Behavioral outcomes from a subordinate standpoint are discussed, and this manuscript concludes that the power dynamic that characterizes different workplace relationships between supervisors and employees has significant effects on work productivity and employee motivation.

**Introduction**

In the late 1950s, John R. P. French and Bertram Raven (1959) analyzed the complexities of power and determined that there were five dynamics (or bases) of power: referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive. They defined power as the primary source in achieving results or compliance from another individual. Since then, power has been explored, dissected, and defined in a number of ways. Vecchio (1997) explained power as having the aptitude to modify one’s behavior, causing a different outcome. Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson (2003) defined power as the ability to alter another’s state by either providing assistance or withholding something of value. Biong, Nygaard, and Silkoset (2010) concluded that power was a strong tool for managers to motivate and manage. Anderson, John, and Keltner (2012) presumed that one’s power is relative to the relationships one has with other individuals in the group. Mysen, Svensson, and Hogevold (2012) concluded that power was difficult to recognize, describe, and verify, and held by those in dominant positions. Randolph and Kemery (2011) studied power in managers and determined that in order for managers to exemplify power, there must be a source for this influence. They concluded that the power bases identified by French and Raven (1959) were these sources of influence and likewise, the source of employees feeling empowered.

In summary, power is the potential influence that one has over another person or group, and generally, the one with the power has control over something the other person (or
group) desires. The common theme of these definitions is that objectives were attained (or behavior was changed) because of an influencing party. In this manuscript, the focus is on French and Raven’s (1959) bases of power (i.e. power dynamics) because the presence of each power dynamic has a significant impact on not only outcomes, but also the method of achieving those outcomes.

**French and Raven’s (1959) Power Dynamics**

Robbins and Judge (2017) defined power as not only the capacity to influence power, but when the influencee acts in accordance with the influencer’s desires. They argued that an individual can hold power, but does not necessarily need to use it (partially or in full capacity). In *Field Theory in Social Science* (1951), Lewin said, “Power among parties is determined by their current states, actions, and possible futures. This implies that power can be exercised, and can influence outcomes, but can also be defined as the potential to influence others” (Pratto et al., 2008, p. 379). The degree to which a supervisor exerts influence, and the exhibited power will affect the employee’s inherent motivation to be successful.

If a supervisor projects an unfavorable influence, the employee is likely to feel intimidated, unappreciated, or any other unwelcomed emotion. Thus, the employee would not be as motivated to be successful due to the current state of the supervisor-employee relationship. On the other hand, if a supervisor exhibits a favorable influence, the employee is likely to feel valued, important, and a contributor to the project’s success. Thus, the employee would be more motivated to be successful because of the supervisor-employee relationship. Note, the examples of both scenarios are based on this single-instance, rather than the prior relationship history.

The five power dynamics (or bases of power) identified by French and Raven (1959) include referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive. Coercive power is the only power base with negative influence. The other four are considered relatively positive by both the influencee and influencer. Additionally, “dynamics” and “bases” of power are interchangeable throughout the manuscript. These five power dynamics have classification into other categories - formal or informal.

**Power Categories: Formal and Informal**

Power is segregated into two categories: formal and informal. Specifically, referent and expert power are categorized as informal power because they exist without any recognized formal authority. This essentially means that an individual can demonstrate either referent or expert power without having any official authority or employees align under him or her in an organizational hierarchy (i.e. no direct managerial span of control). The other three types of power (reward, coercive, and legitimate) considered as formal power because they exist because of holding a formal position of authority (French & Raven, 1959; Randolph & Kemery, 2011). As a result of each of these various power dynamics, one person or group is in the dominant position and another person or group is being influenced or in a submissive role. Another way to break down these power dynamics is to categorize them as coercive and noncoercive (legitimate, reward,
expert, and referent) (Biong et al., 2010). It should be noted that the delivery approach of the influencer affects the receiving party as well as the outcome(s) of the situation. Using different types of power in various situations is instrumental in motivating employees. The behavior of a supervisor is reflected by a number of circumstances including: 1) the current professional relationship with his or her individual employees and team collectively, 2) the attitude and loyalty the employees have towards this supervisor (or organization), 3) the ability to be (and feel) successful, 4) previous outcomes based on similar experiences within the organization, and 5) the supervisor’s motivation to be successful. All of these factors play a vital role for supervisors who define and redefine themselves as leaders as they acquire different types of power, and sometimes the thrill of power drives them to want to acquire more power (Prato et al., 2008).

**Informal Power: Referent and Expert**

Referent and expert powers are the two types of French and Raven’s (1959) power dynamics categorized as informal because neither of these two powers require a formal position of authority. Referent power (sometimes known as personal power) is based on respect and admiration an individual earned from others over time. It is defined as “individuals who are attractive and socially adept – because of charisma, energy, stamina, political smarts, gift of gab, vision, or some other characteristic – are imbued with power independent of other sources” (Bolman & Deal, 2008, p. 203). Another way of looking at this power in today’s American culture is that those with strong reputations like celebrities sell products (p. 203). Consider Oprah Winfrey, who is not an expert on jeans or skin care, for example. Because of her broad likeability and charisma, consumers blindly purchased items she liked because she identified them as one of her favorite products. This is the likability factor, illuminated by those who hold referent power. Vecchio (1997) stated that those with referent power influence others through alluring dispositions (including style, appearance, or through the values they exhibit) and inspire approval, respect, and admiration to want to associate with them. Those who possess this power maintain it for their likeability, admiration, and behavior. In fact, scholars argued that referent power is “the most important managerial tool” (Biong et al., 2010, p. 358).

Moreover, exercising referent power may be a method to obtain legitimate power in a workplace setting, particularly for those holding junior positions in organizations with aspirations of career advancement. These individuals can demonstrate this power to showcase leadership capabilities. For instance, without having any direct reports, a young professional can create a pleasant work environment, treat others with respect, provide high quality output, and share knowledge willingly. He or she can be a valuable go-to resource and gain the respect and admiration through work ethic, behavior, and likeability. Because of all of these favorable characteristics, this person has the potential for a leadership position consideration. However, both sides of reward power should be considered. There is potential caution for those promoted because they hold referent power. They may be likable, but they could lack integrity or the necessary skills to be
successful; thus, using their respective referent power to alienate others, cause harm or gain an unfair advantage.

From a research standpoint, Elangovan and Xie (1999) concluded that a positive correlation existed between supervisors demonstrating referent power and subordinates who maintained an internal locus of control and that referent power positively related to work effort. However, the referent power of a supervisor was associated with higher stress levels when paired with an employee with an internal locus of control.

Expert power, the second form of power categorized as informal, is based on an individual’s advanced knowledge about a project, a given field or some other specialty, based on education and/or experience, and is not dependent on any formal position in an organization or social status. French and Raven (1959) defined it as power based upon both informational influence and the credibility of the person. Those with expert power add value to organizations, not only providing others with good technical knowledge or skills, but offering guidance and advice for the betterment of others. Businesses that capitalize on this expertise create a long-standing knowledge base that is imperative for the long-term success of many organizations. Losing these types of experts within an organization can be detrimental to the organization’s operations. This type of power crosses disciplines and includes roles such as accountants, legal experts, technical managers, doctors, plumbers, coaches, counselors, electricians, and technology specialists. Unlike other powers, an individual does not need to hold a position of authority to possess expert power.

Expert power is often well-received by employees. Elangovan and Xie (1999) confirmed that subordinates with an internal locus of control demonstrated an increased motivation when submitting to expert power (i.e. expert power positively related to work effort), but there was a negative correlation for employees with an external locus of control. Often times the delivery of the expert knowledge makes a difference (nobody likes to work with a know-it-all), but experts are often sought after in the corporate environment to further a project or initiative. Their insight and knowledge can provide sizable benefits resulting in profitability, a reduction in the duration of the project, and experience/learning for the employee to carry forward throughout his or her career. Most often, employees do not feel threatened and are happy to work with an expert.

**Formal Power: Legitimate, Reward, and Coercive**

Three types of power (legitimate, reward, and coercive) are categorized as formal power. French and Raven (1959) defined legitimate power as “the legitimate right of some other individual or groups to prescribe behavior or beliefs for a person” (p. 265). They provide three different bases for legitimate power, which include culture, acceptance of social structure, and designation by a legitimizing agent. This is actual authority (or power) an individual holds in a formal organization based on a predetermined hierarchical structure. Some examples of exercising legitimate power in the workplace include hiring and terminating employees, completing performance appraisals, setting behavioral expectations, and delegating tasks. Elangovan and Xie (1999) researched the perception of power and impact on locus of control, and they found that legitimate power...
had a stronger bearing on those with an internal locus of control. They concluded, “supervisor power constitutes a key source of environmental stimulus for employees, the role of the individual differences in perceptions of and reaction to supervisor power merits critical attention” (p. 360). Furthermore, legitimate power has the greatest opportunity to exhibit fungibility. This is the ability to utilize current power to gain additional power (Berdahl, 2008). Often supervisors demonstrating strong performance are awarded with additional responsibilities including a greater span of control. However, legitimate power can be immediately eliminated once the position is eliminated or an individual no longer holds the position. Additionally, “there is an underlying threat that noncompliance by the subordinate... will entail sanctions” (Biong, et al., 2010, p. 345). Supervisors are expected to behave in noncoercive, ethical manners when demonstrating power (Biong et al., 2010). Understanding the variation in these dyads as potential predictors in the workplace to capitalize on supervisor behavior, employee output, and employee motivation. Sometimes categorized under legitimate power, supervisors utilize both of these power dynamics (coercive and reward) to demonstrate influence and initiate (or motivate) a response from the employee.

The second power categorized as formal is reward power. It is opposite of coercive power. This is the ability “to give or withhold rewards based on performance as a major source of power that allows managers to have a highly motivated workforce” (Jones & George, 2015, p. 333). This is the idea of adding a positive factor to create a positive environment, or removing a negative factor to create a positive environment (Robbins & Judge, 2015) with the understanding that positive working environments result in increased employee effort. For example, one reason a supervisor exhibits reward power is to motivate an employee to replicate a particular behavior or produce a similar outcome. The intention is to create a positive environment within the workplace that serves to motivate employees. Thus, the rewarded employee becomes an example for employee standards and creates an optimal relationship between the supervisor and employee.

French and Raven (1959) found that applying a reward power-type of system led to increased production through monitoring piece-work in a factory-based scenario. Like coercive power, reward power naturally falls under the formal authority hierarchy. While it may be difficult to materialistically reward a large number of associates, a good supervisor can eliminate roadblocks to ensure the greatest possible outcomes and grant equity within those outcomes. Examples of reward power include promoting employees, awarding employees, using words of encouragement to make employees feel valued, granting additional time off, issuing monetary awards, or empowering employees. Empowerment is a form of motivation. Studies have set the stage demonstrating the direct effect of power on employee effort by using empowerment (Locke, 1986; Randolph & Kemery, 2011). These scholars proved the importance of empowerment in the dyadic relationships between supervisors and employees (Locke, 1986). This included using reward power as an empowerment tool for employees to motivate employees, i.e. increase effort. Similarly, Randolph, and Kemery (2011) confirmed a positive relationship between supervisors using reward power and empowering employees. Ironically, Hegveldt (1988) uncovered that individuals who were in a lower-
powered position were perceived as more powerful when withholding rewards. In creating this inequitable situation (i.e. power manipulation), lower-powered individuals were perceived as more influential. This could be a sign of coercive power.

The final of French and Raven’s (1959) power dynamics is coercive, and it is the final power dynamic categorized as formal power. Coercive power is the ability to penalize others or remove a positive existing element. Some of the many examples of coercive power used by supervisors include: publicly shaming someone to gain influence, purposefully withholding relevant/important information, excluding certain individuals on meeting invitations, intentionally causing a negative result on a project, not approving time off, sexual harassment, terminating or threatening to terminate or withhold a promotion, or withholding some other positive within the environment (i.e. flextime, vacations, bonus opportunities). This power, when used inappropriately, is not an acceptable practice of management and is often under the legitimate authority category. With legitimate power, those who have a span of control (i.e. direct reports) also have the ability to exercise reward or coercive power.

French and Raven (1959) inferred the utilization of coercive power has a direct influence on an employee’s willingness to have a positive impact or improve productivity. The stronger the negative influence, the more dependent employees are on this supervisor for future direction (often for fear of reprimand if delineating from an expected course of action), and are less likely to initiate any type of empowerment he or she may have been granted. An organization that removes a supervisor using coercive power will be seen as more favorable for removing the negative, but potentially questioned as to how or why that supervisor was granted that position initially. Sometimes supervisors using coercive power are viewed as bullies. A bully, for whatever reason, has a need to dominate and remain in a higher position of power. The other party, whether it be a person or group of individuals, is in position with minimal support and/or confidence. Additionally, Biong et al. (2010) observed that coercive power should be avoided, and other researchers backed the notion that coercive power was less influential in motivating employees (Nesler, Quigley, Aguinis, Lee, & Tedeschi, 1999).

A supervisor exhibits coercive power for a number of reasons. For example, a supervisor may try to use coercive power to motivate employees to stop a particular negative behavior, such as underperforming or behavioral issues like consistent absenteeism. In efforts to emphasize the importance of a given situation, a supervisor may threaten with removing a positive or introducing a negative to try to initiate a specific response or outcome. Teven (2006) found that employee perceptions of their immediate supervisor’s use of coercive power “related to negative interpersonal affect, decreased job satisfaction and resistance” (p. 75). Locke (1986) resolved that coercive authority did not promote employee responsibility. Ng and Sorensen (2009) and Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and De Chermont (2003) both performed meta-analyses that uncovered similar findings. Specifically, when coercive power or influence exhibited in the workplace, it resulted in negative outcomes (i.e. stress and dissatisfaction in the workplace).

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Taucean, Tamasila, and Negru-Strauti (2016) conducted a study on leader power in large organizations, and they concluded that employees' perception of leader power accounted for their degree of success within the organization, or lack thereof. Thus, interpreted that employees who work for supervisors who use coercive power are less likely to motivate their employees. Examples of such employee behaviors include working reactively (rather than proactively), completing the bare minimum of required work, or not volunteering for additional work/special projects. Employees working under a supervisor behaving coercively often have an increase in health issues as well (Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008). Goodstadt and Hjelle (1973) found that those subordinates with an internal locus of control believed they had the ability to influence situations and could be successful. Likewise, they concluded those with an external locus of control did not believe they had any control over various situations, including supervisor influence, and did not expect to have organizational success.

Conversely, there are supervisors that are not able to understand the value of adjusting influence to favorably impact employee motivation. Some supervisors strictly use coercive power, sometimes due to lack of confidence to be an effective authoritative figure (Goodstadt & Hjelle, 1973), regardless of the employee that reports to him or her. As a result, employees under this influence may be more or less likely to be motivated.

Therefore, supervisors using either reward or coercive power can have a significant impact in motivating employees. Supervisors should have the ability to understand how his or her behavior (or influence) affects employee motivation, and thus, develop a significant advantage in maintaining a strong dyadic relationship with his or her employees. Supervisors with this understanding know which type of power (reward or coercive) to exhibit over which employee in order to instigate, or motivate, a response. Other scholars saw the importance of supervisor influence and employee locus of control on motivation. In fact, Etzioni (1961) created a systemic structure to recognize employee responses to power. Similarly, other research highlighted the interdependent relationship, specifically between supervisors and employees, and validated the importance it has in the workplace (i.e. increasing employee efforts) (McShane & Von Glinow, 2003). Other scholars saw the value of studying power and expanded upon French and Raven’s (1959) power research, explaining the psychology of individual employee resulting from supervisor influence (Farmer & Aguinis, 2005). Specifically, they examined subordinate outcomes by way of supervisor influence and concluded the supervisor-employee relationship was a powerful tool in determining employee effort. Thus, supervisor power and employee characteristic alignment showed positive outcomes.

Additional research proved the value of this supervisor-employee dyadic relationship in the workplace. For example, the greater the interdependence between supervisors and employees proved to create a stronger the dyadic relationship between the two (i.e. increasing trust, work effort) which resulted in a more significant impact on organizations and business goals (Sheu, 2014). It was also validated that supervisor-employee working collaborations had the potential to result in valuable synergies that otherwise would not be recognized (Nyaga, Lynch, Marshall, & Ambrose, 2013), further arguing for the need
of additional research on specific employee characteristics to improve this dyad. Olekalns and Smith (2013) also evaluated power in dyadic relationships in workplace settings. Their study revealed the importance of power in dyads and how using it in a positive manner results in improved business opportunities, including employment negotiations (externally) or internal relationships. Employee-supervisors dyads cause employee motivation to change because of the type of power used to influence the employee (Coelho, Cunha, & Souza Meirelles, 2016).

**Conclusion**

Thus, in various types of business settings, demonstrating power (or influence) modifies the receiver’s behavior positively or negatively (Kovach, 2020). Supervisors who positively influence employees are likely to produce positive outcomes. The same idea is true for supervisors who negatively use influence on employees-they are likely to produce negative outcomes. These outcomes result from the power exhibited upon the employee. Thus, employee motivation can be altered based on the type of power his or her supervisor exhibits. As studies reviewed in this manuscript reveal, the power dynamic that characterizes different workplace relationships between supervisors and employees has significant effects on work productivity and employee motivation. For example, Randolph and Kemery (2011) found employees perceived supervisor use of reward power impacted employee perceptions of empowerment but specifically, not coercive power. One important outcome of the different power dynamics in the workplace that needs further examination is employees’ type and level of motivation.

**References**


About the Author

Dr. Mary Kovach is an Associate Professor at Miami University. She graduated with her BA from Baldwin Wallace University, her MBA from Cleveland State University, and her PhD from Miami University. Her professional experience includes 15 years with Fortune 500 organizations and has held numerous leadership positions, including managing multi-million-dollar global business units. She holds a LEAN Six Sigma Black Belt certification, as well as multiple Agile certifications. Mary’s research interests include leadership, motivation, and power. She recently started a YouTube channel – Dr. K The Management Professor.

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REFLECTIONS ON HUMANITY’S MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS
UNCOVERING THE FOUNDATION OF VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

— Joseph P. Hester, Independent Researcher and Writer

Introduction
Metaphorically, both “conscience” and “moral consciousness” have similar meanings as both are representative of an “inner moral voice.” In this article “moral consciousness” is used with reference to an active, intentional, and communal “moral awareness” considerate of feelings that are personal and collective. Thus, rather than being a depository for one’s beliefs and moral sentiments, an inner voice that somehow reaches out and speaks to us, the moral consciousness is a revolving flow of ideas and opinions offering views, sifted through reason and communal consultation, about what is or what is not moral behavior. Utilizing an analysis by Roy Woods Sellars, a case is made that knowledge, including moral knowledge, is not an isolated or individual phenomenon lying deeply within the conscious mind. Rather, it is a culturally influenced and sharing of our opinions and values with others, malleable and often inconsistent. Understanding this, especially for values-based leaders, places a strong emphasis on the importance of human relationships and communication utilizing insight, intuition, and the moral imagination as tools for effective values dissemination. Recognizing our communal nature, attached emotionally as well as physically and occupationally, the difficulties of this explication are apparent. Consequently, this reflective tour may be more of an idealized vision than a substantiated empirical assessment given the intrinsic nature of moral consciousness, moral beliefs, and sentiments. This being said and owning up to my idealism, my purpose is to set forth what I believe are the rational conditions for being actively moral. But one should be careful, for being rational doesn’t deny the importance of emotions, sentiments, or the intuitions of the conscious mind; reason doesn’t create our values, it only brings structure and consistency to our moral musings.

The Conscious Mind
All is Interpretation and Qualification
When referring to “moral consciousness” or “moral imagination,” we could be prodding

The cosmology underlying our mental processes is but three centuries old — a mere infant in the history of thought — and yet we cling to it with the same embarrassed zeal with which a young father fondles his new-born baby (Burtt, 1954, p. 15).

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Everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Obviously, consciousness per se does not exist; it is not a mindless vacuum, for if it were, it would be void of meaning. As Descartes reminds us, thinking is the basic function with consciousness often taking two general forms: descriptive and prescriptive. Thus, consciousness is always mindful of something, representing with intentionality inputs from others and the environment. In his analysis, Roy Woods Sellars explains that “prescription” is generally assumed under “representation.” Sellars says,

To make a long story short, I take perceiving to consist of deciphering referential claims which are constantly being tested. From this base, we work out our cognitive claims about things, relating them and describing them. ...Modern philosophy got off to a bad start because it did not understand the causal circuit in perceiving and made sensations terminal...Critical realism moves between presentationalism and representationalism in that is referentially direct and yet recognizes the informative role of sensations (Sellars, 1967).

With reference to “presentation,” morality is a taking stock of personal and communal actions.
experiences — what is perceived and what is considered important. This begins within the moral consciousness and is later evaluated, articulated, and “represented” to others through reason and collaborative experiences. Because conscious as well as unconscious moral insights are found in personal as well as communal judgments, representation is a normative quality, cognitively basic, informing and prescribing as well as recognizing and recording, and often revealing a hidden moral grammar.

Sellars says there are no unrepresented facts; all is interpretation and qualification. It is from real life experiences we take stock of life and our place in it. But these conscious events are not always individual or isolated as the moral relativist claims — they are frequently social and dialogic as interactions with family, friends, and work associates testify. For example, ideally, even within the sterile domain of a laboratory, the scientist makes his or her empirical calculations, but, hopefully, with environmental sensitivity and in consultation with others, applies his or her discoveries with a sense of their impact on a greater humanity. This generalized example demonstrates that knowledge is social as it is empirical and often subjective, but hopefully and idealistically, a seeking of objectivity through rational methods, transparent dialogue, and with moral sensitivity. Based on Sellars’ analysis and generally speaking, moral knowledge, expressed in words and actions of what we think important, represents an expressed understanding of the dignity and sanctity of human life.

The conscious mind is thus a multiplex of aptitudes, attitudes, and feelings including intuiting, imagining, and creating new ideas and innovative solutions to problems. Conscious judgment is sometimes insightful, rational, and considerate, and at other times irrational and maleficent, carrying within it the burden of moral decision making. It is consciousness that makes available our moral capacity, an indispensable aptitude definitive of human life. Thus, moral consciousness reveals our character and identifies who and why we are, our authenticity or lack thereof. It is a moral-identifier saturating our developing moral propensity with ideas, beliefs, and conclusions about people and their behavior, some articulately clear and some vague and disorganized. Understandably, moral consciousness is as communal as it is personal, typifying social behaviors and actively inaugurating moral veracity. It is within community where moral understanding is most needed, discovered, and intentionally initiated. Value sharing is thus a dialogic process of communicating diverse perspectives and becoming consciously aware of what Aristotle called “our proper humanity”; that is, humanity as community.

Grasping the conditional “content” of human consciousness and its moral guidance is necessary. Comprehending its impact is organizationally and personally essential. To be moral and maintain homes, organizations, and governments of moral authenticity requires dedication and diligence, honesty and transparency. As Sellars says, much is conditioned on how we represent our knowledge and moral understandings to others.

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Our moral consciousness asks that we lift our sights to the morally possible while creating and maintaining positive human relationships. Thus, to free themselves from fixed commitments to tradition – from hovering in the past – values-based leaders need to allow the winds of moral veracity sweep through, connecting internal and external evaluations to moral sensitivity as they begin to uplift the ethical profile and integrity of their organizations (Webster Speech, 1850).

As we are aware, moral ideas spread slowly and remain deeply immersed in traditional beliefs and practices. Formalizing these beliefs into practical ethical ideas and rules for the workplace has proven complex as human diversity remains a prevailing and sometimes disruptive influence in all areas of contemporary life. The unexhumed assumptions which have impounded civil and moral discourse require examination and the moral consciousness is an avenue for realizing this ideal. Naturally and socially, we are obliged to unearth the idea that there lies within the domain of human cognitivity the ability to discern and lay bare the moral features of the humanity we are and the humanity we wish to become.

Consequently, care is needed when identifying collective values or values thought of as organizationally important for these are sometimes misstated or provided with the assumption of collective agreement. Also, appealing to one’s “conscience” maybe inappropriate as human diversity reveals multifarious views on what is considered to be right and wrong behavior. Also, practically, strongly motivated by their own authority and suppositions, leaders need to stay grounded and not get too far ahead of their employees when engaged in discussions of value, projecting assumed values on the screen of reality with such authority these values become reality itself. Patience is required and more so, listening to what others are saying. Recognizably, in a most general sense, moral value is intrapersonal as well as interpersonal, narrated and more often than not obfuscated; this is often the world, at least our understanding of the world, we share with others. Given this reality, when orientating new employees to values considered organizationally important, leaders need to understand the importance of transparency while engaging others in discussions of their values and the idealized values of the organization. Defined as ethical and moral, the organizational culture
becomes more realistically embedded by giving others a voice. All of this is a function of the conscious mind and, more precisely, the moral consciousness.

**Descartes’ Intuition**

It was in the 17th century that Rene Descartes1 initiated discussions of the conscious mind leading to developments in psychology and the social sciences and, to some extent, influencing crime and punishment as conscious motivation became a leading factor in determining guilt or innocence in criminal trials. Descartes’ intuition – “I think therefore I am” [common translation] can also be expressed as, “I know I am thinking because I am conscious of my thinking.” Both thinking and being conscious that I am thinking are a reciprocated reality. Descartes presents us with a dual nature of humanity – thinking and being. Implied is not that thinking brings us into being, but being human or being conscious allows thinking to exist. That we are conscious is self-evident and ontologically basic to human life. Consciousness is not a theoretical deduction nor is it a first principle; that is, a basic assumption that cannot be deduced any further. Rather, consciousness is foundation to our being alive – to our being – and irreducible to anything else. On the other hand, as Descartes suggested, we are made aware of the content of consciousness by thinking, which gives rise to the intuition of consciousness itself.

Consequently, thinking (including moral thinking) is the basic function of the conscious mind. We can question later interpretations of “think” or the Latin “cogito” as most limit its usage to reasoning only, but cognitivity – the act of knowing – is a conscious intellectual activity which includes, among other capacities, the development of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning. Descartes would later include emotional and volitional processes such as motivating, imagining, intuiting, believing, feeling, and innovating as activities of thinking. All of these are at the center of what it means to be a human being. Thinking morally partakes of many cognitive processes making the development of knowledge and value intentional social creations. Understandably moral valuation proceeds from our consciousness, not the other way around.

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1 See [https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness-17th/](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness-17th/). See also, Peter Critchley (2011) *Philosophizing through the eye of the mind: Philosophy as ethos and praxis*. [https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:22143/](https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:22143). Critchley writes: “By far the most famous attempt in the history of philosophy to tackle this problem, to refute skepticism by showing that we can be absolutely certain about some things, was made by the French philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650). Rene Descartes set the agenda for modern philosophy by placing the question ‘Of what can I be certain?’ centre stage. He used the method of systematic doubt, by which he would only accept what he could see clearly and distinctly to be true. He knew that his senses could be deceived, therefore he would not trust them; neither could he always trust his own logic. The one thing Descartes could not doubt was his own existence. If he doubted, he was there to doubt; therefore, he must exist. This is the one truth that cannot be doubted. After all, if I did not exist, I could not doubt or even be deceived about anything. Descartes expresses this insight in one of the most famous propositions in the history of philosophy: ‘I think, therefore I am’ (cogito ergo sum). This, he claims, is an indubitable certainty that can serve as a foundation upon which he can build the rest of his philosophical system and thereby lay to rest the spectre of scepticism. There is a question as to what the first certainty is. Is it ‘I think’, or is it ‘I exist’? Descartes seems to say it is the latter. Yet if we take the statement ‘I think, therefore I am’ at face value, he seems to be inferring his existence from the fact that he is thinking, which implies that ‘I think’ is actually his first certainty.”
Consciousness is therefore primary and embryonic without which meaningful life ceases to exist and gives rise to its basic function, thinking. This flows from Descartes’ intuition; yet, although intuitively grasped, the moral content of consciousness along with rules of reason and scientific validation acknowledge the complexities of knowledge and judgment revealing their social (communal) nature. Consequently, knowledge is a living and growing affair cognitively grounded in assumptions (beliefs) about the valued nature of human life, as normative as it is descriptive. These beliefs we cling to, often without consideration. They structure our thinking, help us to separate fact from fiction, and motivate us. In particular, our moral consciousness carries us forward in a growing awareness of others often stretching the limits of our thinking, but opening fertile possibilities for growth and development.

Although knowledge and moral understanding are made possible by the conscious mind, the question can be raised about our capacity to “take in” and “interpret” what is experienced. How do we move from common sense – our fundamental presuppositions about life – to a willingness to contemplate differing views and moral alternatives? And what is it anchoring our moral commitments – is it faith, our social awareness, or something built into our human nature? These questions have provoked theoretical as well as practical discussions concerning knowledge and morality. As we are aware, deeply felt and held assumptions tint our interpretations of experience. Caution is suggested as often instinctive and habitual assumptions are the given (presuppositions) we present to reality which in turn modify reality and become, in our minds, reality itself. This is something about which values-based leaders need to be constantly aware when seriously opening discussions of organizational values.

What we learn from Descartes is that we have the ability to turn inward, question ourselves, and, if need be, modify our own perceptions through an invested cognitive re-examination. The implication is that we live our lives in terms of highly restricted reality images; there is much more of which we are unmindful influencing our thinking. Consciousness, therefore, remains a complexity resisting reduction to simple “awareness”; it is holistic and sometimes partial, admittedly subjective—perhaps self-deceptive—yet, hopefully, seeking understanding and rational consistency.

From this discussion we learn:

1. Moral values are not self-evident, they proceed through experience, but collective agreement is seldom achieved. An honest exchange of ideas and opinions is therefore necessary for the gathering and applying knowledge, including that which is moral.

2. Intentional responses to our surroundings – empirical and non-empirical, moral and nonmoral – symbolized in words (generally descriptive or prescriptive) are self-identifiers. Others know us not only by what we say, but also by what we do: “Actions speak louder than words.”

3. Enculturation – the process by which we learn the requirements of our culture and acquire the values and behaviors appropriate or necessary in that culture – shapes and binds our values and these constraints are difficult to loosen. We are naturally
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communal in nature and the emotions and sentiments binding our sociability more often than not define our moral and civil response to others.

(4) Commonly, we become conscious of, and are able to comprehend, the moral value of others by living moral lives ourselves. Living a moral life is a learning process that precedes comprehending its personal and social value. Awareness of our own needs and those closest to us are requisite for the extension of empathy and compassion to others.

(5) Thus, the content of our moral consciousness represents something learned and deeply sensed, seemingly self-evident because it is genuinely felt. Unable to be dismissed, this intuitive awareness initiates feelings about the value of our collective humanity and inaugurates moral reasoning. Such intrinsic feelings cannot be easily set aside as nonsense or unimportant as they provide, among other things, individual and collective meaning to our lives.

Values as Socially Constructed

Theoretically, although moral values can be examined and realigned rationally suggesting their “objective importance,” as Sellars says, it would be dishonest to deny their inherent subjectivity and malleability. Practically and socially, we live in a culture orientated to the assumptions of others, especially moral assumptions and those related to the often thought of unconditional nature of the empirical. Obviously, when talking about the intrinsic – the moral consciousness – many, noticing the lack of empirical validation, will be suspect and relegate this discussion to the inexplicably subjective, influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions. There is buried within our predilection for solidity a belief in the sensory detectable as foundational. We know this works and have witnessed its results, especially when the empirical is coupled with logical precision and physical validation. Yet, while the empirical has been proven to be useful and practical, our obedience to it has often sidestepped and ignored other obligations, especially those conceived as moral.

Industrial, economic, and scientific progress – the driving forces for the majority of changes witnessed in the 20th century – require a critical mind and a moral aptitude free of prejudice and open to new ways of thinking. These new “ways” include the application of the ethical and moral to empirical methods, discoveries, and their projected long-range conclusions. This may sound prudent, but many involved in these communities are driven by a profit motive relegating what is morally necessary to the waste bins of the relative and insignificant, ignoring it when they can. Without due consideration, some might agree, to pursue any avenue to knowledge and wealth without moral oversight and a consideration of its impact on others is socially and morally irresponsible. EMBRO REPORTS says,

*Science cannot discover that only science leads to truth* (Baggini, 2016).

It is therefore important that governments, public and private funding organizations, scientific societies and the researchers themselves become more sensitive to ethical questions. In the present climate, upholding the neutrality of science would not be
amoral, but immoral. Scientists are the first to receive crucial information, sometimes years in advance, about the potential dangers of certain scientific knowledge (EMBO Rep., 2001).

Clearly, empirical reason is and can never be free of disorderly, imprecise, and hard-to-justify personal judgment. This we are witnessing in 2020 as the coronavirus is impacting our lives. The social construction of knowledge is a clue: what is many times claimed as fact or rational (reasonable), is frequently based on judgments which are capricious – political and/or faith-based – lacking in moral sensitivity. We should be aware, reason qua reason relies not just on logic and evidence, but on insight and intuition for real world applications. Modern business, government, and community leaders should be aware as what is called “fake news” and “fake science” continues to populate the airwaves. The nature of both truth and knowledge are constantly being tested. Being socially constructed, truth and knowledge are affected by personal and organizational values, sometimes self-centered, often economically charged or politically motivated, at other times moved by religious faith. The moral consciousness is conditioned by these values and behaviors.

From a moral point of view, is there a stopping place where we say enough is enough? Without begging the question of subjectivity, it suffices to say everyone has to accept that some beliefs, some values, are basic to human collective living and apply these consistently. Without this acceptance there would be no way of distinguishing sense from nonsense or what is essentially human from what is not. Even the blatantly selfish individual wishes that others exercise moral acuity. This is an inference drawn from our social awareness, the perceived need for social stability; it is affected by our moral consciousness. For many, this choice is not formal but a matter of upbringing – an evolving unawareness – usually called “common sense.” Yet, within common sense we discover a non-judicious mixture of several paths to knowledge – faith-based, empirical, and pragmatic, etc. – confusing moral discourse and making moral consistency difficult to achieve. Theoretically, the implication is that no humanly construed path to knowledge and value can be considered as absolute or terminal.

Functions of the Conscious Mind
Structure is provided to the conscious mind by C. G. Jung (1955) who identifies four paths to knowledge generally identified as “thinking,” but often used injudiciously. Jung’s identification of these capacities will provide understanding to the functions of moral consciousness. They include thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation representing a holistic vision of the conscious mind. One change is made in Jung’s cognitive hierarchy; “thinking” will be called “reasoning” as Jung’s definition allows this suggestion. All of these constitute thinking processes and are difficult to discuss without admitting this as self-evident:
Sensation tells us something is there;
Reasoning (Thinking) makes the discrimination as to what it is;
Intuition tells us about its possibilities; and
Feeling reveals its subjective value.

Together, these cognitive capacities are mutually active in representing the **content of consciousness** offering a holistic understanding of experience. Jung says when one is neglected, the other forms of judgment are also weakened. His insights are noteworthy for understanding moral judgments and managing a diversity of people within an organization. Individuals normally rely on one of these functions while ignoring the others. For example, leaders with highly developed analytic and pragmatic inclinations often over-emphasize the rational and economic, leaving feelings, emotions, and beliefs – as sources of corporate and moral improvement – dangling in the backwaters of the underdeveloped and unappreciated. Encouraging holistic thinking will increase understanding and improve the social climate of a business or organization. We should also understand that as forms of judgment, these cognitive processes are neither terminal nor are they absolute. They are constructions of the conscious mind, conditioned by experience and tradition, and rely a great deal, as Sellars says, on **interpretation and qualification**.

Experience teaches of the workability and practicality of the dialogic process. Significantly, and as a matter of practice, when in tune to workplace conversations a leader is able to distinguish which modes of thinking are dominating a conversation. With improved communications and with imaginative flexibility, the leader will better distinguish between which are insightful and which are over-emotional or straying off the point, and move quickly to gather a variety of opinions for more balanced decision-making. This entails some introspection but also requires attentively listening as others speak and offer opinions. Collective insight and the acknowledgement of the contributions of others will lead to enhancements in the quality of work, the satisfaction of workers, and the improvement of a values-based organizational culture. Such skill is the product of the moral imagination utilizing previous knowledge, insight, intuition, and respect for others no matter their position in the organization.

Yet, without being overly optimistic — given that many are self-promoters, self-centered, narrowly focused, and often uncooperative — this is an idealized version of a values-based organization and of the dialogic process. Wisely, C. G. Jung brings us back down to reality as he confesses,

*Indeed, I do not forget that my voice is but one voice, my experience a mere drop in the sea, my knowledge no greater than the visual field in a microscope, my mind’s eye a mirror that reflects a small corner of the world, and my idea — a subjective confession* (Jung, 1955).

**A Case for the Moral Consciousness**

*Living on the Thin Edge of Subjectivity*

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Easy to see, this commentary is suggestive, offering no empirical evidence for the existence of moral consciousness or, for that matter, moral imagination. These are intrinsic and insightful inclinations unbounded by reason and statistical manipulation; yet, definitive of our humanity. The question of “consciousness?” does raise questions requiring attention; namely, “Who are we?” and “Why are we?” Answers to these questions reveal an uncertainty habitually blurring the lines between what is thought of as innate and what is considered social and developmental. Undoubtedly, consciousness, as a form of self-awareness, is ontologically basic to human life. Without consciousness we cease to exist. But it would be incorrect to say our moral nature is innate or natural. Rather, it is a developed capacity, socially anchored and constructed, and malleable—an outward flow of the conscious mind.

Our moral capacity is built on understanding the importance of building strong and sustaining relationships revealing its social nature. Evolving within the family and community, our moral consciousness becomes a conduit to human communal life.

Admittedly, accounts of morality modulate between that which is considered innate or natural and that which is thought of as developmental often causing confusion. Upon a careful study of Jonathan Haidt’s *The Righteous Mind* (2013), one is apt to concur. Obviously, there is much about life about which we are relatively unaware, so when speaking of “consciousness” or “moral consciousness” or “moral imagination” we are approaching the outer limits of what language can convey. Theologians, philosophers, psychologists, and social scientists have put their twist on this and we, like them, stammer and hesitate using abstraction and metaphor to give these behaviors meaning. Entrapped as we are by the limitations of language, ethics and morals, and even science and logic, must rely upon metaphor to convey their images, meanings, and importance as avenues to truth and value.

Clearly, we are on the thin edge of subjectivity indicated by how commonly we use such symbolic expressions as “self,” “thinking,” “moral compass,” “spirit,” “soul,” “heart,” and “mind” as indicators of “moral consciousness.” These are common idioms, some theoretical and others faith-based, indicating that something humanly significant is going on here, something fundamental to human life that cannot be ignored nor reduced to insignificance. About this, no argument or moral theory is required; it is self-evident. Because of this inherent subjectivity, many seeking a more solid ground upon which to rest morality, have chosen a more utilitarian approach. Thus, they objectify morality as a set of cultural or social rules and regulations, forgetting that knowledge, especially moral knowledge, is qualitatively interpretive going much deeper than the veneer of society.

...It would appear reasonable to conclude that conscious processes evolved out of unconscious processes, both phylogenetically and developmentally; phylogenetically, primarily in terms of the evolution of brain structure, and developmentally; phylogenetically, primarily in terms of the evolution of brain structure, and developmentally, both in terms of greater awareness as we grow psychologically from infant to adult, and historically as we develop more and more advanced civilizations (Royce, 1964).
often suspects. They have put their emphasis on the objectives of morality and not the thinking, moral person. Subsequently, they often reduce non-empirical judgments such as insight and intuition as unsound or insignificant. But the thinking subject resists such objectification. There is a need to dig deeper for even unarticulated motives deeply felt, perhaps habitual, move our moral response to others. These retain their moral significance and cognitive understanding by the way we treat others and how they respond to us. An awareness of what motivates the moral response of us and others should be a priority of values-based leaders.

Insightfully, Karl Jaspers, correctly said,

At the end we have no firm ground under us, no principle to hold on to, but a suspension of thought in infinite space—without shelter in conceptual systems, without refuge in firm knowledge or faith. And even this suspended, floating structure of thought is only one metaphor of being among others (Bennett-Hunter, 2014).

Creating Non-Humiliating Environments
Since the scientific-empirical movement began in earnest in the 17th century, Western Civilization has pruned and developed the sensory-rational functions of cognitive discourse. These functions have been combined with logical and mathematical precision to more accurately describe and make predictions about the physical world. These have proven worthy, leading to vast industrial and technological improvements. Yet, they often have ignored the quality of human life, as, for example, ignoring climate change, gender and racial inequality, and nuclear and coal-ash waste disposal. Using similar means, joined with statistical correlations, these efforts have been utilized by the social sciences, especially those involved in demographics, to manipulate political affiliations, tastes, and social values (Investopedia, 2020). Today, in education, these methods are used to measure learning, itself an intrinsic quality definitive of the knowledgeable person. Generally, these processes dominate the world of scientific research, industry, business, and education. They are practical and they work, but left underdeveloped has been creativity and intuition, including the moral consciousness and moral imagination.

In light of these developments and the need for values sensitivity, the values-based leader is challenged, as Isaiah Berlin has noted, with “promoting and preserving an uneasy equilibrium, which is constantly threatened and in constant need of repair” (1994). Berlin rightly points out that the effort to walk the line between the moral certitude of conflicting values’ orientations “is the precondition for decent societies and morally acceptable behaviors.” This effort requires some flexibility and creativity as rational algorithms ensconced in organizational beliefs and values can stretch us only so

Suggested by John Paul Lederach (2005), the moral imagination is “…the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist.” It “…is about the messiness of innovation.”

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far. Indeed, measurement has become the defining metaphor of our time, but moral value resists quantification and statistical manipulation.

A good organizational climate is the basis for successful operation of any company. It substantially contributes to the well-being of employees, but its attempts to measure and quantify organizational climate represent a testimony to the failure of the moral imagination as moral judgment and is often accompanied by a pretense of infallibility saying that a rule is a rule is a rule (or, just taking care of business, or the bottom line). Darcia Narvaez comments,

Moral imagination involves not only the ability to generate useful ideas, but also the ability to form ideas about what is good and right, and to put the best ideas into action and service for others. The use of moral imagination involves exploring alternatives actions and possibilities while being sensitive to the people, situations, and lifescapes at hand (Narvaez & Mrkva, 2014).

If our aspiration is a decent and responsible society, the activation of this goal and our commitment to it will be, as Edward Tivnan observes, “... a continuing conversation about how we can keep from stomping on one another’s special projects of self-improvement” (Trivnan, 1995). And so, we ask, “How will a good person know when she or he is hurting or humiliating her or his neighbor?” and “How will companies, including scientific and governmental organizations, know when they are violating rather than promoting essential human values?” Valuing freedom, tolerance, and justice, says Richard Rorty (1999) “Requires me to become aware of all the various ways in which other human beings whom I might act upon can be humiliated.”

From a moral perspective, values-based leaders are tasked with creating non-humiliating organizations characterized by respect for the welfare, dignity, and self-worth of those in their care. These are organizations consistently infusing within their cultures a sensitive awareness of the values-diversity among their employees, including, among other things, respect for cultural and religious differences, the need for income equality, paying livable wages, and gender sensitivity.

An Avenue of Discernment and Moral Judgment

The term “moral” designates a particular kind of conscious content socially prescriptive and
cognitively descriptive telling us how we ought to treat one another. Through parenting, nurture, and continual interaction with others, we learn the importance of living morality. This aptitude is symbolized as “moral consciousness”; it is a social disposition identifying human interrelatedness and collective responsibility. This is learned and developed by communal awareness – in families, churches, schools, and by working with others. Thus, being moral is both natural and developmental but also reflective of cultural diversity. It may be so firmly enculturated as to be thought of as self-evident. Of course, noting the maleficence evident in society today, this should not be taken for granted. Suffice it to say, we are molded individuals and our moral consciousness is a conditioned response to our environment. No moral theory, religious or secular, will correct this condition, but applying reason to our moral understanding can help.

Thus, as we gather and weigh experiences, information, and the needs of an organization and its employees, the moral consciousness provides an avenue of discernment and sensitivity. This will be a learning process as moral understanding is rarely self-evident and varies injudiciously among individuals. With commitment and experience, we are able to become morally adept and, importantly, comprehend why being moral is important. This opportunity initiates an appraisal of feelings, intuitions, beliefs, and assumptions bringing what are good, right, and honest to bear on social relationships and organizational competency. This knowledge and its appraisal represent the content of our moral consciousness seeking consistency and social authenticity. It will never be pure or terminal; it is an ongoing growth experience.

Morality and the moral consciousness are not strictly bound by empirical or statistical validation, rational theory, or even the rhetoric of faith and belief. This is a problem for many seeking a more solid foundation for building a values-based culture. Some even doubt adding “rational” to our moral awareness will alleviate our anxieties about the objective import of moral thinking as noted by Roy Sellars. Putting values, especially moral values, into a business model runs the risk of being free-floating unanswerable to common sense, reason, or our collective moral intuitions. Consequently, building a values-based culture cannot be an isolated decision; rather, it requires study and dialogue, respect for others, and an honest appraisal of organizational practices. Thus, many will agree that basically, but minimally, developing a values-based organization is a continuing conversation about how to place what many deem as moral qualities – responsibility, tolerance, equality, dignity, and impartiality – at the forefront of personal decisions, social values, organizational practices, and interactions with clients and customers.

**Relationships, the Spiritual, and the Inauguration of Moral Insight**

**Stretching the Boundaries of Our Thinking**

Attuned as we are to statistical methods and the use of questionnaires for the assessment of organizational climate, surely this essay stretches the boundaries of what is commonly thought of as rational. Conceptual understanding is difficult and more so when leaving the security of the empirical and peering into the vastness of the intrinsic. In the end, the explanations provided may be inadequate – an adventure of piling
metaphor on metaphor seeking explanatory release. Yet, sensitivity to moral feelings and to the complexities of experience – our intuitive moral awareness – cannot be neglected; this is both an intrinsic and pragmatic reality but for many represents an existential crisis.

A function of the moral consciousness is to filter such knowledge through the sieve of our reasoned moral sensibilities. Caution should be taken, as George Silberbauer (1995) says,

"One’s own morality lies deeply internalized, and it is not easy to overcome ethnocentric [my views are right because they are my views] prejudice when confronted by behavior which prima facie [at first sight] offends against it."

Silberbauer warns that the dominant moral values and beliefs of a society cannot be applied to all people and all cultures without some modifications and adjustments. This will happen at only a generalized level before comparisons proceed, including comparisons of moralities. These adjustments will include, among other things, constitutions and laws specifying duties and rights, behaviors we generally call “moral” and clarifying what is essentially moral in religious literature and talk. Most assuredly, this applies to businesses and community organizations as well. Consistently developing and articulating morally-based values within the diversity of an organization is an arduous task including what Silberbauer calls “modifications and adjustments.” With this, Silberbauer demonstrates the complexities inherent in ethical talk when applied amidst our human diversity.

Sensitive to this, the values-based leader needs to be flexible, making use of the moral imagination when establishing a values-based culture. In this way, a values-based leader is able to pursue options for values impartiality and balance. This is a daily challenge and being practical and rational is often not enough. Thus, leaders are counseled to think widely and wisely to bring into themselves the opinions and reasoned judgments of others. Of course, none of us will ever be satisfied with what is heard.

Perhaps we can agree that emotion guides much of moral thinking, especially when hitched to personal affiliations, traditions, and organizational commitments. When facing this challenge, a negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions will serve a leader well. This will include listening, making adjustments in heretofore judgments, and applying values-based directives that have been clear discussed and, if need be, amended.
For the values-based leader listening, collaborating, and weighing the insights and emotions of others against our own attitudes and judgments is being rational in the broadest and most general sense. It is utilizing the opportunity to explain and justify the beliefs and commitments of the organization and connect these to the values of employees and the community. It is a process of learning. Life-long learning, says Socrates, “is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel” (Leef, 2019). This signifies that which gives meaning, motivates, and brings understanding; it points to the moral consciousness, the “flame” of moral veracity.

In addition to the economic realities facing organizations, the challenge is to reassess personal motivations with regard to employees, clients, and customers. Reassessment is the art of inspecting (introspecting, weighing) personal assumptions and preconceived notions through the insights of others, even those with whom we disagree. This is what is meant by “thinking widely.” In this manner, reassessment becomes a rational process, coherent and judicious, a commitment making available the capacity of the rational mind seeking objectivity and communal agreement. Of course, this is an ideal, as we can never predict what others will do, or fully know what they are thinking, their willingness or unwillingness to talk freely and honestly, even when they assert their agreement. But, even idealized, the moral imagination will pay dividends as it offers flexible and creative ways for developing moral coherence, a sense of community, and overall moral improvement. These activities and what motivates them lay at the foundation of a values-based organization.

From a philosophical perspective, Charles Taylor speaks to the moral consciousness as an affirmation of “a given ontology of the human” (1989, p. ix), involving claims, implicit or explicit, about the moral nature and status of human beings. Consequently, we are challenged by an awareness of our human multiplicity to remove the scales from our own eyes, to look inside, to the inner self, the moral self, and therein discover the dignity and worthiness definitive of our own humanity while extending this value to others.

Although consciousness is basic to human nature, as Taylor surmises, its content is not. The content of the moral consciousness evolves within social relationships and is learned, disclosing its cultural pliability. Responding to basic human needs, the moral consciousness extends and broadens conscious awareness awaiting development. Consequently, being intentionally moral is a living and growing affair, neither terminal nor absolute, but ongoing. Given this overt intentionality, and with moral comprehension and a sensitive awareness to the needs of others, values-based leaders become accountable for acting consistently within the boundaries of what is considered to be ethical and moral behavior.

Life is a Web of Relationships
Understandably, “life is a web of relationships.” Relationships reveal our character; they are “the eye of needle” defining our moral obligations. Relationship-building is a powerful but fragile phenomenon, constantly changing and easily lost. We are daily confronted with making an effort to understand those around us — their familial connections, religious affiliations, political views, and deepest values. This understanding entails
empathy, generosity, fairness, and reciprocity. All of these, including their polar opposites, figure into our relationship-value-equation.

Waxing metaphorically and with interpretive license, an insight from artist Paul Cézanne can inform moral responsibility. Cézanne remarked about one of his paintings, “The landscape thinks itself me and I am its consciousness” (Baggini, p. 60).² If the “landscape” is symbolized as “the human landscape” or “the organizational landscape,” then our consciousness will be a moral consciousness of unconcealment. We are the gap in the trees of our human environment allowing moral insight filter in thereby bringing life to all whom we touch. With and amongst others our moral consciousness is revealed. Consequently, moral living is a crafting, a making, a growing of compassion, forgiveness, care, and love for others. Here we are grounding our lives in something firm, for without the solidity of human relationships we cannot survive. It is within the soil of everyday living where morality, duly experienced, grows in importance. Our responsibility is to let the growth of our moral sensitivities elevate others, not just ourselves, to ensure their human moral growth.

As pointed out by Fritjof Capra, thinking in terms of relationships is essentially moral thinking or “a new science.” Responding to Capra’s insight, we can say, in time we learn that our lives are largely built on a scaffolding of relationships. Understanding this takes many years as most of us learn this lesson late in life. Relationships—good and bad—create the web of our lives. Finding purpose in our web is difficult for much that happens to us is either incidental or accidental. Purpose is intentional and a difficult and foreboding task. When we discover our purpose, we are able to maneuver through life in more productive ways.

Recognizably, our reference to moral consciousness and moral imagination appeals to our sense of mystery and awe. There is more we wish to know, but understanding will always be incomplete. We can only speak in simile and metaphor grounded in the public domain and in a pragmatic commitment to keeping the conversation about morality and its significance going in a time of values confusion and fragmentation. In our sensitive understandings and as we engage others, we will discover a reverberating effect as the moral consciousness is recognizably relationship dependent. Not self-contained and neither bilateral nor individualistic; our moral consciousness is flexible, holistic, and noticeably responsive – compassionate and reasoned, and yes, sometimes unreasonable – often living on the edge of emotion and incredulity. To these intuitions and feelings, perceptions, and misperceptions, we apply

the normative quality of moral sensitivity recommending avenues and means of moral service. This is continuously reactivated through the positive response of others.

**That Which is Spiritual**

Within societies and nations, religious values continue to shape and reshape, not only ways of life, but the political landscape as well. Yet, in a most general sense and considered definitive of “humanity as community,” morality often rubs against religious absolutism which asserts that only the “faithful” can be moral. One has to admit that moral intuition and insight are difficult to identify, and even more difficult to portray as it comes in many forms, expressed variously, and is culturally compliant. It understands the value of dignity, honesty, and responsibility. It is relationship oriented and relationship dependent. The moral consciousness is charged by human activity and communal awareness losing its meaning and balance without content and context. Relationships, our collective humanity, fill the consciousness with normative beliefs about who we are and about the dignity and value of others.

Recognizably, and even with its connectivity to what is essentially natural, being moral is often called “spiritual” providing it with a significant, other worldly quality. Thus, some care should be taken when using “spiritual”; its meaning varies due to its long and conflated history and association with a variety of religious faiths. Historically, the meaning of “spiritual” varies impartiality within and across cultures. “Spirit” and “being spiritual” have collective importance in both religious and secular societies; consequently, we should not disregard this common expression as it carries moral significance for many.

In daily speech we often refer to the “spirit of humanity,” “team spirit,” “the spirit within,” “the spiritual,” and “the soul,” etc. as significant-value-identifiers. Not to dismiss religion in its various forms, it is commonly recognized from religion has originated many moral concepts and practices proven effective in societies and cultures. Although, these are often provincial and fortified with faith-based commitments, they are just too solidly entrenched to be dismissed. Their vitality and staying power are testimonies to their normative value. To this, values-based leaders should be sensitive.

Consequently, “spirit” is a common moral signifier within and outside of religious settings. Recognition of its many uses and meanings will be constructive for understanding the diversity of value-orientations within an organization. Recognition and respect for religious diversity is important; however, values-based leaders, in an effort to dignify this diversity, can use “spirit” in a religiously neutral way. Among other [Life’s] sanctity is often thought to derive from the impossibility of any such reduction (Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, 1990).
things, “spirit” signifies strength of mind, courage, character, and moral fiber. Other usages include: “the principle of conscious life,” “the vital principle in humans,” and “animating the body or mediating between body and soul.” Symbolically, “spirit” goes to the heart of what is meant by “human being.” Of course, a reductionist approach will not satisfy this variety or those who use “spirit” and “spiritual” within the context of a faith-based culture or even those who prefer a more secular connotation. A more inclusive nuance will help identify its moral significance. Without a doubt, consciousness identifies our mental acuity as being rational, often moral, and other times neither of these. To call the moral consciousness “sacred” or “spiritual” is understandable, but being intrinsic, it is plainly difficult to explain to a wider audience. Insightfully, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1980) noted,

*What is eternal and important is often hidden from a man by an impenetrable veil. He knows there’s something under there, but he cannot see it. The veil reflects the daylight.*

The “veil” to which Wittgenstein refers is culture, its habits and traditions, including the philosophical and religious beliefs, that have often defined human development, progress, and refinement. Nietzsche was aware of this which led to his diatribe on self-deception lending credence to the mystery of consciousness.

Practically, it’s easy to acknowledge morality as a series of value judgments, subject to rational analysis about how to live within society. But this acknowledgement will never be as objective or universal as the will to believe remains a strong force in human life revealing its uneven braiding within the moral consciousness. Selfish and unselfish attitudes, ethnic biases, and religious beliefs are part of this binding. Without careful attention to our motives, these can become mental and social detractors. They often ignore the fundamental dimensions of relationships and the inclusive nature of our moral humanity.

Fundamentally and generally, morality is an intentional awareness of self and others, our dignity and their dignity and the demands such recognition signifies. It is an acknowledgement of the inclusiveness of humanity, of humanity as community, deeply felt and spiritual, directing our attention to the worthiness of others. Thus, morality and the behaviors morality signify are recognizably social as well as cognitive, deeply felt and religious. They display the imprint of our thinking, social intuitions, practical decision making, religious beliefs, and the affairs of everyday life. Hence, being moral is an everyday experience—cognitive, spiritual, and social. In Capra’s words, it is holistic, hewn through experience (externally) yet housed internally, and indicative of the human spirit. Once socially discharged,
reassessed, and exposed in dialogic communication, the manifold possibilities of the moral consciousness are able to be released.

The Inauguration of the Moral Mind
What has been written reveals moral consciousness as a perpetual activity, as well as a reservoir of experiences, needed for shaping the world and responding to its ethical demands. It intentionally explores ways and means for applying what is morally essential to human communal and organizational life. This is only a beginning of moral understanding and behavior, an inauguration of ideas and actions making living with others agreeable and civil. Begun as moral insight (Royce, 1964) and utilizing our moral imaginations, the actual details and social structures of morality are developed and applied in real life situations—through rules of conduct, organizational standards, constitutions and laws, and/or following the commandments of a particular religious faith, etc.

We can pick at the entrails of this explanation and can agree insight by itself seems flimsy and confined, that it is too unstable and inadequate as a foundation for objective moral discernment. And it is! Such a conscious inauguration is only the starting place of moral understanding. A more thorough and consistent morality requires our unvarying attention, rational examination, clarification and communication with others, especially listening and providing dignified responses. Utilizing the capacities of the moral imagination, within organizations the moral consciousness seeks exploratory applications. Undoubtedly, a finely-tuned moral consciousness releases compassion and human sensitivity into the world, is ongoing, and never terminal, awaiting confirmation and application. These are some of the major corridors through which morality travels. When one tries to make morality a quick fix, empirically or religiously, it loses its zest and power of adaptation and reorientation.

1. To collect our thoughts, the moral consciousness is continuously restored, reverberating from the outside in and from the inside out, and back. It is a revolving conversation—an interchange of attitudes, commitments, and behaviors definitive of humanity. More formally, environmental and communal inputs are constantly presented to us through natural events and social interactions. As this information is processed, responses are gathered, some descriptive and others normative. Through this most common process and using experience, including insight and knowledge previously gained, we represent these inputs in various ways: as facts, theories, moral judgments, insights, intuitions, and by our behavior. Moral representation moves forward as we form opinions, make decisions, and build relationships in recognizably moral ways. Unperceived, but known, evolving through experience, and socially malleable; the “mysterious” language of moral consciousness speaks to us only emerging as a form of self-consciousness allowing us to know the grounds or reasons for our beliefs and

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3 Royce argues that all knowledge is partial, contingent on the method(s) chosen, and therefore incomplete. Absolute knowledge or truth is out of our reach.

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actions (Korsgaard, 2006). This is the representative “structure” and “content” of moral consciousness constantly requiring “reassessment” and “reactivation” in social and organizational contexts.

**Conclusion**

In this dialogue, a case has been made that we represent ourselves – our ideas, judgments, and values – to others by the activity of our moral consciousness. This is not an empirical claim, but one that is self-evident. The moral consciousness is not separate from consciousness, only representative of its prescriptive substance. Perhaps this is an *overbelief*, something I wish to believe that covers my doubts about human nature, the intrinsic, and the moral. Overbeliefs are what Henry David Aiken called, “ideological principles of orientation” (Aiken, 1963). These provide supporting contexts of ideas concerning the nature of the world, our place in it, our essential inner nature, our history and institutions, and the framework through which we express and interpret our ideas and values. But overbeliefs can become dogmatic when not released to conscious examination. To avoid such dogmatism and its concomitant encapsulation, this article opens a dialogue – a conscious examination – of the moral consciousness and its importance to values-based leadership.

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Academic Leadership: Gatekeeping or Groundskeeping?

Abstract
Common approaches to academic leadership include serving as assessors of the progress of individuals towards organizationally-determined milestones and markers of success. Likewise, leadership development often focuses on leadership skills and tactics, rather than on cultivation and enactment of leadership philosophies and progressive vision. Here, I discuss the importance of cultivating leadership for progressive faculty and academic staff development through strategically tending the cultures and systems that one leads, in addition to tactical supervision of people. I describe this as systems-engaged leadership manifested as groundskeeping, or as attending to the individuals in an organization while simultaneously actively tending the ecosystems in which the work of the organization occurs. Groundskeeping contrasts with more traditional approaches of leading, which function as gatekeeping, or primarily via guarding who gains access and who advances based on conceptualizations and assumptions about who can function and thrive.

Introduction
Common Leadership Practices in Higher Education
Academic leadership encompasses a range of different higher education roles, including distinct positions and titles. It often varies from tactical management, which centers on specific objectives, to administration, which is positioned as relational and mission-driven, to leadership, which is vision-driven and potentially transformational (Cheruvelil & Montgomery, 2019, p. 240).

Academic leaders can pursue a range of different leadership paths. Many academic leaders enter department-level leadership positions and beyond via a faculty route (Figure 1). Progression in the faculty ranks, both in the tenure system or for non-tenured faculty, can position individuals for consideration for leadership roles. However, progression on the tenure track from assistant to associate, with the checkpoint of internal and external review for tenure, as well as to full professor, with a second review period for promotion, can be required for advancement into particular leadership roles for which tenure or promotion is considered a prerequisite. Given the recognized disproportionate underrepresentation for marginalized and minoritized groups and
barriers to advancement in the ranks of higher education tenure-track or tenured faculty (Montgomery, 2020a), these “checkpoints” can result in limited or disrupted opportunities for equitable progression into leadership roles for many individuals in academia.

When considering individuals’ preparation for academic leadership roles, we generally measure success at each of the prior levels of faculty rank or academic leadership as evidence that individuals will continue to demonstrate success at the next (Figure 1). While a strong case has been constructed for this model of advancement across levels within a disciplinary faculty ladder, we also often make decisions about who can and should lead primarily based on an individual’s success as a faculty member, rather than based on their aptitude or demonstrated abilities for a role as an effective academic leader. We use such a selection paradigm frequently, although it is readily recognized that “the role of the academic leader (department chair and/or dean) is very different from that of regular faculty members even though faculty members often are asked to serve in these capacities” (Rowley & Sherman, 2003, p. 1059).

In their roles, academic leaders provide administration (e.g., operational efforts) and leadership towards academic goals (Rowley & Sherman, 2003). However, in many cases the formal training and selection processes for these individuals center primarily on their academic training and success in disciplinary roles and distinct leadership positions, with little to no formal training in or assessment of demonstrated administrative or leadership functions for a particular academic position under consideration, nor necessarily any evidence of prior practical experiences (Baker et al., 2019; Bisbee, 2007; Gmelch, 2013; Rowley & Sherman, 2003). Additionally, those who transition into leadership roles in academia often do so without a full understanding of, or preparation for, the complexities associated with these positions (Gmelch, 2013). Apart from deficits in training or demonstrated experience, many academic leaders also have no expressed aspirations for leadership (Rowley & Sherman, 2003).
Once in leadership roles, “good” academic leadership is often judged based on leadership traits or capabilities, such as planning, organizational skills, listening, communication, stakeholder engagement, decision-making styles, humility, and courage (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017; Rowley & Sherman, 2003). While these are all critical functions, much more is needed for progressive leadership, especially in dynamic current times. Less frequently do we select or advance academic leaders on the grounds of having assessed their formal leadership preparation, evidence of active cultivation of leadership philosophy, expressed or demonstrated leadership values, or development and enactment of a leadership vision. A focus on values in the development, cultivation, or advancement of leaders can be rare (Smikle, 2019). In regard to vision, while developing a vision is sometimes recognized as important, an ability on the part of an academic leader to execute a vision is even more critical (Mathews, 2018; Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017). Given that we have not always insisted on academic leaders even having an espoused or highly developed vision, a widespread requirement for demonstrated vision and a plan for execution would represent a major leap forward. Effectively incorporating such a requirement into academic practices would require that we revisit the means by which we prepare, select, and socialize academic leaders.

**Cultivating Academic Leaders: Common Mechanisms Used for Leadership Development**

Gmelch (2013) has argued that in many regards the “socialization of academic leaders appears to be left to chance” (p. 26). Indeed, faculty and professional development often center on teaching or research in many academic institutions (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013). Significant efforts at the level of administrative training and leadership development are scarce, although increasing, across the U.S. higher education landscape (Beach et al., 2016). For those institutions or organizations that do have leadership development programming, many of these efforts focus on skills development, situational competencies, or other tactical issues of leadership preparation (Cheruvelil & Montgomery, 2019; Orsini, 2019; Randall & Coakley, 2007).

There is an abundance of “misdirected leadership development” (Bellis, 2017, p. ix). For example, leadership training or development often plays out as imprinting. Imprinting, or the patterning of individuals' behaviors after the norms of a recognized group, has been described as powerful for maintaining status quo or promoting acculturation in mentoring (Montgomery, 2019a) and in the support and training of youth (Liao & Sánchez, 2015; Pryce, Kelly, & Lawinger, 2019). As I have argued with regard to mentoring, a common mistake in leadership development is a focus on offering “what” rather than underlying “why” advice during developmental input and support to individuals (Montgomery, 2019b). For example, a specific recommendation for participation in particular programs or practices may be offered as critical stepping stones to success. Such advice centers on what one should do to pursue success, rather than describing the reasons or needs to expand specific skills that underlie why a particular intervention may need be engaged. Accordingly, I maintain that effective intervention depends on offering insight into why specific avenues may have been
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pursued or may be valuable, with the intent of supporting individuals in finding their own effective “what” to accomplish the more common and necessary “why” (Montgomery, 2019b). I have also argued that “those who insist on a very specific ‘what’ often are maintaining norms or gatekeeping” (Montgomery, 2019b, pp. 44–45).

As with mentoring, leadership cultivation should be about “much more than ‘supporting’ an individual to be successful towards some recognized, and customarily institutionally determined, goal or milestone” (Montgomery, 2019a, p. 10). Truly effective leadership development and enactment needs to promote individuals working at the interface of their personal goals and skills and the needs of the unit or institution. One means for accomplishing this is succession management or proactive training of individuals prior to their pursuing or assuming a particular leadership role or position and based on their passion and interests (Baker et al., 2019; Rothwell, 2015).

In the preparation of individuals for academic leadership roles, one area that is not often addressed is the importance of the explicit preparation of leaders based on best practices in organization leadership development. This point is especially true for discipline-based academic leadership roles such as department chair or dean, but also has implications and reverberations beyond these leadership roles as leaders higher in the academic leadership progression such as executive-leaders generally arise from this pool of disciplinary leaders. Current practices, which are based on assessment of performance at previous levels as mentioned above and which collide with long-standing disparities in who enters and advances in the faculty ranks, can be characterized by gatekeeping from the very entry point. Additionally, the ways in which these positions are performed and the leadership practices that are rewarded also can be governed by gatekeeping practices. Here, however, my purpose is to focus on the ways that leadership practices themselves, and not just the selection of who becomes and advances as a leader, are too frequently carried out as a powerful form of gatekeeping. I compare these academic practices to organizational leadership praxes that have been documented as effective for organizational effectiveness and improved outcomes and argue that academic leadership needs to evolved from being driven largely by traditional gatekeeping to systems-engaged leadership practices that increase leadership responsibility for the individuals in a systems simultaneously with active care and tending of the grounds or ecosystem in which these individuals are operating.

Evolving Leadership from Gatekeeping to Groundskeeping

Leadership ability is frequently defined in general ways, such as an ability to align “organizational needs with human resource capabilities” (Rowley & Sherman, 2003, p. 1060). While leaders clearly must pursue the needs of their organization, such a perspective is often enacted as “gatekeeping.” Exclusionary language is characteristic of gatekeeping approaches to leadership that position constant improvement of the organization and its standing or rankings as driving the standards to which employees must aspire and contribute. Gatekeeping can be classified as measuring individual traits and performance as rendering someone worthy of passing through “gates of opportunity” or “gates of success.” In contrast, “groundskeeping” recognizes that individuals have aspirations that can be pursued and must be actively supported in the
context of and in service to organizational goals or needs. Leaders functioning as groundskeepers, then, focus on whether the environmental landscape is conducive to supporting the development and advancement of individuals towards personally-defined goals, even as there are institutional expectations and metrics in place. Indeed, it has been recognized that “the engagement...of the external environment is at least of equal importance...Yet leadership competency frameworks and engagement processes rarely embrace this” (Bellis, 2017, p. ix). This groundskeeping work requires identifying unfettered paths, as well as working actively to open and clear paths with recognized barriers, roadblocks, and inequities that may prevent access and success by specific individuals or groups.

Organizational leadership literature has previously recognized these distinct forms of leadership. Gatekeeping has been positioned as serving as a “diversion effect” for those not deemed worthy of admittance in a particular environment, whereas gateway function — which parallels what I position here as groundskeeping — has been centered as a “democratization effect” for those who are supported and actively enabled to find success in a particular context (Dowd, 2007, p. 415). Groundskeeping, or the democratization effect, has been associated with improvements in equity in higher education for students, but also results in improved outcomes broadly (Dowd, 2007).

Here, I argue that groundskeeping as a leadership framework is likewise powerful for the promotion of equity. Groundskeeping-centered leadership also aligns with the conceptualization of transformational leadership framing as compared to transactional leadership which aligns with gatekeeping (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Transformational leadership is a form of adaptive leadership in which leaders have a flexible style of leading that responds to the environment in which they operate (Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 2003, p. 207). Of note, transformational leadership is associated with greater positive organizational outcomes, as well as being important for incorporating the consideration and support of individualized needs of employees and their career aspirations (Howell & Avolio, 1993; Xenikou, 2017). Furthermore, transformational leadership is associated with organizational innovation and change (Xenikou, 2017).

Gatekeeping and groundskeeping-proximal leadership styles have been found to be complementary leadership styles that can both contribute to organizational effectiveness and positive outcomes (Xenikou, 2017). Notably, while gatekeeping can be effective depending on context and need, paying attention to individual considerations through groundskeeping-positioned leadership can lead to improved effectiveness and increased satisfaction of those being led (Xenikou, 2017). One of the reasons that individual satisfaction may increase under groundskeeping-positioned leadership is that attention to the environment on the part of the leader may limit deficit-based engagement of leaders with those they are leading, including an emphasis on a reliance on resilience on the part of individuals for their persistence and advancement.

**Invoking Grit and Resilience Theory as a Form of Gatekeeping**

**Emergence of Grit and Resilience Theory.** There is an increasing dependence on the importance of grit for individual persistence in academic settings. Angela Duckworth (2016) introduced grit as a concept that describes an individual’s proclivity to use
Leadership passion and perseverance in the successful pursuit of long-term goals, even in the face of challenges. This conceptualization may include a sense that individual passion and perseverance serve as buffers or “barrier breakers” in the face of obstacles or difficulties that are encountered.

While frequently used to describe positive traits of students or youth, grit has been invoked in leadership realms as well, including in academic leadership circles (Mrig & Sanagah, 2017; Rowland, 2017b; Shakeel et al. 2020). For example, leader resilience has been embraced as a beneficial trait, including the definition that resilient leaders “don’t let barriers or blockages prevent them from exploring possibilities. They do not deny the challenges; they just don’t let the challenges overwhelm them or cause them to give up hope...they keep their eyes ‘on the prize’ to get through difficult times” (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017, p. 25). Furthermore, Hartley (2018) describes two types of resilience — preventative resilience and restorative resilience (p. 211). Preventative resilience is the proactive establishment of personal capacity to deal with challenging events, whereas restorative resilience operates when there is a need to recover from disruptive or stressful situations (Hartley, 2018, p. 211).

Beyond the reliance on resilience or grit as individuals, institutional resilience is also prized. This concept is generally understood as institutional recovery and stability in the face of change or after disruption (Barin Cruz et al., 2016). Central to institutional resilience is the idea that organizations that possess this characteristic enforce regulation and normative practices (Barin Cruz et al., 2016). Maintaining the resilience of institutions is sometimes used to aid academic leaders in embracing complacency or actions that maintain the status quo (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017, p. 5). This understanding is critical because “if senior leaders stay stuck in habitual response, so do their organisations” (Rowland, 2017b, p. 3). Complacent or status quo responses on the part of leaders and institutions can often be deeply ingrained in the fact that leaders act from a fear of failure, rather than from the perspective of embracing risks in pursuit of a defined vision. Functioning from a fear of failure perspective often leads to leadership moves that maintain the status quo, whereas a propensity to weigh and embrace risks makes room for considering new directions and requires forward-thinking, innovative leaders.

Despite there being powerful advice in regard to the importance of resilience for academic leaders, this perspective often focuses heavily on building up leadership deficits in individuals rather than discussing the need for environmental interventions to support leadership cultures (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017). These authors also do not engage with the reality that many factors can impact “which” leaders need to be more resilient than others, including factors related to the identity of leaders such as gender (Wong et al., 2018) or race or ethnicity (Thomas, 2019; Whittaker & Montgomery, 2014; Whittaker et al., 2015). Concerns about disparities in who must preferentially operate from grit are similar to prior arguments made about the undue focus on grit and resilience in students (Goodman, 2018; Gorski, 2016; Ilela, 2019). When no attention is paid to whether certain environments inequitably require more resilience of some than of others in order to attain the same levels of success, then grit and resilience — which have great intrinsic
value — can as a result be misplaced as tools that amplify structural inequity and injustice, rather than as tools to promote success more broadly.

**Commitment to Grit/Resilience Theory as a Form of Gatekeeping.** In many ways, commitment to concepts of individual resilience and grit, as well as to institutional resilience, can be invoked as excuses not to embrace more agile interventions that promote progress in institutional commitments to and innovations in promoting equity, for instance in regard to the recruitment and retention of students and faculty from underrepresented groups (Whittaker & Montgomery, 2012, 2014; Whittaker et al., 2015). This argument is not to say that resilience is not important for individuals; however, as aforementioned, institutional environments and leaders in particular often function such that some individuals — especially those from marginalized or minoritized backgrounds — are routinely required to exhibit more grit or resilience than others in order to persist and pursue equal (if not lesser) success (Montgomery, 2018e; Smith, 2016). Functioning accordingly serves as a powerful and operative form of gatekeeping.

**Leadership and Advocacy**

**Leading Change**

To embrace the recognized benefit to organizational outcomes of groundskeeping-positioned leadership requires leaders who embrace a need for assessment of traditional or status quo practices and a need for change. Such leaders understand that their leadership practices may require the incorporation of advocacy for change on the part of individuals whom they lead and potentially transformation of systems in which they lead. Leadership “combined with advocacy is not about guiding someone through a pipeline with blockages and inequities, but about clearing the pipeline,” as has been stated in the context of change-focused mentoring (Montgomery, 2019a, p. 11). Such advocacy-grounded leadership recognizes the power of broadly promoting the success of individuals, including via means that center individual goals and aspirations in service to a unit’s or institution’s needs or mission, rather than simply measuring individual performance relative to predefined metrics of success (Montgomery, 2018d), or via gatekeeping as defined above.

The environment or context must be tended actively to assess when and where opportunities versus barriers exist, which either promote or impede individuals’ success. Such a commitment to groundskeeping over gatekeeping draws on the recognition that individuals function in an environment, and that the environment, and its health and tending, has significant impacts on individuals’ potential for success or lack thereof (Montgomery, 2018d; Rowland, 2017b). Leaders have critical roles in cultivating a bilateral focus on individual growth and performance, as well as on the active tending of the ecosystems in which the individual exists (Montgomery, 2018a). Failure on the part of individual leaders to cultivate such a bilateral perspective, and failure to actively select for leaders with such capacities, leads us to engage environments or ecosystems as infallible (Montgomery, 2018a, p. 5; Montgomery, 2018b; Montgomery, 2018d, p. 11) or free of “environmental barriers” (Whittaker & Montgomery, 2012). Ultimately, progressive leadership and mentoring are not carried out “to manage symptoms” but to
actively promote and leverage engagement “to address root causes” (Weiston-Serdan, 2017, p. 6). These root causes are what result in environments that are experienced as meritocratic by some and deeply inequitable by others (Wong et al., 2018).

One way for leaders to counteract gatekeeping is through using change leadership as a powerful means for groundskeeping. Such change-focused leaders can actively “work on the underlying system that produced the results, not try and drive new results through keeping the current systems and routines intact” (Rowland, 2017b, pp. 178–179). It is critical for groundskeeping-positioned leaders to avoid the mistakes that arise when one seeks simply to “layer change onto a system” (Rowland, 2017b, p. 154). Pursuing such a groundskeeping-perspective requires leaders to see themselves as responsible for the environment through embracing active stewardship.

**Environmental Stewardship**

Leaders are likely to recognize the need for fiscal or human resource stewardship in effective leading. Yet effective leaders must also serve as environmental stewards (Montgomery, 2019a) and organizational stewards (Rowland, 2017b)—particularly during times of change.

I have previously discussed the role of environmental stewardship in mentoring (Montgomery, 2019a), and this is equally applicable to leadership. Environmental stewardship in leading and mentoring fully recognizes that “success of the individual [happens] in and with contributions to a particular context” (Montgomery, 2019a, p. 10). Environmental stewardship, then, is a means for “tending an ecosystem in support of an individual pursuing specific goals therein” (Montgomery, 2019a, p. 11). This role of environmental stewardship is linked to the aforementioned recognized benefits of transformational leadership, which aligns with a groundskeeping leadership framework, in prioritizing individual needs and promoting the individual satisfaction of those led (Xenikou, 2017). Leaders who can serve in an environmental-stewardship capacity have “a wider appreciation of context and system dynamics” (Rowland, 2017b, p. 51). Such leaders can also function through an equity-focused lens by recognizing that they “must maintain a dual perspective, seeing the [worker] as an individual, as well as part of a larger social context” (Crutcher, 2014). Leaders who serve effectively as environmental stewards or cultivators of systems prioritize positioning and rewarding individuals who also can serve as sensors and stewards of change in organizations.

Current academic leadership development models largely focus on three major areas: conceptual understanding of leadership, skills development, and self-reflection (Figure 2; Gmelch, 2013). Additionally, some attention is given to the intersection among pairs of these developmental areas, that is, leadership application that arises when using skills to enact conceptual understanding, adapted practice that emerges from reflection on the impact and use of one’s leadership skills, and the development and advancement of theory at the intersection of reflection and conceptual understanding (Figure 2; Gmelch, 2013). Ideally, the integration or synergy of all these major areas should result in leaders who are capable of demonstrating needed stewardship (Figure 2).
Discussion

The development of leaders and enactment of leadership requires a transformation to meet current and future challenges and to adapt to the changing landscape of higher education (Gmelch, 2013; Mathews, 2018; Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017). Indeed, Mrig and Sanaghan (2017) have accurately observed that “the past and current leadership model that prizes vision, academic reputation and track record, communication and charisma, and fundraising expertise is no longer enough to meet our current and future challenges” (p. 4).

Evolving leadership undoubtedly needs to exist in academia, given the rapidly and continuously changing academic landscape, including demographics, funding models, technological advancements, and changing public expectations and support for higher education (Montgomery, 2018d; Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017; Zusman, 2005). There is an urgent need for leaders who do not default to business as usual, but instead adopt and fully embrace creativity and innovation to address emergent challenges (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017), including in the ways that we select, reward, and advance academic leaders. Many of the new changes facing higher education have been referred to as “adaptive challenges” (Heifetz & Linksy, 2017) or “adaptive change challenge” (Rowland, 2017b, p. 8). These challenges require new models of leadership, including abilities to innovate, embrace risks, navigate resistance, and pursue continuous learning (Mrig & Sanaghan, 2017; Rowland, 2017b; Rowley & Sherman, 2003). Additionally, leaders who can undertake systemic approaches to leadership are sorely needed.

When we begin to embrace the need for environmental stewards as leaders, we will rapidly progress towards identifying, cultivating, rewarding, and championing academic leaders who are not focused on or rewarded for gatekeeping or “guarding” access to the “leadership table,” but who proactively and progressively promote tending to the environment to support change and progressive leadership needed in academic environments (Montgomery, 2018c). Indeed, as described by Rowland (2017b), “leading
change demands a deep capacity to acknowledge the whole system over the selective promotion of certain parts, beliefs or interests” (p. 12), and I would add over self-promotion to this assertion. The required transformation will not only change the way we do business in academia, but will also foster new frameworks altogether for the development and performance of leadership in these environments.

Conclusion
Cultivating Progressive Academic Leadership
Whereas much of the focus on leadership selection in academic circles frequently centers on identifying leaders capable of maintaining standards and raising the reputation and ranking of institutions, new frameworks are required to select and reward leaders capable of the strategic, creative, and occasionally risk-associated leadership needed in our current dynamic environments. The current global pandemic associated with coronavirus is an extreme example of the lessons we must learn about the limitations of selecting and rewarding leaders with tactical skills best targeted towards managing established systems and “keeping the trains running,” rather than the critical need for creative, strategic leaders capable of focusing on necessary tactics while at the same time building new “trains” and paths in the midst of the need for them.

Such strategic and innovative leadership in our increasingly diverse and global context requires leaders with abilities to enact vision, who are equity-centered, advocacy-grounded, and stewardship-focused. The cultivation of such leaders requires our systems and the leadership development programs designed to identify and cultivate the leaders of these systems to rapidly evolve from being driven by gatekeeping practices and principles to being strongly groundskeeping-positioned.

Postscript
Academic Leadership in the Midst of Pandemics
At the time of revision, higher education leadership is facing challenges beyond the scope and impact of those that may arise in a particular institution or due to more current occurrences such as leadership transitions. The entire higher education ecosystem is facing two emergent crises: a crisis driven by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 and the COVID-19 disease, as well as an ongoing, long-standing national crisis related to systemic racism and a need for social justice. The latter crisis has been revealed most recently due to persistent health disparities being brought to widespread attention due to disproportionate numbers of COVID-19 cases and associated deaths of Black, Latinx, and Native American citizens (Godoy & Wood, 2020) and a national catastrophe in the policing of Black Americans, the most recent case sparking widespread protests being the killing of George Floyd (Blain, 2020). These are both catastrophes of pandemic natures—a global health crisis pandemic and a national racism pandemic. The leadership needed to bring required change due to these pandemics must be groundskeeping-centered and break from leadership focused on keeping the gates, which in many ways contributed to the impact of these current pandemics.
Especially in crisis, leaders must recognize that some actions are required that simply cannot be “system maintaining”, rather than ‘system changing’ (Rowland, 2019; Rowland et al. 2020b). Furthermore, timely leadership in crisis requires quick feedback loops without sacrificing open, timely communication and continued cultivation of trust (Montgomery, 2020b; Rowland et al., 2020a). In the COVID-19 pandemic, this rapid feedback and initiation of needed leadership action entailed the swift move to offering classes and assessment online for the remaining portion of academic terms, as well as other evolving approaches such as virtual celebrations offered outside the standard framework of rank and file graduation ceremonies and proactive extensions of tenure clocks related to review for promotion and tenure (Montgomery, 2020b). For the racism-associated pandemic, leaders and institutions have moved to issuing statements of positionality, support, and sometimes solidarity with Black students, staff, and faculty due to the latest killing and associated protests.

These dynamic, and potentially volatile, moments require leaders to draw on expertise beyond themselves; in fact, leaders must often decenter their role and cultivate systems-based approaches to leadership and implementation of mechanisms for responsiveness and change (Rowland & Casimir, 2020). Certainly campuses across the higher education ecosystem made use of the expertise of a broad swath of individuals to support the transition to teaching at a distance at the onset of the health pandemic, as well as the current need to vet and facilitate a “return to campus” after months-long at-a-distance learning and working. In these times, leaders must recognize that needed change in the midst of crisis is more than ever a “collective, collaborative task” (Rowland et al., 2020b). Such a collective, community-engaged leadership perspective may be much more feasible for groundskeeping-positioned leaders than those accustomed to keeping the gates and centering their own or traditional institutional views and approaches. Leaders who understand and implement groundskeeping- or systems-based leadership methods in dynamic times focus on “creating stabilising structures and disrupting routines” (Rowland & Casimir, 2020); such leadership embraces disturbance as an opportunity for reflection and implementing appropriate change, rather than allowing the disturbances to feed anxiety and confusion about the way forward.

The responses to the systemic racism pandemic have been somewhat distinct in that many of these have been driven by sharing of position or solidarity statements with less frequent identification and implementation of rapid changes in processes and procedures. The danger is that many institutional efforts have a great risk of being perceived as a performative declaration of an espoused commitment to equity — racial, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and more — in the face of crisis. This perspective is buoyed by the observation that many academic leaders have issued statements that point to national issues related to police brutality against Black men and women in the U.S. without fully acknowledging recent, long-standing, or systemic local issues related to these same issues of racism and inequity, nor are these leaders manifesting real plans to address them. It is much easier to espouse commitment to such issues through declaring alliance with individuals from aggrieved populations in response to a publicly-engaged national agenda with platitudes rather than specifically demonstrating lived commitment to social justice in leadership practices through engagement with and
deployment of specific and meaningful interventions for the same populations at one’s own institution (Montgomery, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e).

Statements of commitment in the midst of a national crisis can be a powerful method of gatekeeping through serving as a means for encouragement of protest outward rather than inward. By contrast, groundskeeping-focused leaders would recognize that “leading change in today’s turbulent world is...a disciplined practice that requires intentional and continual effort” (Rowland, 2019). One-time statements on unit-level or institutional commitments to Black faculty, staff, and students or proclamations that “Black lives matter” simply will not serve to avow or demonstrate long-term lived and ongoing commitment to these members of a community as valued and valuable (Montgomery, 2020a).

Performative commitment to DEI as “gatekeeping”, as well as with the COVID-19 pandemic, can also be identified through the issuing of statements or decisions about solidarity to Black constituents or about campus reopening at a time that institutions are relatively certain that there will not be real push back or negative reactions. That is, these institutions often play it safe and take on limited risks by issuing statements of a nature and in a time that are consistent with the masses, i.e., joining a chorus and being reactive rather than being a leading and proactive voice. Such leadership responses allow “performing” commitment while “keeping the gates.”

Leading capably is founded in values and trust at all times, yet especially in the midst of crises when the outcomes and way forward remain largely uncertain. Importantly, trust ideally is cultivated before being the middle of a crisis and “needs to be firmly established and cultivated daily so that all can focus time, energy and resources [on] areas of greatest priority in times of crisis or urgency” (Montgomery, 2020b). Leadership grounded in trust and values requires paying attention to the system and an expressed and demonstrated commitment “to tune into and move the system around them” (Rowland & Brauckmann, 2020). Astute leaders recognize that their acknowledgement and actions can either demonstrate commitment to gatekeeping, or even in the times of crisis, groundskeeping-positioned leaders can move by assessing the grounds and responding accordingly. The navigation of these pandemics is adding even more credence to the position that we need to rapidly evolve academic leadership from traditional gatekeeping perspectives to systems-responsive, groundskeeping-centered leadership and engagement.

Conflict of Interest
The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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**About the Author**

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Abstract
This paper analyzes the theoretical relationships between transformational leadership, knowledge management, firm performance, and information technology. My analysis of the literature in this article demonstrates that although past empirical research confirms the importance of these theoretical relationships for building organizational performance outcomes but they have failed to present these theoretical links in an integrated model. This article develops arguments on the impacts of transformational leadership on knowledge management, firm performance, and information technology. A review of the existing literature illustrates that transformational drive performance through improved use of data, information, and knowledge to increase speed, lower cost, and meet customer expectations to secure competitive advantage. More specifically, this research shows that transformational leaders not only directly impact knowledge management, but more specifically, foster more effective information technology use, which can positively contribute to the effectiveness of knowledge management as a significant driver of firm performance.

Introduction
Executives are spending more time today concerned about operational risk than ever before. Operational risk, according to Wiig (1994), is an operational approach to represent knowledge management but in this case, it seeks to apply organizational knowledge in order to improve firm performance (Keskin, 2005). Existing literature combines the interactions of transformational leadership, knowledge management, and firm performance. The purpose of this article is to synthesize the extant literature on these organizational factors in the field of management. I expand on this concept by attempting to better understand the mechanisms by which knowledge management and firm performance are influenced by transformational leadership. In the first section, I present a new facet that executives have embraced—transformational leadership.

A literature review is conducted to identify the relationships between information technology, transformational leadership, knowledge management, and firm performance. The nature of the interactions between transformational leadership, knowledge management, information technology, and firm performance suggests several complementary insights for the existing literature. In particular, my focus on this
critical role of transformational leadership allows us to have a rich basis for understanding the mechanisms by which information technology is better managed by transformational leaders. This article has articulated a different approach and it extends these lines of study by examining how the four vital factors of transformational leadership, information technology, knowledge management, and firm performance are linked.

Transformational Leadership and Knowledge Management Processes: How Are They Linked?4

Transformational Leadership and Knowledge Accumulation
Transformational leadership plays a critical role in developing interactions and relationships towards more effective performance at the organizational level. Transformational leadership theory can also serve as an ideal vehicle to develop social networks, thereby providing further opportunities for employees to explore new ideas and knowledge. These roles could also be justified using the dimensions of this leadership, such as inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation which inspire followers to take risk-related efforts and generate more innovative solutions. Moreover, it is evident that a transformational leader can, in turn, facilitate the knowledge acquisition process through idealized influence that is considered essential for developing relationships. To demonstrate, several researchers including Politis (2001), Jung, Chow and Wu (2003), and Tse and Mitchell (2010), empirically investigated the impact of transformational leadership on knowledge creation and acquisition processes. These researchers highly affirmed that a transformational form of leadership was a necessary precursor for the creation and acquisition of knowledge. Following this, it can be established that transformational leadership positively impacts the knowledge accumulation process by promoting its fundamental constructs, including knowledge creation and acquisition. Furthermore, transformational leadership improves the knowledge integration by providing intellectual stimulation, which enhances the knowledge sharing process around the company.

Transformational Leadership and Knowledge Integration
A transformational leader could also provide a significant contribution to knowledge integration through implementing idealized influence aimed at enhancing relationships within organizations. Scholars Liu and Phillips (2011) explored this relationship, and illustrated that transformational leadership could build a climate that would inspire followers to share their knowledge and facilitate the knowledge-sharing process. Moreover, transformational leaders are clearly the ones who establish networks with environmental components, thereby adopting the idealized influence aspect necessary in developing relationships and interactions.

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4 Knowledge management has been defined from various perspectives. Executives embrace the process perspective because it takes a task-based approach by translating the management of knowledge into various organizational processes. I take executives through a new model that is based upon Lee and Kim’s (2001) work in this area because of its appropriateness for transformational leadership.

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Transformational Leadership and Knowledge Reconfiguration
It can also be argued that this theory of leadership inspires organizations as a whole to develop networking with more effective enterprises through employing inspirational motivation by setting highly-desired expectations for followers. Therefore, transformational leaders provide a significant contribution to knowledge reconfiguration by facilitating the activities associated with networking. And these roles that stress a more knowledge-oriented company highly recommend transformational leaders for the knowledge economy largely based on managing companies’ knowledge assets. In this way, Liu and Phillips (2011) have provided empirical evidence to support the vital importance of transformational leadership in improving the processes of knowledge management within companies.

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Performance: How Are They Linked?
Researchers including Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir (2002), Hancott (2005), Zhu, Chew, and Spangler (2005), Flemming (2009), Patiar and Mia (2009), García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, and Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez (2012) all illustrate that the four principal roles of transformational leaders impact various financial and non-financial performance. The findings of these studies have been summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Effects of Transformational Leadership on Companies’ Financial and Non-Financial Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Principal Roles of Transformational Leaders</th>
<th>Financial Performance</th>
<th>Non-financial Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Idealized influence (Attributes)</td>
<td>*Improving the price of stock</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Idealized influence (Behaviors)</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Decreasing the costs of organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Inspirational motivation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>*Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>*Increasing the sales of organization</td>
<td>*Improving innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Individual considerations</td>
<td></td>
<td>*Increasing the rapidity of responses to environmental changes</td>
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<td>*Improving the quality of products</td>
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<td>*Customer focus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*Developing opportunities for learning</td>
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Knowledge Management Is Crucial to Leadership and Long-Term Success
To define knowledge management as a facilitator of transformational leadership, Lee and Kim’s (2001) approach to managing knowledge has been selected as it reflects a more strategic and practical perspective. This approach is process-oriented and most
applicable in the context of leading organizations. In Lee and Kim’s (2001) view, organizational knowledge, firstly, is accumulated by creating new knowledge from organizational intellectual capital and acquiring knowledge from external environments. Therefore, this process embraces generating knowledge from existing intellectual capital through developing organizational innovation. This knowledge exchange with external business partners develops innovative environments that enable transformational leaders in intellectual stimulation aimed at creating a more innovative climate in companies. In addition, this process enhances the capabilities of transformational leaders to engage in inspirational motivation, which is directed at setting highly-desired expectation to recognize possible opportunities in the business environments. The knowledge exchange also positively contributes to how transformational leaders facilitate idealized influence, and develop a more effective vision, and includes more comprehensive information and insights about external environments. Furthermore, the knowledge creation improves employees’ empowerment, and largely develops the role of transformational leaders in individualized consideration that focuses on empowering human knowledge holders. Hence, the synthesis of existing literature has provided fascinating evidence regarding a vital importance of knowledge accumulation in the effectiveness of transformational leadership.

Secondly, knowledge is integrated internally to enhance the effectiveness and efficiencies in various systems and processes as well as to be more responsive to market changes. In this process, the accumulated knowledge is synthesized to produce higher quality outcomes. In general, knowledge integration focuses on monitoring and controlling knowledge management practices, evaluating the efficacy of current knowledge, defining and recognizing core knowledge areas, coordinating experts, sharing organizational knowledge, and scanning the changes of knowledge requirements to keep the quality of their productions/services in market. In order to promote knowledge integration, Cohen and Levinthal (1990) argue that members’ skillsets and interpersonal relations based on trust and reciprocity can increasingly empower the performance of these expert groups. It is apparent that both knowledge integration activities of evaluating the existing organizational knowledge and assessing the required changes to keep the quality positively impact on transformational leaders to more effectively recognize their employee’s learning needs are required. Further, a systematic process of coordinating company-wide experts enables transformational leadership by propelling the role of intellectual stimulation which serves to create a more innovative environment. In addition, an apparent argument is that those qualities indicating a high-performing expert group, as Tiwana, Bharadwaj, and Sambamurthy (2003) argue, are considerably overlapped with Kerry Webb’s (2007) scales about an effective transformational leader that examine the capabilities of these leaders in creating trust within companies. Logically, this practice itself develops a climate that transformational leaders target.

Thirdly, the knowledge within organizations needs to be reconfigured to meet both environmental changes and new challenges. In this process, knowledge is shared with other organizations operating in the business environment. Past studies have observed that companies might lack the required capabilities to interact with other companies, or
even suffer the distrust to share their knowledge. These studies indicate that expert
groups may not have sufficient diversity in order to comprehend knowledge acquired
from external sources. Due to these limitations, Lee and Kim (2001) posit that
networking with business partners is a key activity for companies to enhance knowledge
exchange. Given these points, networking with external business partners facilitates the
role of idealized influence, thereby empowering transformational leaders to become
better able to develop a more effective vision which incorporates various concerns and
values of external business partners. Additionally, the knowledge transference among
companies itself improves the efficacy of learning, which in turn enables both
transformational leadership roles of idealized consideration by empowering human
resource and intellectual stimulation through creating new knowledge and solutions.
Taken together, this review illustrates that networking among companies in a domestic
and international market leads to enhance the effectiveness of transformational
leadership within companies. Furthermore, the empirical studies by Lee and Choi
(2003), Fugate, Stank, and Mentzer (2009), Oh (2009), and Cho (2011) have collectively
shown that knowledge is a significant indicator for improving organizational performance
through the way it is managed by top management executives. These studies have also
illustrated that the knowledge management processes can improve financial and non-
financial performance through increased sales, customer satisfaction, learning
opportunities, innovation, and quality of products and services.

Transformational Leadership and Information Technology: How Are They
Linked?
Transformational leadership has been highlighted as a theory of leadership where
relationships and interactions are developed within companies. This leadership theory
concentrates on setting highly-desired expectations and inspiring followers to identify
further opportunities in their respective workplaces. Information technology used as an
internal resource to facilitate organizational communications and improve the search for
knowledge could be developed by transformational leaders to enhance their
effectiveness. The idealized influence aspect of transformational leadership can be
considered as an important facilitator of information technology, which enhances
interactions among organizational members and departments. In addition, a
transformational leader is a role model who is admired and respected by subordinates.
Accordingly, it can be argued that information technology could be perceived as a critical
resource by organizational members because a transformational leader becomes a role
model for them. Similarly, Yee (2000) and Seyal (2015) posit that a transformational
leader serves as a role model by highlighting the importance of the effective use of
information technology. In conformity with this reasoning, scholars Schepers, Wetzels,
and de Ruyter (2005) conducted empirical research whereby they discovered a
significant correlation between transformational leadership and perceived usefulness of
information technology within companies. Noseworthy (1998) and Chandna and
Krishnan (2009) also affirm the strategic role of transformational leadership in the
success of information technology implementation in organizations.
Information Technology and Knowledge Management: How Are They Linked?

Information technology can be employed to enhance the conversations and exchange of knowledge between organizational members. In Gold, Malhotra, and Segars' (2001) view, knowledge shared through information technology could positively contribute to knowledge integration. Grant (1996) highlights knowledge integration as a major reason for the existence of a company. Equally important, knowledge sharing itself can in turn develop a more innovative climate and facilitate knowledge creation in organizations. Accordingly, information technology can play a crucial role in improving knowledge creation. Thus, it can be inferred that information technology is an internal resource that develops and integrates organizational knowledge as the most strategic factor of competitiveness. In addition, information technology can be also considered as a facilitator of the knowledge creation process through providing the essential infrastructures to store and retrieve organizational knowledge. As a result, it is apparent that information and communication technology positively affects various processes of knowledge management. Similarly, Muhammed (2006) highlights major functions for information technology. He explains that information and communication technology enhances learning and knowledge sharing by providing access to knowledge, stimulating new ideas and knowledge generation. He also elaborates that information technology transfers individual skillsets to other members and departments, thereby improving knowledge capturing, storing, and accumulating to achieve organizational goals.

Figure 1 provides a snapshot of how transformational leadership, information technology, knowledge management, and firm performance are linked.

![Figure 1. Relationship between Transformational Leadership, Information Technology, Knowledge Management, and Firm Performance](image-url)
Conclusion
This study indicates that information technology plays a mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and knowledge management. Ergo, the influences of transformational leadership on knowledge management occurred not only directly, but also indirectly through the mediating effects of information technology. This research contributes to knowledge by exploring a framework upon which to continue developing more comprehensive understandings of the relationships between transformational leadership, knowledge management, information technology, and organizational performance. I suggest that scholars take these ideas and continue to conduct research using executives as the focal point so that academic scholarship can empirically investigate the correlation among these factors and meet the needs of managerial implications at the higher echelons of organizations worldwide. In addition, this study contributes to practice by identifying the ways in which to build a high-performing organization through transformational leadership knowledge management, and information technology.

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Case Studies

The following information was extracted from an information sheet distributed to civilian teachers and counselors who volunteered at the brig circa late 1960s.

U.S. penology has undergone many changes in methods and techniques through the years. The present-day phase with rehabilitation as the major goal was first started in civilian prisons in 1925. Not until 34 years later (1959) did the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps adopt this method.

The figures on manpower lost due to confinement are staggering. As an example, on June 1965, there were 498 Navy and Marine Corps prisoners confined at the U.S. Disciplinary Command at Portsmouth, NH; 17 in federal institutions; and 1,812 Sailors and Marines in brigs. As of this date, there is a total of 3,276 men locked up.

In the interest of reducing these figures, all Navy and Marine Corps brigs, as well as the Navy’s prison (Portsmouth), have correctional counselors assigned to the staffs.

(NOTE: called “the castle” by many, the Navy’s prison was used from 1908 to 1974 and it is actually located in Kittery, Maine on the grounds of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.). Four counselors are assigned to the NTC, Great Lakes, IL brig. The counselors are either Chief Petty Officers or Petty Officers First Class with a background of interviewing and counseling. They are graduates of a four-week Correctional Counselor School, which covers such items as: Correctional History, Brig Counselor Duties, Counseling Techniques, Marine and Navy Clemency, two weeks of Psychology, and Alcoholism. Each confinee at the brig is assigned a counselor and is seen within two working days after confinement.

Civilian counselors are desired to bolster the work of the Navy counselors. Many confinées see the Navy’s brig counselors as career Navy men and believe they are more interested in the Navy’s welfare than their own. Also, some confinées will divulge more factual information to a civilian counselor. An educational program has also been introduced in the brig where teachers from local schools conduct classes each week in mathematics, history and English.

A Leadership Test Like Few Others

— by Ritch K. Eich

The year is 1968 – two years after I enlisted in the United States Navy as a reservist – and the place is a man-made island built in the ‘30s in San Francisco Bay for the Golden State International Exposition: Naval Station Treasure Island. I was berthed temporarily at Treasure Island, awaiting orders and assuming I was about to get shipped off to Vietnam. Instead, and much to my surprise, I was sent to the brig where I learned invaluable lessons in leadership.

My orders for the next two years called for me to serve as a correctional counselor at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, in Illinois. I saw a foreign and inequitable world that was about to face a massive and long overdue transformation, one that put Navy leaders – as well as me – to the test.

Historically, the Navy was a rigid, rules-bound bureaucracy led by a predominantly white officer corps. There were huge class divisions; and deeply entrenched institutional racism and sexism were the norms. And, the conventional wisdom was that there were severe limits to what junior enlisted sailors could accomplish.

The Navy in the 1960s and 1970s, much like society as a whole in the United States, was simmering with racial tension and dissatisfaction. Enlistments and re-enlistments in the Navy were plummeting. Protests, war, and death dominated the news. The military was unpopular. Minorities and women in particular lacked opportunities for advancement in the Navy,
leading up to, in part, the 1970 race riot at the Great Lakes brig where I was stationed.

**The Brig**

This was a time when U.S. involvement in Indochina had begun to grow. Our involvement in the region initially began small around the mid-1950s and escalated when President Johnson sent 3,500 U.S. Marines to Vietnam for the first time in 1965. Our troop presence in the country peaked to roughly 536,000 in 1968.

At the time, Naval Station Treasure Island was a bustling place with many sailors reporting in and many others departing with orders in hand. For the most part, those of us who were there in a transient status awaiting orders to ship out were kept busy working around the base. I recall listening repeatedly to Otis Redding’s 1967 hit, “Sittin’ on the Dock of the Bay,” a song whose lyrics seemed to fit my life to a T.

Early one morning after breakfast, I was ordered to report to the island’s correctional center, better known as “the brig.” My heart pounded and I could not imagine what possible offense I’d committed. When I arrived, the commanding officer of the Treasure Island brig informed me that the Department of the Navy was concerned about the increasing loss of manpower as rising numbers of young sailors were being incarcerated, many committing offenses in boot camp or at their first duty station. Repeat offenses were also becoming too common despite efforts by the Navy’s justice system to
rehabilitate the offenders, and the Navy was seeking new, innovative ways to get sailors back on active duty. My experience and advanced college education – I had a master’s degree in personnel administration – were given as the reasons for my being considered for the billet as a Navy correctional center counselor, if I was interested. After my initial shock wore off, I told the brig officer that I had prepared physically and mentally for assignment to a patrol boat in the Naval Forces Vietnam (“brown water navy”), but would serve wherever the Navy directed me to go. Several days later, my orders arrived directing me not to go to Vietnam but to report to the correctional center at Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois.

When I arrived, I was shocked by the conditions. The brig’s facilities were antiquated and like many buildings of that era contained large amounts of asbestos and lead paint. The brig had been built in 1942 during WWII and had a maximum-security cellblock added in 1952 plus another wing added in 1953. There was no space for prisoner arraignment and legal counsel as JAG offices were on the main side of the base. The Navy’s role in the brig at the time was largely educational and motivational. Prisoners could take classes leading to a GED (high school degree), attend religious services and see a counselor. A retired local Navy captain would periodically visit with interested prisoners to offer advice on patriotism and service to one’s country.

I thought it problematic that the U.S. Marine Corps was in charge of guard duty and discipline at the brig, as was the case for confinement facilities throughout the Navy until 1976. Two Marine officers and a senior enlisted Marine – a warden – oversaw the brig. The brig officer was a major who was later promoted to lieutenant colonel and the assistant brig officer was a captain. Enlisted Marines, many of whom had been awarded Purple Hearts for combat wounds sustained in Vietnam, maintained close supervision of the prisoners. Many of the sentries were in Casualty Company and hence after completion of their day’s brig duty would report to the Naval Hospital on base for medical treatment or physical or occupational therapy. It became clear to me that using decorated Marines to guard prisoners was less than ideal for a whole host of reasons. Understandably, some had little empathy for the prisoners, some of whom were awaiting

**Brig, Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Illinois**
court-martial or transfer to the Naval Disciplinary Command in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Some prisoners were confined for relatively minor first offenses such as an unauthorized absence, or disobeying a direct order like refusing to jump in the pool after failing to satisfactorily complete the swimming test the first time (they were afraid of the water.) Many other prisoners had committed multiple and more serious offenses. It was clear that myriad prisoners did not want to be in the Navy to begin with – there were a number of sailors incarcerated in the brig who enlisted after being given two options by a civilian judge: join the Navy or go to jail. Not surprisingly, this practice did not inspire honorable service or bring in willing sailors. The African-American prisoners felt increasingly alienated and angry due to institutional racial discrimination at every rank.

Regrettably, during my two-year stint, there were instances of prisoner abuse. Some Marines lost a stripe or more due to misconduct. We had prison breaks, hunger strikes, and at times, overcrowding. Racial strife came to a head in a race riot on Feb. 8-9, 1970 in the brig, when black and white inmates attacked each other and had to be separated. Several prisoners required medical treatment. Given the conditions described above, the riot was inevitable.

Admiral Elmo Zumwalt: The Navy Reformer
Along came Admiral Elmo Russell Zumwalt, Jr., 49, who President Richard Nixon nominated as the Chief of Naval Operations; a transformative figure who was the youngest person ever named to that top position. Things began to change immediately. When he took office in 1970, Zumwalt led the Navy’s long journey to equality. He empowered enlisted people, believed in them, and encouraged the “old salts” to stand up for their rights. Many of the Navy’s regulations were archaic and parochial, with several policies going back to Colonial times. Zumwalt, an iconoclast, brought Navy customs and traditions into modern times with creative, strong but controversial leadership.

A veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam, Zumwalt (1920-2000) was disciplined, bold, innovative, caring,
and is understandably perhaps best remembered for his crusading efforts to reduce racism and sexism in the Navy. Too seldom recognized today, however, were his efforts to retire many old, worn out warships and thus free up monies to be used more strategically for newer, more lethal ones; to enhance the capability, professionalism and reputation of the surface warfare community; to minimize if not blunt intramural service rivalries; and to address the growing Soviet threat. He was the right person at the right time.

Zumwalt attacked the organizational deficiencies of the Navy from the ground up. He treated the lowest-ranking sailors with dignity and respect. He made people want to re-enlist. Through his progressive directives, known as “Z-grams,” Zumwalt tried to humanize the Navy and improve everyday living conditions for minorities, Navy spouses, female sailors and junior officers. He issued directives to establish ROTC programs at predominantly black colleges, change regulations at the U.S. Naval Academy to boost enrollment of African Americans and women, permit women to serve aboard ships at sea, and end sexist and racist policies. He created a Minority Affairs Office and loosened up the dress code. He allowed women to become Naval aviators. In 1970, Zumwalt issued what he believed was his most important directive: “Equal Opportunity in the Navy.”

Zumwalt faced considerable pushback from some Navy leaders, white sailors of all ranks, the media and Washington pundits. He battled jealousy from other military leaders and Navy chief petty officers – the indispensable careerists that run things – who resisted his reform efforts. But he stood his ground. In awarding Zumwalt the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998, President Bill Clinton called him, “One of the greatest models of integrity and leadership and genuine humanity our nation has ever produced.”

Lessons from the Brig
As I reflect back 50+ years, I remember feeling fortunate at the time to have read many articles and books in college on topics that helped me when I worked in the brig: organizational theory and behavior, semantics, corporate culture, leadership, social psychology, motivation, management, counseling, negotiation, communication and personnel. In time, names like Rensis Likert, Peter Drucker, Douglas McGregor, Carl
Rogers, B.F. Skinner, Warren Bennis, Abraham Maslow, S. I. Hayakawa, Max Weber, David Berlo, Edgar Schein and Victor Vroom were among those that were important.

I drew many lessons from my brig experience that I have tried to apply and improve upon since 1968. The following have stood the test of time:

1. Always strive to maintain your personal set of values and principles that you wish to live by. They will guide you as you are challenged countless times in life.
2. When you sense or see a serious wrong being committed, speak up. Gather the facts or evidence, develop possible actions that may solve the problem, and take them to your supervisor. Calmly try to enlist his or her cooperation by clearly stating the problem. Offer potential solutions and seek their recommended approach.
3. Invest in training. Setting clear expectations for the Marine guards, then training to those standards, may well have headed off some of the prisoner discontent experienced in the brig.
4. Develop professional relationships with people in other departments or divisions. Learn their needs, goals, and frustrations. Discern what joint strategies might be developed to improve recurring problems that affect the command.
5. Respect others’ rank or status (military or civilian) and pay appropriate deference to them, but never cower, as it will lessen your influence.
6. Remember that there is strength in numbers, so try to enlist staunch supporters who will back your ideas.

The Big Picture
Finally, my experience with the brig reminds me that regardless of your position, assignment or job, and whether or not you land where you want in your career, you should strive to make meaningful contributions and do your absolute best. As the age-old adage says, “sprout where you are planted.” I had made a conscious decision to join the Navy in 1966 as an enlisted man, not as an officer, and it wasn’t until a year after I’d completed active duty that I received a commission as an officer. Nearly 30 years later, I retired as a captain.

I firmly believe my experience as an enlisted man helped me become a better officer. Having “walked in their shoes,” I felt I had a keener understanding of how to relate to enlisted sailors, how to listen to them, motivate them, and challenge them. Enlisted personnel learn accountability, punctuality, how to work under intense pressure with sometimes limited resources, trouble-shooting, problem-solving, getting along with others in close quarters and how to appreciate other cultures, ethnicities, genders, lifestyles, and religions. Drucker’s admonition was correct: leaders must “teach” and he didn’t mean in the classroom per se, but in many different ways.

Remember: “If your ship does not come in … swim out and meet it.” — Author unknown
My “job” in the military was to serve where the Navy felt I was needed most. If it was in the brig and not in Vietnam, so be it. I had never previously worked in any kind of penal environment nor had any particular interest in doing so, but I’d already decided that I would serve where ordered. I tried to help offenders turn their lives around and become productive citizens whether they returned to active duty or were awaiting discharge.

We must learn to accept change and commit to do our best. I faced a new and tough challenge by being placed in a military prison overseen by patriotic, decorated, combat-proven Marines who deserved much better after Vietnam. I started out in the brig with little credibility given my junior enlisted rank, wearing civilian clothes, and having no formal training. But I decided I’d give 100 percent, listen, and learn from my coworkers who were more experienced, and do my best. I vowed to give 100 percent before I joined the Navy, in part, due to my appreciation for the selflessness and bravery of the Sullivan brothers in WWII, in tribute to my father who worked in a Navy shipyard during the war, and in admiration of my courageous childhood hero, Jackie Robinson.

Fortunately, the Navy today is a much different service, one where women and people from all ethnic backgrounds can, and do, excel and have opportunities they were previously denied for a great career. The Navy has performed excellent work over the years to address many of the shortcomings in its treatment of minorities and women. Thanks to the sacrifice of countless service members, veterans and courageous leaders like Admiral Zumwalt, the Navy – and all us – are better off today. And, without question, the Marines always had my back!

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PLANT POWER:
WELCOME TO THE FUTURE OF FAST FOOD

— by Susannah Larson

Introduction
During a time when the world is facing unprecedented impact from Covid-19, the topic of meat consumption is perhaps more relevant than ever. With the virus linked to zoonotic factors and with many US meat processing plants designated coronavirus hotspots collectively threatening the supply chain (Wendy’s restaurants, for example, in early May of 2020 experienced a shortage of fresh beef curtailing portions of its menu), now is a prime time for deep reflection on the benefits a vegan diet may provide. Preventing future pandemics may now be the fourth motivation incentivizing the meat-eating public.
to question their food choices as the meat industry is also experiencing lower demand due to climate change, animal mistreatment, and human health factors. Paving the way to combat these issues yet allowing people to enjoy traditional US cuisine, is pioneer and entrepreneur Zach Vouga of Plant Power Fast Food (PPFF). He and his two partners, Jeffrey Harris and Mitch Wallis, have ignited a grand vision to provide classic fast food options such as burgers, fries, nuggets, and shakes, that are all vegan, plant-based, zero cholesterol, and free of GMO or artificially-flavored ingredients. The chain is flourishing in Southern California despite the challenges the pandemic has presented as this innovative team is proving that a company can attain financial viability and generate profits without compromising values, ethics, health, safety, or the environment: in other words, they are doing well by doing good.

**Plant Power Fast Food**

Founded in January 2016, with its first location in the Ocean Beach area of San Diego, Plant Power Fast Food began offering indoor and patio dining, take-out, and drive-up service similar to that of the “Sonic” restaurants. Fast forward to today, PPFF now has “more than $7.2 million in funding [and has expanded] to seven restaurants and a mobile food truck operation in just four and a half years.” This relatively new brand has done exceedingly well in weathering Covid-related market disruption and the company is currently on track to register brand-wide net sales of over $12 million in 2020. As shared by CEO Vouga, “with three additional projects in development and more in the early planning stages, Plant Power has captured the attention of industry insiders by demonstrating the viability of a 100% plant-based brand in the fast-food market segment.” To date, PPFF is the only chain of drive-through fast food restaurants in America that features a 100% vegan menu. Vouga reflects that while other purely vegan concepts exist, they need not be seen as competition as the global fast food opportunities represent a $600-billion market share, so businesses with the shared mission of providing sustainable and cruelty-free food have plenty of room to join the movement.

**Vision Statement**

Plant Power not only acknowledges systemic issues and consequences behind a meat-based industry, but it actively wants to improve the nation’s current standing on multiple fronts while appealing to a mass audience. As detailed by Vouga:

*We recognize that a dietary model based on animal agriculture is inherently flawed: It causes unnecessary suffering for countless animals, is devastating to the earth’s ecosystems and is the root cause of ill health and disease for an increasingly large portion of our human family. It’s not enough to recognize the problem: We are committed to being part of the solution.* By demonstrating the viability of a plant-based, cruelty free, environmentally sustainable and healthier alternative in the fast-food restaurant format, we seek to expose millions of consumers to convenient and delicious plant-based meals. We hope to inspire them to ask themselves important questions about their food choices and to begin to explore plant-based alternatives that can positively impact their own lives and the world we all share. While we’re
inspired by a vision for meaningful change, we don’t preach: The food we serve and the love with which we serve it is itself the message.

Mission
In efforts to realize its vision, the PPFF team developed the slogan, “The Future of Fast Food.” Vouga describes this as perfectly encompassing the current philosophy of an adapting world, exponentially adopting a genuine interest towards veganism. He stated that the company’s goal within the next 20 years is to be a nationwide chain, even global, while witnessing other fast-food conglomerates transition to plant-based options comprising a minimum of half of their respective menus. Vouga, who was featured on Forbes’s List of “30 under 30 - Food & Drink 2020,” explained that he and his partners aim to become “the vegan McDonald’s.” Even mimicking the well-known McDonald’s Big Mac™ burger, PPFF has created a plant-based “Big Zac,” derived from Vouga’s name.

We are committed to being part of the solution.

He reflected that to reach the end goal, the company would act as a bridge between the stereotypical depiction of a vegan diet being limited to “just tofu and broccoli” and meet the desires of the masses by providing mouth-watering fast food fare. The business touts:

Delicious food first, vegan second ... [because] when delicious food becomes the objective messenger, people’s mental wheels really begin to turn, and real change starts to happen.

Vouga explained that the Plant Power’s motto “We’re not just a restaurant, we’re a revolution” aims to uphold the benefits plant-based food provides such as “99% less water, 93% less land, emit 90% fewer GHGEs (Greenhouse Gas Emissions) and uses 46% less energy than the food systems serving beef burgers” as seen in a Life Cycle Assessment conducted by the University of Michigan which compared Beyond Meat burgers to “a ¼ pound of U.S. beef” (Heller & Keoleian, 2018).

Industry Shifts
While deleterious consequences of meat-based diets and factory farming have been known for years, an exponential trend appears to be occurring with interest in veganism or at least with respect to a reduction of eating meat. Vouga reflects that 5 to 6 years ago, he would not have predicted the market for veganism to be as large, or as more widely accepted, as it is proving today though he acknowledged there was still a viable customer base to pursue his idea. With this in mind, Plant Power set out to appeal to
“flexitarians” - people who, on occasion, eat meat or fish but primarily adhere to a vegetarian diet. Successfully drawing in a new audience, PPFF reported that 75% of its patrons are neither vegan nor vegetarian but simply looking to try something new that tastes delicious. As per Vouga:

**We have countless stories of guests sharing that Plant Power was the impetus for their plant-based journey. For us, this is the proverbial icing on the cake. It’s what we set out to do, and to see it manifesting is the most fulfilling feeling I can describe.**

People around the globe are representative of this growing phenomenon, testing the vegan or vegetarian waters:

- In 2017, 44% of consumers in Germany follow a low-meat diet, which is a significant increase from 2014 (26%). Similarly, 6% of US consumers now claim to be vegan, up from just 1% in 2014 (Top Trend in Prepared Foods, 2017).
- More recently, Forbes’s “The World in 2019” article claimed 25% of 25-34-year-old Americans now identify as vegetarian or vegan, and vegan food sales in 2018 rose “ten times faster than food sales as a whole.”
- A recent report released by the US Bureau of Industry and Security estimated that the plant-based market would reach $480.43 billion by 2024, with a projected combined annual growth rate of 13.82% from 2019 to 2024 (Nettle, 2020).
- Nestlé stated that “87% of consumers in the US, including vegans and meat-eaters, are including plant-based protein into their diets, and over 50% of consumers in the UK are reportedly following a flexitarian diet” (Nettle, 2020).

**Impetus for Change**

**Climate Change**

Shifting dietary decisions may be best explained by the immediate threat to the all global citizens and ecosystems, of the environmental consequences of factory farming, the name given to an industry which Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines as “a farm on which large numbers of livestock are raised indoors in conditions intended to maximize production at minimal cost.” Factory farming has been shown to be a significant accelerant of climate change. Meat and dairy products consume 70% of global freshwater and consist of 38% of all land use (Gullone, 2017). Furthermore, these industries account for 14.5% of all greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Gerber, 2013), exceeding that generated from the entire transportation sector (Gibbons, 2016). Within the animal agricultural sector, beef accounts for the largest amount of GHG emissions followed by “milk, pork, poultry and eggs” in descending order (Harwatt, 2019).

The three most common GHGs attributed to this industry are carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide both directly into the atmosphere and through collateral means (Hayek, 2019). Of this, the direct emissions can be segmented into different contributing categories: enteric fermentation, or “cow burps,” at 44% and manure management at 10%, as well as indirect emissions such as energy consumption at 5% and feed at 41% (Hayek, 2019). Meat products have the largest impact on the environment as the feed to meat conversion is extremely inefficient; it is estimated that 75-90% of energy consumed
by the animals is solely attributable to body maintenance or is lost in their waste or by-products like skin and bone (Djekic, 2015). In fact, “Beef has one of the lowest feed-to-food conversion efficiencies of commonly consumed foods. Only 1% of gross cattle-feed energy and 4% of ingested protein are converted to human-edible calories and protein” (Gibbons, 2016). Researchers estimate that if consumers reduced their amount of meat intake to recommended levels, GHGs would be decreased by 29%, and a global vegetarian diet would yield a 63% reduction, hence alleviating many ecological threats (Gibbons, 2016).

**Human Health**
Once considered healthy by professionals, an animal-based diet is now producing opposite outcomes. Ostensibly, a paradigm shift has been occurring. Supported by empirical research, a plant-based diet has been proven to be more effective at preventing chronic diseases (Gullone, 2017).

Compared to an animal-based diet, vegetarian diets are associated with:

- Reduced risk of death from ischemic heart disease;
- Lower cholesterol levels;
- Lower blood pressure;
- Lower rates of hypertension;
- Lower prevalence of type 2 diabetes;
- Lower body mass index; and
- Lower overall cancer rates (Gullone, 2017).

Such identified benefits “are related to lower intakes of saturated fat and cholesterol and higher intakes of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, soy products, fiber, and phytochemicals” (Gullone, 2017). Switching to plant-based diets has even demonstrated measurable amelioration of certain forms of heart disease in addition to its prophylactic qualities in cardiac healthcare. Furthermore, some claim that a paucity of red meat in a diet correlates with a reduction of iron needed in a diet, however, such claim is spurious. In fact, plant ferritin is shown to be a source of iron abundantly available in plant-based foods (Gullone, 2017).

Aside from just meat-based foods, “egg consumption has been related to increased risk of a lethal form of prostate cancer among men” (Gullone, 2017), adding further support for veganism over vegetarianism. Another non-meat category that has been unfoundedly promoted as integral to human health is dairy products. In fact, data recorded over the last 20 years reflect that countries with high intake of animal protein, dairy, and calcium have some of the highest rates of osteoporotic bone fractures. There has been little to no support, when studying risk of fractures, that milk or dairy products improve bone strength. Conversely, such food options can negatively contribute to “risk of prostate and ovarian cancers, autoimmune diseases, and certain childhood ailments (Gullone, 2017). There is continued evidence showing harmful effects on people’s health triggered from meat and dairy-reliant diets witnessed by increasing documentation of chronic diseases in developed countries that have transitioned to animal-based diets at an accelerated rate during the latter part of the last century (Gullone, 2017). Concomitantly, the number **Volume XIII • Issue II • Summer/Fall 2020**
of factory farms has greatly multiplied over the last 4 decades within the US with 3,600 reported in 1982 to 20,000 in 2012 as reported by the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Agency (Williams, 2018).

**Animal Welfare**

Wanting to ensure a sustainable future for the planet, the importance of our human-animal relationship must remain in a state of constant assessment. To prevent ecological imbalance and destruction, humans must acknowledge the reciprocal relationship that exists within the animal kingdom – the mutual reliance between the species – always realizing the deleterious consequences of financial exploitation. It is estimated that over 56 billion animals are killed annually for global food consumption, and that figure excludes fish and sea animals generally (Gullone, 2017). This figure does not include animals collateralized killed through other human activities such as deforestation or hunting. Mahatma Gandhi’s famous statement still rings true: “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

Most farm animals designated for slaughter are kept on Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) where movement is severely restricted, often resulting in animal deaths, injuries, and stress. Many consumers are ignorant of these conditions – either by design or unwittingly. Many often disregard the disturbing details regarding animal treatment on factory farms and thus, are unfamiliar with grossly inhumane practices. For instance, pregnant mother pigs are locked in gestation crates that are minimally larger than their own bodies and their piglets’ tails and teeth are removed without the assistance of pain relievers (Gullone, 2017). Dairy cows are modified to generate 10 times the normal amount of milk their calves need, causing painful injury to their ligaments and increased infections like mastitis; their offspring are removed soon after birth, prompting agonizing wailing in by their mothers who are re-impregnated shortly after being milked to capacity. This cycle is repeated as long as she is able to provide milk, living an average of 7 years while cows not seen as “profitable units” in factory farms typically live to about 20 years (Gullone, 2017). Male calves, as well as male chickens in the egg industry, are deemed waste products. Disturbingly, about 7 billion male chicks worldwide are killed annually, often within hours of being born. They are gassed or ground alive in mass groups. This method of culling occurs in all industrialized egg production operations, whether they are classified as free range, organic, or battery caged (Krautwald et al, 2018).

Many offspring, including calves and lambs, are also castrated or spayed and have their tails cut without use of anesthesia as most jurisdictions lack any specific laws requiring otherwise (Gullone, 2017). Other factory farm practices just graze the surface among the inhumane practices occurring in large factory farms let alone the overcrowding pens and cages or hormones injected as well.

As the 1990s witnessed the rise of animal activism and began to ignite overall societal concern about animal welfare, Ag Gags (legislative bills designed to silence whistleblowers from revealing animal abuses on industrial farms) began to emerge. This
gave way to legislation including the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act of 2006 (18 U.S.C. §43), a US federal law that prohibits any person from engaging in certain conduct “for the purpose of damaging or interfering with the operations of an animal enterprise,” thereby making it illegal to capture any pictures or video within a facility unless given consent by the owner. There have been some steps to curb abusive practices including several food suppliers that have initiated their own labeling or grading practices to distinguish products which allow consumers to be more aware of the conditions and treatment the animal received when buying a product. However, many organic, non-GMO, or cage-free/free-range products offered at stores such as Whole Foods, tend to be more expensive and limited in stock, therefore not easily accessible by consumers.

**Zoonotic Pandemics**

As of the current date, the official cause of Covid-19 has not been identified. However, the evidence strongly suggests a connection to food systems. In general, the likelihood of such zoonotic diseases spreading are increased as deforestation for commercial agriculture operations has precipitated greater human-wildlife interactions. Furthermore, “large-scale industrial livestock production creates the conditions for the propagation of zoonotic viruses due to the confinement of large numbers of animals in small spaces, narrowed genetic diversity, fast animal turnover, and habitat fragmentation through expansion of livestock production” (Richardson, 2020).

During the early months of the pandemic, the meat industry operations in several states became hotspots for many Covid-19 cases, also disrupting supply. In early May, it was reported that meat processing factories were a major factor in states showing higher rates than other areas of the country (Gibson, 2020). This was supported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in a report citing “at least 4,193 workers at 115 meatpacking plants in the U.S. have been infected with the coronavirus, and 20 of those workers have died” (Gibson, 2020). And this is more likely than not an underestimate as lack of testing may be obscuring true positive case numbers. In fact, the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting reported that “as of April 30 there have been at least 6,300 reported positive cases ties to meatpacking facilities in at least 98 plants, 28 states, and at least 30 reported worker deaths at 17 plants in 12 states” (Gibson, 2020).

Cass County, in the State of Indiana, reported the third highest number of confirmed cases behind Marion County/Indianapolis and Lake County, which sits closest to the Chicago, Illinois border. Cass Country is home to Tyson Food’s pork processing plant and
at one point in late April, the number of new cases accounted for almost half of the reported cases within the entire state (Bowman, 2020). Across the nation, plants either closed temporarily or were threatened to be shuttered; however, President Trump then signed an executive order mandating that meat processing plants should remain open even during the pandemic” (Gibson, 2020).

In May, CBS News reported “14,000 confirmed coronavirus cases linked to 181 meat processing plants across the U.S., with at least 54 employees killed by the virus. A large poultry plant in Britain is also at the center of a significant COVID-19 cluster with more than 150 confirmed cases” (Noryskiewicz, 2020). In mid-June, as Germany’s numbers were previously subsiding, an outbreak with over 1,000 positive cases have originated from a German meat processing plant in the North Rhine-Westphalia’s Gütersloh district, becoming “the largest local outbreak to hit Germany since the new coronavirus was first detected in the country on January 27” (Noryskiewicz, 2020).

In addition to the unnecessary risk of death and virus spread, there was a brief delay in grocery supply chains, however, those not reliant on animal products for their meals did not need to be concerned as most plant-based alternatives were left unaffected by the disease’s spread. Reflecting on both the cost of lives and economic turmoil, moving towards a diet less animal-centric could also serve as a prophylactic step towards preventing or stalling future pandemics.

**Unforeseen Path**

Offsetting the deleterious effects of the meat and dairy industry by way of offering tasty alternatives to the public was not necessarily what Zach Vouga sought to achieve as a young adult; though, he did have a special love for food. Growing up in the Midwest in a family of attorneys, Vouga saw himself following a similar path. He moved to Chicago for undergraduate studies in political science at DePaul University but paused before graduating upon realizing he was searching for a more purposeful existence. In 2010, circumstances led him to relocate to San Diego, California and soon took up a position at the first vegan fast-food drive-thru restaurant called Evolution Fast Food. Vouga recounts:

*Through Evolution, I witnessed and felt first-hand the impact that a vegan restaurant possesses. The concept immediately clicked with me, and I was enamored with the potential that the concept had for social change, especially if scaled and proliferated across the country. Perhaps the most alluring aspect was that despite the long, physically demanding hours, it never felt like work. It felt more like I was getting paid to be an activist. I knew it was my calling and devoted my entire life force to creating Plant Power with my partners.*

It was here he met the other co-founders of Plant Power, Mitch Wallis, the owner of Evolution Fast Food, and Jeffrey Harris. Soon thereafter, they began backroom discussions to develop a revolutionary new brand, combining an all-vegan menu with sustainable materials, centered around the traditional fast food cuisine of burgers, shakes, fries, and sandwiches with which consumers have been most familiar and favor.
“It would be a healthier, sustainable, and cruelty-free version of traditional fast food,” said Vouga.

When building this initial concept, the three all agreed that the new venture would not be limited to one restaurant; they wanted to reach as many customers nationally, even globally, to yield the most systematic level of change. Before even raising their first dollar, they signed two leases within the same period of time, knowing this would emerge as a chain restaurant. They wanted to be, and currently are, 100% debt-free and rejected any institutional lending as they began fundraising from family, friends, and other connections with a promised exchange of an investment return.

In January of 2016, they opened the first flagship location in the Ocean Beach area of San Diego. Here, Plant Power Fast Food offered a variety of dining options including indoor, patio, take-out, and drive-up style service. Despite their lack of name recognition in the area, the company was overwhelmed by the local community response. In their first year, the company generated $1.1 million and in 2017 almost $2 million in revenue (Concepcion, 2018).

Upon this first restaurant’s unveiling, fundraising for the second location began immediately. Ironically, this second restaurant opened in 2017 in Encinitas, California – formerly the venue of a Burger King – ideally symbolizing the paradigm shift occurring in the market wherein a sustainable plant-based eatery physically replaced the walls of a meat-dominated chain. This second location was also unique in that it featured a “living” patio wherein fresh vegetables and herbs are grown, intended for use in the restaurant’s meals (Wills, 2017). Since then, the company has added 5 more locations in the surrounding region and has set up a food truck as well. In fact, the Fountain Valley location that opened in June, 2020, used to also be a Carl’s Jr. restaurant, further demonstrating the industry trend.

The Grubby Details
While Plant Power Fast Food’s goal isn’t to advertise itself as a health-food restaurant, the company certainly can promote its options of being a healthier alternative to other fast food options of similar cuisine. Using wheat, pea, and soy proteins in addition to vegetables, non-GMO ingredients, and no artificial flavors, Plant Power’s food items are a healthier version of options consumers tend to prefer, like burgers or nuggets. While calories may be comparable, Plant Power’s menu offers similar or reduced sodium options other than the traditional meat version and the amount of protein is equal or sometimes even greater than other animal-based fast-food products. Also, all fare on the menu is completely cholesterol-free.
When PPFF was first getting its footing, all of the food items were made inhouse as they procured their ingredients from carefully selected suppliers regionally. As they initiated expansion, however, they realized they could benefit by having one sole supply location, especially where they could make the sauces and more high-demand items. So, the group bought and now operates its own centralized food facility referred to as Plant Power Commissary Kitchen in Escondido, California. This had given the company’s owners more ease in opening new locations and control over food sources and methods of food preparation. All ingredients are “sourced from local farmers, natural food distributors and a direct relationship with manufactures” (Concepcion, 2018).

Responsibility Beyond the Meal
As PPFF’s food itself is sustainable and environmentally responsible, what about the other elements that comprise an order? A typical trip to McDonald’s also encompasses the use and waste of plastic utensils, plastic straws, wrappers, and boxes that end up in landfills in addition to a handful of napkins stuffed in the bag. At PPFF, all aspects surrounding the food experience are thoughtfully made to be more responsible. Vouga explained that all orders are served in biodegradable packaging, with recycled materials, and the utensils are solely created from plants. Furthermore, the company has goals of making the Long Beach/Los Angeles, California location to be completely solar-powered.

Plant Power’s ethics also embrace social responsibility. “Most of our restaurant locations get involved with their respective communities on a regular basis, either in the form of fundraisers or donation drives when possible,” Vouga shared. In fact, even while Plant Power had to endure its own adjustments due to the Covid-19 pandemic (limiting hours and payment methods, closing indoor and patio dining, utilizing third-party delivery services, and increasing online ordering with drive-thru, drive-up, and outdoor express counters), it also enthusiastically partnered with Support & Feed - an organization founded by Maggie Baird, the mother of famous American singer songwriter Billie Elish. Together, Zouga reported they “supplied over 1000 meals to frontline workers in hospitals, homeless shelters, first responders and women’s centers in the Los Angeles area.”

Even more recently, the company has been highly supportive and active in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement. Publicly acknowledging the country’s battle against
racial injustice, PPFF posted its own message of advocacy and pledged to donate 100% of its total profits from purchases made from all locations on June 6-7, 2020. The company published, “As a small business, this actually isn’t easy for us. But easy doesn’t always work. Sometimes, you’ve got to lean forward in faith and do something that’s a little harder.” This initiative was met with overwhelming response as the company reported record-setting sales and at some locations generated more than twice a normal weekend yield. In total, the company donated $27,672.00 and equally divided the proceeds across four organizations at the forefront of fighting racial inequality: Black Visions Collective, NAACP, Beam Org, and Black Women’s Health Imperative.

Reflecting on the company’s desire to root itself in ethical and values-based practices, PPFF has attracted and cultivated a team of employees who strive to uphold such values, having aligned with many in the customer base. Vouga and his partners equally share the motivation to uphold these defining values, declaring what ethical leadership means to them:

**Ethical leadership means putting the needs of the entire planet and all of its denizens way above your own; it means taking into account in every decision the impacts on the next 7 generations at the very least; it means ‘Ahimsa’ - do no harm; it means creating a win-win situation for everyone involved; all of the above are not only possible in every situation- but when you follow these precepts you succeed beyond your wildest dreams... but you must have faith, courage, and strength to follow these convictions no matter how much adversity, fear, and doubt are presented. — Mitch Wallis**

For me, ethical leadership is ultimately the expression of a deep-seated conviction that everyone is worthy of being treated with the greatest love and respect. Not in some fake ‘corporate mission statement’ kind of way, but for real. So, that leads to the importance of intention. For me, that core intention is about being of service to others and to this beautiful world we all share. — Jeff Harris
The Future
With more than a stable base below its feet, Plant Power Fast Food continues to push the status quo and change the fast food industry’s landscape. The restaurant chain has continued to gain new interests, both in terms of expanding its customer base as well as new financial entities looking to invest and fuel the growing company. Many articles regarding the company’s success including the recent Forbes’s “30 under 30 in Food and Drink” nomination has given the company increased validation, credibility, and awareness – drawing even more momentum. Plant Power hopes to focus on expanding its Southwest market in the U.S. next, with sights to include Las Vegas and regions in the Northwest within the next few years. Tackling nationwide expansion will also necessitate the development of different regional food commissaries, such as the company’s current facility, and seek out and forge new relationships with different suppliers. While Vouga once may have doubted the level of openness to plant-based restaurants in areas like the Midwest, he sees and feels the tide turning and can envision it being a welcoming possibility sooner than once imagined. Hopefully, the clever act of changing habits, taste buds, and hearts and minds through delicious and innovative food may prove most effective in creating sustainable and dramatic change in the food industry, benefiting the nation’s health, safety, and environment for generations to come.

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A True Story of Determination, Courage, Integrity and Leadership

— Emilio Iodice, Rome, Italy

Families of immigrants are all different and all the same. They face the hardship of assimilation in a new culture while clinging to the values they left behind. Such was the case for a baby born in the South Bronx in 1946. His mother wrote Francesco on his birth certificate. In his home, which was a small piece of Italy in the New World, he had one name but when he stepped out the door into the world of Americans, he had another. In the
enclave in New York City of people from the island his parents immigrated from he was known as Francesco; in the United States he was often called, “Frankie.”

**Island of Ponza**

His parents came from a lovely rock in the Mediterranean. Ponza was a land of magic. Its incomparable beauty, wild elegance of volcanic colors and turquoise water set it apart as a Mecca where its sons and daughters wanted to return too even after living in the land of milk and honey, which was America. Most never went back, as their children became natives of this new nation and cast off the traditions of Italy and the island. It was a sad yet natural phenomenon of survival.

Frankie was born in a hospital named for the patron saint of Italy. For his mother, Lucia, this was a good omen. St. Francis Hospital was the place of care and birth for many of the people and children of the Ponzese. Francesco was also the name of Lucia’s uncle, whom she adored. He baptized and married her and was her mentor and educator. He was the legendary pastor of the church of the Assumption in Le Forna of Ponza. Don Francesco was a brilliant, clever and passionate priest who served two generations of families in Ponza.

Lucia had lost six babies. She carried each for nine months but at birth, they were stillborn. She was determined that this child would live, no matter what. Her doctor would perform a caesarean section, which was a rarity at that time. Women risked infections and dying from loss of blood. Lucia was required to sign a special form. It
forced her to make a fatal choice. If there were complications, who should the doctor save: her or her baby? Lucia made it clear to the doctor. She said, “If you have to choose between me and my baby, save him and let me die.”

Francesco was born on April 13th, the birthday of Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States and creator of the American Declaration of Independence. On the day of his birth, his god mother, Angelina, said, “This baby will be in the White House, someday.” Frankie was a fine, healthy boy. He had long, blonde, curly hair and a pleasant personality. He smiled and was playful, intelligent and obedient.

Frankie’s family was not a normal one. His father, Silverio, did not have one full time job. He had two. One was running his own business; a small grocery store in the North Bronx.

When Frankie’s father was not at the store he was on the waterfront, loading and unloading ships. It was hard and dangerous but it paid well. Ships in the 1950s still had boxes, bales, fruits, and vegetables and tons of loose luggage to handle. There were few containers.

Longshoremen, like Silverio, lifted and moved the freight from the ship on to the dock to load into trucks that would deliver the merchandise across the continent. Injuries and deaths on the waterfront were frequent. It was a savage and perilous place to work. Silverio was strong and tough. He had to be to survive on the waterfront of New York.

Silverio would be at the pier by 5 AM. At times, he would work 12 grueling hours. He would be so exhausted that he would feel like all the blood was drained from his body. Even so, he would drive across New York City to go to the store and be there until it closed. Several times a week he would get up at 2 AM, travel to the Bronx Terminal Market, buy boxes of fruits, vegetables and groceries and bring them to the store. After unloading everything, he would head back to the Brooklyn Navy Yard or the piers on the North River. By 7 AM the store was opened by Silverio’s wife and boys.

Frankie’s mother, Lucia, worked. His brother, Ralph, worked and he worked. He began to go to the store at the age of 5. At that time, they lived in Little Ponza. On days he and his brother were not in school, they would take the subway from the South Bronx to the Longshoremen getting ready to work on a ship, Courtesy, New York Historical Society

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North Bronx where the store was. By the time Frankie was eight years old, he was an expert who knew how to sell to customers; go with his father to the market to load their truck with provisions; stock shelves and keep the store clean and deliver groceries. At the age of 10 his family moved across the street from the store. Now that former garage that was turned into a place to sell groceries became the center of their lives.

Most immigrants from Ponza usually toiled regular hours, even if it was the back breaking labor of construction. Instead, Frankie’s family worked from dawn to dusk, seven days a week. Other families had vacations, enjoyed holidays and weekends off. His never took a break; not even on Christmas, Easter or Mother’s Day. The only holiday for Frankie and his family was on June 20th, the feast of San Silverio.

Frankie and his mother opened the store very early each morning. He would go off to school and when he returned, he was there until 8 or 9 PM. He did his homework when not serving customers or doing other chores. His passion was reading. Fortunately, he had back issues of the New York Times, including the Sunday edition that had scores of book reviews. It was this sort of reading that gave Frankie a deep understanding of culture, current events, philosophy, fiction and history that would serve him well in life.

The boy also delivered merchandise to clients in the neighborhood. The boxes of groceries were heavy for a 10-year-old. They became especially challenging when he had to haul them five or six blocks on his shoulder. He had no delivery bike or cart. Invariably, his customers lived in apartments on the fifth floor or higher in buildings without elevators.

When he finally reached their door and gave them their goods he hoped for a tip. If it was the lady of the house who greeted him, he received 5 or 10 cents. If the husband was home Frankie could get as much as 25 cents. In the mid-1950s 10 cents or 25 cents were small amounts even for that time.

Part of the neighborhood clientele were restaurants. They usually bought boxes of fresh vegetables and bags of onions and potatoes. One restaurant, in particular, purchased at least three orders of potatoes a week. Sacks weighed on average, 25 kilos. The restaurant was four blocks from the store. Each Monday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons, Frankie would carry a bag of potatoes to the back door of the establishment. The owner would pay $1.25 for the potatoes. The restaurateur never said thank you and never gave him a tip. This went on for three agonizing months. Finally, Frankie had enough.

On a cold December afternoon, he hauled his delivery of potatoes to the restaurant. It was snowing hard and very cold. His feet were freezing and wet. His hands were frost bitten. His back ached from the heavy sack. Frankie knocked several times until the owner could hear him. He opened the door and went in. He dropped the bag on the storage room floor. Frankie then stuck out his hand and said, “The price of potatoes has gone up. They now cost $1.75.” The owner looked at him with fire in his eyes. His restaurant was thriving but he would rather dance with the devil than pay 50 cents more for a sack of potatoes that would easily net him a profit of $10.00. He reluctantly
shoveled out the fee, counting nickels, dimes and pennies. Frankie’s pockets were literally filled with coins.

When he returned to the store, he confronted Lucia. “Mamma, I did something I probably should not have done but I had no choice. You know that cheapskate restaurant owner who has never given me a gratuity? Today, I decided that I would charge him for my service. I raised the price of the potatoes 50 cents so I could have a decent tip. I am sorry, Mamma,” he said. Lucia looked at him and smiled. “You did fine, my son,” she said. “Some people need to learn a lesson, one way or another,” she explained in her fine Ponze dialect.

There were three times a year when the family did their hardest work. At Christmas they sold trees. At Easter and Mother’s Day, they offered flowering plants. More than half of their annual income was earned from these three holidays. Frankie loved to sell. He was good at it. He smiled and carried on all sorts of conversations with customers until he made the deal. He enjoyed being of service and giving satisfaction to people. He was so good that clients invariably returned to be served by him. He had one unique quality that stood out above all else: he looked and sounded sincere. Frankie had a high sense of honesty that came with his Catholic upbringing and family values.

One sunny Mother’s Day, Frankie’s personal integrity was challenged. A young lady came to the store. She was in her early twenties. She had on a white dress with mother of pearl buttons and a rainbow-colored scarf. Her hair was like strands of gold. Her face was white with touches of pink. Her light blue eyes were like jewels. She was gorgeous. Her perfume was a magic potion that captivated Frankie with its sweet scent of orange blossoms.

She went up to the boy and asked, “Do you have any rhododendrons?” Frankie was at a loss. He knew they did not have any but did not want to lose the sale. “You like rhododendrons,” he asked? “Actually, I have never seen them but someone told me they are beautiful and would make a lovely gift for my mother,” she responded. “In that case, I am going to get you the nicest one we have,” said Frankie. He dashed into the back of the store where there
were hundreds of potted plants. He picked a stunning geranium. It was dark pink with velvety petals and large Irish green leaves. It was fresh and had flowering buds. It would continue to bloom for weeks. In minutes he managed to wrap it in bright red aluminum paper, knotted a white bow to it and brought it to his customer. “This is the best rhododendron we have and I personally wrapped it for you,” he said. “It’s beautiful. I love it and so will my mother. Thank you so much,” she exclaimed. Her eyes sparkled with a lovely smile. Frankie was enthralled by her charm. She gladly paid for the plant and went off to celebrate Mother’s Day. Her fragrance hung in the air as she turned a corner and disappeared.

Frankie reflected on what had happened. He had sold one thing for another but his customer was delighted. Did this justify being dishonest? He knew it did not. He realized, in his heart, it was not right but also knew he was prepared to do it again. He faced a personal dilemma that questioned his values in the sale of a potted plant. Frankie’s logic was simple. His family struggled to make a living and a lost opportunity never returned. He reasoned that as long as his customer was happy, all would be well. At the same time, he knew it was wrong and would always try to avoid making this kind of choice.

His years of experience in the store taught him about human nature; about right and wrong and about sacrifice and service to others. More importantly, he learned about his own shortcomings and his visions of the future and his ambitions.

One dream was so important to him that he saved all his pennies, nickels and dimes from tips to realize it. He wanted a pair of “sneakers.” The shoes were very popular in the mid-1950s and became the footwear of athletes. Frankie’s classmates all had sneakers. He could not ask his parents to buy him a pair because he realized how hard they worked just to make a living. Instead, he saved until he had enough money to see his wish come true.

He vividly recalled the day he bought his first pair. Frankie went to the shoe store around the corner. It had been there forever. The same family ran it for twenty years. They had all types of shoes but one pair stood out for the boy. For weeks Frankie would pass by the establishment and literally put his nose up against the glass showcase staring at a pair of black and white sneakers. Now he was ready to realize his fantasy.

He went into the store carrying a brown paper back filled with coins. “How much are the sneakers in the window,” he asked? “7.99, plus tax,” said the shopkeeper. “I have exactly $8.00,” explained Frankie. “Is that enough,” he asked. Frankie had counted his money five times. He knew precisely how much he had. “Well, with tax it comes out to $8.03,” said the shopkeeper. The man looked at the boy and realized that he had saved hard for this pair of shoes. “I will give you the sneakers for $8.00,” said the shopkeeper.
Frankie quickly started counting. It took him almost 15 minutes to count all his money. His bag was empty but he was excited. He put on the shoes and started to walk around the store. “They’re perfect. Thank you, Mister,” he exclaimed. “You’re welcome, Frankie,” he said as the boy rushed from the store. He carried his old leather work shoes in a box under his arm as he darted up the block.

Frankie felt he was flying and not just running. The pavement seemed to melt away. The sneakers were light and they appeared to put springs in his feet that made him leap as he dashed along the street toward the store. “Mamma, look” he exclaimed as he showed off his new pair of shoes. Lucia was happy for her son. He was a good boy. He worked hard, was a fine student and was kind, affectionate and respectful. He deserved a pair of sneakers.

What Frankie missed the most was the chance to play with other children. His father was afraid that he could get mixed up with some of the gangs in the neighborhood. As a result, he was forbidden to mingle with the other kids in his area. Lucia, instead, looked the other way. She knew the parents of most of the children and most of the boys came from respectable families. She loved her son and knew that he had to socialize in order to grow up and trusted his good judgement.

Around the corner from the store were a group of neighborhood boys who played stickball every day after school and on weekends. It was a simple but sophisticated game that required precision, speed, practice, and determination. It was a poor boy’s sport, with a plain rubber ball and bats made from old broom sticks. It was, in many ways, the game of life in that all types of people played and one learned about them by how they performed under all sorts of conditions. Character was formed and defined on the asphalt of New York.
Playgrounds and school yards were often off limits for kids playing stick ball. Usually, the only place available was the street or an empty lot or wherever they could find space. In parts of New York, like the North Bronx, stick ball playing was prohibited because it was dangerous for pedestrians and motorists and the bats were considered lethal weapons. They were often confiscated or destroyed by the police. As a result, children always looked out for a patrol car or a uniformed officer as a potential enemy.

The basics to playing stickball were to have a solid wooden bat and a “Spalding” ball. No one had much money so the sticks usually came from old mops or brooms. They were thin and lightweight. The ball was not cheap, especially for kids with little money. In 1956, a new Spalding cost $.99 and sometimes as much as $1.50. It was expensive when a family like Frankie’s earned less than $3,000 in a good year. The balls were precious and when they were lost it was a tragedy.

When school ended in late June, kids flocked into streets across the Big Apple to play stickball. They would start early in the morning and continue until sundown. The game was played in several forms. One was with a pitcher and a catcher similar to baseball. He would throw the ball and the batter would have three strikes to hit it. Another form was the use of a wall in the place of a catcher. Perhaps the hardest type of stickball was where the batter bounced the ball or threw it up in the air and swung. He would have only one strike and not three. This was the way they played in Frankie’s community. It was a tough, unforgiving game with only one, rare opportunity to succeed.

The measure of a home run was usually the distance of three sewer covers in the City. It was about 300 feet. In Frankie’s locality, a home run was measured by getting it over the fence that bordered on the farthest street. It was almost 400 feet away. In Yankee Stadium the distance from home plate to the center field wall was 410 feet. Even for a
strong hitter, a home run was a near impossible task in the vicious game of stickball on the streets of Frankie’s neighborhood.

Frankie had just completed the 7th grade. He was thirteen. It was late June. He was off from school until September. He asked Lucia to let him go around the corner from the store to see the boys playing stickball. She said yes, especially since Silverio was working on the waterfront.

Frankie was nervous. He did not know any of the children in the area. He went to a Catholic school and most went to public schools. The community was mixed with Italians, Irish, Jews, and a few Hispanics and Blacks. The place where the boys were playing was a large, irregular road. It was a triangular space that bordered on fenced in residential lots and large apartment buildings. Five boulevards fed into the thoroughfare. It was sharply inclined and hilly with dirt and gravel stones spread out across the area. Lots of cars, trucks, and an occasional bus traveled over the motorways. Whenever this happened, the boys had to stop the game, regroup, and begin again. It was not an easy place to play.

Frankie went over to where the boys were sitting, waiting their turn at bat. “Hi, my name is Frankie,” he said to one of the boys. He had red hair and lots of freckles on his cheeks and forehead. His name was Red. Frankie was greeted with silence. The boy did not respond or look at Frankie. The other boys did the same. They acted like he was not there. Frankie stood on the sidelines watching the game. He heard all forms of foul language as boys invariably struck out or had their hit caught by the opposing team. They cheered wildly when they scored. If someone hit a home run, they were treated like a divinity. The boys all knew each other well. He heard nicknames like Skinny, Bone, Slushy, and Block.

“I want to play” said Frankie to one of the kids that seemed to be the team leader. His name was JoJo. He was tall, slim and sun tanned. “We don’t need anyone. Anyway, how do we know you’re any good” he responded sarcastically. “I don’t know how to play but I can learn and I am strong and fast,” said Frankie. “Get out of here,” one of the boys yelled. “We don’t need you and we don’t want you,” screamed another. “Scram” yelled one more. Frankie slowly walked away.

Yankee Stadium, Bronx, New York, Courtesy New York Daily News
He was hurt and discouraged. He reflected on what had happened. He was the outsider. He wanted to be accepted and be part of the team but he had nothing to offer. If he was to succeed, he had to learn the game, follow the rules and be able to make a contribution to the team. He needed preparation. Frankie was determined to be a great stick ball player or die trying. He remembered the words of his parish priest, “You can’t expect to join the church today and be elected bishop tomorrow.”

Frankie watched and studied the sport of baseball which was the essence of stickball. He decided he would concentrate on the stars of the game of the past to understand how they succeeded. He had seen films of the great home run hitters. The one he idolized was Babe Ruth. He was known as “The Sultan of Swat,” “The Great Bambino,” and “The Babe.” He was a forceful hitter and set legendary records that lasted for decades. Many considered The Babe the greatest player of all time.

Frankie read about the life of George Herman (Babe) Ruth. He was a poor boy who was raised in St. Mary’s Orphanage in Baltimore, Maryland. It was run by Catholic brothers. One, in particular, Brother Mathias, became Babe’s mentor and guide. He taught him how to play baseball. Ruth called him, “the greatest man I have ever known.” The Babe became famous by determination, hard work and perspiration. Frankie was struck by The Babe’s legendary words of wisdom that became his lifelong mottos:

Never let the fear of striking out get in your way.
Every strike brings me closer to the next home run. Yesterday's home runs don't win today's games.

Babe Ruth not only hit more home runs than any player in history, he hit the ball the farthest. Often times, his home runs were like explosions of cannon balls that sailed over the wall of Yankee Stadium and landed on the tracks of the subway. He actually hit a ball over 600 feet and set a record for the longest home run in history. The Great Bambino also “called” his shot in a legendary game against Chicago in 1932.

With two strikes against him, he pointed with two fingers to the flag pole which was at the outermost section of the stadium. The Babe said that the next pitch would be hit there. The crowd and opposing players jeered and laughed. The pitcher was determined to use his fast ball to strike out the legendary Babe Ruth. He propelled the sphere with a fiery vengeance. It was low and outside, making it especially hard for Ruth to hit it.

Instead, the Sultan of Swat took a step forward and one sideways and swung his bat with tremendous power and precision. The swing of the bat cut the air with sound and fury. The Chicago crowd heard a loud crack as the Great Bambino blasted the orb into the heavens. For a moment it seemed to disappear. Suddenly, they froze and watched as the ball sailed high over the pole flying the colors of the American flag.

The Babe pointed at it as if pushing it toward its destination. He smiled and humbly tipped his hat as he slowly turned the bases. He bowed before entering the dugout. The entire stadium of spectators rose with applause and pandemonium. The opposing team was stunned into silence by the magnificence of the Sultan of Swat. Babe Ruth demonstrated again that he was the greatest player of all time. It was one of the most electrifying performances in baseball history.

Frankie decided that he would learn from The Babe about how to hit a ball. He went to the library and watched movie reels of the Babe in action. He read and studied as much as he could about his technique and skill. Frankie looked carefully at the way Ruth hit a ball. It was almost like he was playing golf. He swung nearly from the ground to pick up the ball and fling it into the stratosphere. With tremendous power, he would literally knock the ball high into the sky in a gigantic arc that often made the small, white sphere seem invisible. Winds would carry it like a bird in flight to its destination which was usually over the fence.
While all baseball bats were the same size, he discovered that The Babe used a very heavy bat. The standard was 33 oz. but his bat was on average 54 oz. Ruth called it his “Monster Bat.” Most players wanted lightweight clubs that they could swing easily without hurting their back or arms. The Babe, instead, relied on a special one that was 60% heavier than the standard bat. It was riskier but it also provided more energy for battering long balls. The Bambino struck out many more times than hitting but when he hit the ball it flew far and wide. For nearly two decades, Babe Ruth was considered among the greatest players in baseball.

Frankie would do all he could to emulate The Sultan of Swat. Instead of using the standard broom handle, he found an old pole which was twice the weight of the broomstick. He wrapped black tape for the grip called it his “Super Bat.” He trained with it constantly. It was heavy but added another dimension to his strength which he put into every swing. It was hard but Frankie had muscles and was heavier than most boys his age. His style was similar to the Babe’s. He swung low and carried the club close in and brought it around his torso so that the full force of his muscles was in every inch of the bat. On his own, Frankie practiced hitting, throwing and fielding. He spent hours drilling in a nearby school yard.

From July to August, Frankie was up at 5 AM each morning. By 5:30 AM he was on the back lot where the neighborhood team, the Barnes Avenue Eagles, played stickball. He was there even if it rained. There was no one to watch him or coach him and no traffic to impede his work out. He bought six used Spaldings for practice. He found them at the local Salvation Army. They were worn and bounced irregularly. They were all he could afford. He was afraid of losing the only new one he had since it cost him a week’s worth of tips.

Frankie could see the sun rise in the East as it covered the roads with light. He stood at the top of the hill and looked at the entire setting from the plate to the home run fence that protected a garden. Frankie took the old balls and his “Super Bat” and slammed them with all the strength in his body. He missed the balls many times but when he hit one, the pink sphere flew high and fast and seemed to touch the clouds. He practiced for two hours a day and then went to work.

Unbeknownst to him, he was being watched. One of the buildings that bordered the place where the boys played stickball was the home of JoJo, the Eagles team Captain. JoJo rose early one morning and looked out the window as the sun went up. He saw someone in the street with a bat. It was Frankie. He watched as the boy hit and ran to recover his ball. He saw Frankie stand squarely at the plate and swing with power. Even though he struck out many times, he kept coming back. JoJo stared as he saw this strange young man bang one ball after another over the fence. On that memorable morning in August, Frankie smashed six drives into the garden with the precision of a sharp shooter with a deadly weapon. It was a sight JoJo would never forget.

By the end of August, Frankie was ready to visit the boys playing stickball near the store. This time he brought with him a large basket of cold ripe peaches and several bags of
potato chips. The boys were famished and perspiring heavily from the game. He offered the fruit to one and all.

It was the most important event of the season. The neighborhood championship was on the line. It was the Barnes Avenue Eagles against the Bronxwood Avenue Panthers. It pitted two strong teams. Each had phenomenal players. Still, despite the importance of the contest, it was being played on a busy New York street in the North Bronx, where stick ball playing was prohibited.

During the top of the third inning, a centerfielder shouted, “Chickie, chickie,” which was the warning signal that a police car was approaching. The boys immediately took their clubs and hid them in various places. The Eagles dropped them down the corner sewer knowing that it was shallow enough to retrieve their precious sports tools as soon as the coast was clear.

The police car stopped and two patrolmen emerged from the vehicle. They examined the area and saw the boys milling around and talking. They knew they were playing stickball. Two sticks were discovered hidden under a car. The officers immediately broke them into four pieces and threw them into a garbage can. The policemen looked high and low for more broom sticks that they considered weapons of mass destruction. Frustrated, they left after 30 minutes of careful investigation. As soon as they were gone, the boys immediately resumed the game, but first they had to retrieve their bats. About a dozen ended up in the sewer. One boy, called “Skinny, or Bone,” had a special role. He was the smallest and thinnest member of the Eagles.

Two of the strongest boys lifted the grate on the corner sewer where the bats were hidden. They were stuck in the muck of the cesspool. It smelled of rotten eggs and excrement. The boys grabbed “Skinny” by the ankles and held him tightly as he went into the sewer, head first, to recover the family jewels of his team. He put a band aide on his nostrils to avoid the stench. With care, he grabbed one stick after another and passed each one to his co-players. It was an arduous task. He depended on the two strong young men to prevent him from falling into the bacteria and virus infested mud. After nearly ten minutes, “Skinny,” completed his mission. “Hurray,” screamed the boys as they cleaned off their bats and restarted the game.

In the bottom of the ninth inning. The Eagles were losing by a run. Their strongest hitters, “Slushy” and “JoJo,” had struck out. Elliot, Block, and Red each got a hit and were on first, second and third. The bases were loaded. Suddenly, the next player to get up to bat twisted his ankle while warming up. The match stopped. The umpire looked him over and said he could not continue in the game. He was taken out.

JoJo, was furious. “We’re finished. Unless we get a hit to bring in some runs, we will lose the championship,” he said in desperation. The Panthers had won every title for the past three years. They were considered invincible. JoJo looked about for a substitute. There were three choices. Sitting on the curb, ready to play, were Al, Jimmy, and Tommy.

Al was blond, tall, slim, and strong. He was a veteran player who had a mixed record of hitting and fielding. He was also arrogant and difficult to manage. Jimmy was short, dark
haired, overweight and proved to be unreliable and rarely showed up at practice. Tommy, instead, was a serious player. He was of medium height with broad shoulders. Tommy lifted weights. He specialized in being a long ball hitter who struck out more than he succeeded. He had an angry personality and was a bully. He often fought with the other players. All season, he had been in a slump. None of these performers seemed right for the great challenge ahead. JoJo needed someone capable, courageous and a risk taker. Everything was on the line.

JoJo had the sharp instinct of a leader. He quickly detected strength and weakness. He was also a great, all-around player which was why he was named Captain. He looked across the curb and, unexpectedly, saw Frankie. He had never seen him play but saw him slam those balls across the field with an enthusiasm he had never seen before. He felt that this boy from the corner grocery store had something special about him. JoJo perceived determination and guts. He knew Frankie had been practicing hard. He saw in him bravery. He had to make a serious decision. The future of his team was on the line. So was his credibility as a leader.

“Hey, Peachboy, you want to play,” he asked. Frankie’s stood up. “JoJo, you can’t put him up at bat,” screamed a team mate. “We don’t know if he can even hit a ball,” injected another. “We’ll lose the game,” insisted another. Al, Jimmy, and Tommy protested and wanted to be selected. After all, they were regular players and felt entitled to join the contest. “Frankie is going up to bat now,” said JoJo. His voice was filled with intensity.

JoJo took Frankie aside. He looked at him squarely in the eyes. “Kid, I’m betting on you, even though I have never seen you play. I know you’re strong and can bring us the championship. Are you willing to take this on?” he asked. Frankie realized that this was his chance. He could seize the moment and shoot for greatness or take the easy way out and refuse the mission. “I will do my best, JoJo. You can depend on me. I won’t let you down,” he responded with grit. “Go in there and show them what you can do,” said JoJo.

Frankie picked up his “Superbat” and walked up to the plate. He was booed by the opposing team and even some of his own companions. He looked across the field. He saw what was on the line. The bases were loaded. It was two outs and the bottom of the ninth inning. His team was losing three to two. It was Frankie’s first game in stickball. “Get a hit, Peachboy,” JoJo yelled. Frankie was perspiring heavily. He was nervous. His hands trembled. He felt a weakness in his knees and arms. He was frightened of failure. In
practice he had hit the ball far and showed concentration and control. Now he faced the real test.

Suddenly, he seemed to hear the voice of the Babe. He saw him in his mind’s eye, “Never let the fear of striking out get in your way,” he said. Unexpectedly, Frankie felt a new vitality. His doubts melted away. He took a deep breath and said, “Thanks Babe.”

Everyone appeared to be watching as Frankie held the ball in his hand. He stood straight before the plate. It was a square box drawn in white chalk on the street. He positioned his feet and body firmly on the ground and looked far into the distance. The streets seemed to go on endlessly and the home run boundary appeared to be a small line on the horizon.

It seemed unreachable. For a moment he could hear no sounds and voices. Frankie blocked out everything.

He concentrated on the pink sphere in his hand. He threw it into air. He kept his eye on the ball. Without thinking further, he swung his bat and brought all the strength from his feet, legs, and arms into the wooden pole. As he twisted his body, he felt the small rubber globe meet the bat midway. It shot into the air like a bullet. It disappeared. He stood gazing at the sky.

The crowd and players fell into silence. They were speechless. Everyone looked as the ball climbed toward the sun and then descended in a long curve across the horizon. It seemed like a comet. It soared high over the roads and began to land as if it had wings. The pink orb sailed into the garden and disappeared into the leaves as it zoomed over the fence. Frankie had hit a stunning home run.

As he stepped on first base, he heard the crowd roar. As he approached second and third, he could hear clapping and yelling. Once he touched home plate his team mates flew at him like bees. They hugged him and raised him on their shoulders. “Hooray for Homerun Peachboy,” they screamed. His team won the coveted prize that ten teams sought after in three months of punishing stickball games. For a few fleeting moments, the boy from Little Ponza in the South Bronx experienced the sense of glory and fame that heroes feel. He would never have that same feeling again.
Frankie went on to play stickball for several more years. He hit more home runs but nothing like his first one. He was considered a strong player who could be counted on when the team needed him most. He carried his values of determination, ambition, integrity, faith, and hard work into his profession and personal life. Those principles would bring him far.

**Epilogue**
The boy who hit his first home run in his first stickball game, Francesco Emilio Iodice, went on to work in the Executive Office of the President of the United States, as his godmother predicted, and became a diplomat, an educator, a writer and a devoted family man who was loyal to his country of birth, the United States, and the place where his parents were born, the island of Ponza in Italy.

You just can’t beat the person who never gives up.
— Babe Ruth

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**About the Author**

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Abstract

The purpose of this case study is to find the fraud and crack the case and resolve the property disputes and family conflicts amicably through soft leadership. It adopts the 11 C’s of Professor M.S. Rao, the father of “soft leadership” — character, charisma, conscience, conviction, courage, communication, compassion, commitment, consistency, consideration and contribution. It provides a blueprint to resolve conflicts and disputes amicably. It emphasizes that family members and stakeholders must act according to the situation, with more emphasis on soft leadership for resolving property disputes to achieve a win-win outcome. It offers practical ideas and innovative tools and techniques to resolve property disputes and conflicts. It enlightens that conflicts cannot be eliminated in families and societies. They can only be minimized if stakeholders and family leaders adopt a proactive attitude. It concludes that parents must settle their property disputes amicably when things are good through open dialogue and discussion to ensure the healthy functioning of the family and set an example for their next generations.
Introduction

There are three things in the world that deserve no mercy, hypocrisy, fraud, and tyranny. — Frederick William Robertson

Stephen received confidential information from one of his close relatives that the share of a property from his mother Sarah was taken by his brother Wilson – illegally. He never believed in hearsay. Therefore, he checked the registered property documents online and was shocked to find that his share of the property was transferred by Wilson. He rechecked the registered documents and confirmed that his mother Sarah transferred his property share to Wilson. He found the images Sarah and Wilson with fingerprints and two witnesses. One of the witnesses was his nephew, Peter. He took the encumbrance certificate and printouts of all documents to show as evidence. He could not digest because his brother betrayed him. He lived in Chennai in India with his wife and children to earn his livelihood. He visited his native place, Erode, in India, twice a year to see his aged mother who was 80 years old. Sarah had three daughters and two sons. Stephen was the older son and Wilson was the younger son. When his father, Dave, was on his deathbed, he expressed his final wish of giving away property equally to his two sons, Stephen and Wilson, in the presence of all family members. He asked his wife Sarah to execute his final wish since the property was registered in the name of Sarah. Dave discharged all the family responsibilities including spending money on the marriages of his three daughters. He decided to bequeath the leftover property of an old home to his two sons equally.

Stephen’s mother wrote a Will in 2007 that the property would be given to two sons equally and the Will document was in Stephen’s possession. Whenever Stephen visited his aged mother Sarah, she informed that the property was in the name of two sons equally and financial assistance from Stephen. Sarah instructed Stephen to give money to his sister Diane and Stephen acquiesced.

Stephen was unable to overcome the shock. It was a clear case of fraud and deceit in his family. He recalled his childhood and was hurt by the way familial relationships had deteriorated. He decided to discover the nature of the fraud and crack the case. He was hurt more about the betrayal by his brother than losing his property share. He had the following questions in his mind: Who was the main culprit perpetrating this deceit? He wanted to find out whether his mother Sarah was involved in these machinations and whether or not his sisters or brothers-in-law played a role.

Stephen visited his hometown and talked with his mother openly about the issue. He informed his mother that he had received confidential information that his half of the property share was transferred to his brother Wilson. Sarah avoided responding first and revealed that the property was in the name of two sons in equal shares. Sarah informed that she had given the property documents to her oldest daughter Sharon who kept them in her locker. Stephen felt that something was fishy somewhere. He was unable to find out whether the property was transferred with the cognizance of Sarah and Sharon.
Several thoughts popped up in his mind. He was determined to find the fraudster and take action immediately.

Stephen invited two family elders, Marshall and Mark, the next day to his home to discuss the situation with Sarah. He asked his sister Diane to come as well to join the discussion with their mother as Sarah lived close by with her husband and daughter. She took care of mother Sarah. Marshall and Mark had inquired about the details of the property. Sarah informed them that the property was registered in her name only. They inquired further how the property would be divided. She explained that the property would be divided between two sons equally. They revealed to her that her younger son, Wilson, managed to get the entire property transferred in his name without her knowledge. She denied this explanation. To prove their point, they read aloud a copy of the land document received from the registrar’s office. Instead of condemning the fraudulent transfer of the property by Wilson, Sarah accused Stephen of raising irrelevant and unpleasant issues from the past. When Marshall and Mark asked Sarah about the property documents, the latter revealed that the property documents were in the possession of her eldest daughter, Sharon. Finally, they informed Sarah that the fraudulent transfer of the property by Wilson was illegal. They decided to confront both Wilson and Sharon to uncover the details of the suspicious transaction and to revoke the fraudulent transfer, thereby re-registering the property as per the wishes of Sarah. They added that they would discuss the situation with all family members and come to a final decision on how to divide the property in alignment with the family tradition. Stephen agreed to the resolution that the family elders would render.

Marshall and Mark met Sharon personally and informed her about the fraud. Instead of condemning the act, Sharon informed them not to interfere with the issue. She did not show the documents given by Sarah to safeguard. She also informed them not to disturb Sarah. They insisted that Sharon must meet Sarah and inform her clearly about the fraudulent transfer because the latter was old and suffering from age-related ailments. Since Sharon was the eldest member of the family, she must take initiative to resolve the issue amicably. But Sharon refused to act. Marshall and Mark suspected further problems because Sharon did not take initiative and tried to close the issue without further action. She also informed Marshall and Mark to keep their distance. Marshall and Mark informed Stephen about the developments and expressed their intention to stay away from the issue. Now, what should Stephen do to resolve the issue amicably and claim his share of the property?

Uncovering the Fraud

*I can’t do no literary work for the rest of this year because I’m meditating another lawsuit and looking around for a defendant.* — Mark Twain

Here are the questions from this case study:

- Was Wilson the fraudster?
- Were there other persons involved either directly or indirectly in this family betrayal?

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Who masterminded the fraud? Was Sharon involved?
Was there either direct or indirect involvement of the other two sisters, Diane and Terri?

Twists and Turns in the Case

*The fraudster's greatest liability is the certainty that the fraud is too clever to be detected.* — Louis J. Freeh

The following detail some possible twists and turns in this case study:

- Wilson might pressure mother Sarah that the latter registered the property to the former at her will to clear his name from the fraud.
- Sarah, Sharon, and Wilson can close the issue easily by informing the family elders that Sarah registered the property on the name of Wilson as he was taking care of her. She can claim that she forgets things easily because of her old age. So, she forgot to tell the family elders when they came first to inform the fraud.
- Wilson and Terri might have been involved in this fraud as Terri’s son Peter was one of the witnesses in the registered document.

Cracking the Case

*If you love your country, you must be willing to defend it from fraud, bigotry, and recklessness – even from a president.* — DaShanne Stokes

Undoubtedly, Wilson was the fraudster. Sharon was most likely involved in this fraud because she kept the documents given by her mother Sarah hidden. She must have checked the documents before secreting them. So, she had knowledge of the fraudulent deed and kept silent. She failed to take any initiative to resolve it. On the other hand, she hindered Marshall and Mark and asked them to stay away from the situation entirely.

When the documents were examined, one of the witnesses was Terri’s elder son, Peter. He was of age and signed in testament. So, he was also aware of this fraud and must have informed her mother Terri and father Chris. His involvement in the fraud as a witness was evident.

When the family heads read the registered documents, Sarah did not accuse Wilson despite being cheated. Instead, she began to blame Stephen, indicating her culpability in so doing. At that same time, Diane was shocked to hear of the deceptive transaction, and her body language was unrevealing. Thus, she might have been unaware of this fraud.

Strategies

*A lean compromise is better than a fat lawsuit.* — George Herbert

The best leadership strategy is to use all available tools to achieve the desired outcome in this scenario. Several tailored solutions are as follows:
Stephen must talk to his elder sister, Sharon, and younger brother, Wilson. Unfortunately, Sharon avoids family issues and Wilson evades direct confrontation. Therefore, Stephen must cooperate with family elders Marshall and Mark and other family members to achieve a mutually agreeable outcome.

All stakeholders and family elders must have a dialogue and discussion to uncover the controversy and work to remediate it. If Wilson doesn’t abide by the solutions offered by family members and elders, Stephen must file a legal complaint to rescind the transfer immediately. This must be done with the support of his mother Sarah to work together to create a partition of the property. Since the property was already taken by Wilson, Stephen must negotiate with Wilson to pay money as per the prevailing price for his share to exit civilly from this property dispute forever. It avoids legal hassles, spending money on lawsuits, and wasting precious time.

The last option for Stephen is to forgive his brother Wilson for betraying him and sacrifice the entire property for his brother.

True Leaders Devise Blueprints to Resolve Conflicts Amicably

To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right. — Confucius

Don’t avoid conflicts. Resolve them amicably and earnestly. If you postpone conflicts, they become crises later which will be difficult to manage. At the same time, ensure that conflicts don’t become chronic. Here is a blueprint to resolve conflicts amicably.

- Consult experts in the area of conflict when in doubt because everybody doesn’t know everything.
- Communicate clearly. Shannon L. Alder once remarked, “The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t being said. The art of reading between the lines is a lifelong quest of the wise.” Ensure that all stakeholders are respected and treated with dignity and honor.
- Be a good listener. Avoid preconceived notions. Have an open mind to look at the conflicts to resolve them amicably.
- Maintain a positive body language. Observe the body language cues of others to identify their inner motives and intentions.
- Be cool and composed. Maintain a cheerful note throughout the discussion.
- Keep the doors of negotiation always open, if the negotiators do not reach an understanding.
- Focus on your strengths and overcome your weaknesses to do better in the negotiation.
- Find out the motives behind the conflict.
- Don’t react. Act.
- Take breaks to recharge yourself and view the conflict with a new perspective.
- If the conflict is overwhelming, break it down into smaller pieces and address them bit by bit. However, ensure that you don’t lose sight of the big picture.
• Be flexible and at the same time restate your points clearly and assertively.
• Stick to facts, not opinions.
• Observe the hidden reasons behind the conflicts to address them.
• Attack the issue, not the individuals.
• Emphasize similarities, not differences.
• Empathize with others.
• Strive for mutual success. Give concessions, if possible. Show a graceful exit to your opponent, if proven to be at fault.
• Close the issue and avoid boasting about your victory to avoid further complications.

Adopt Soft Leadership to Resolve Conflicts Amicably

We win by tenderness. We conquer by forgiveness. — Frederick William Robertson

Leaders adopt various leadership styles and tools to resolve organizational conflicts. They can adopt a soft leadership style to achieve the desired outcomes without adversely affecting the relations. Soft leadership believes in applying pressure to get things done. It doesn’t believe in using force and violence. It believes in cooperation and collaboration, not competition and compromise. It emphasizes persuasion, negotiation, discussion, and dialogue to resolve conflicts with people-orientation without compromising task-orientation. Soft leaders search for synergy and collaboration. They avoid aggressive posture towards conflicts. They explore various options to make the outcome a win-win result through persuasion and negotiation.

Professor M.S. Rao’s 11 Cs and Soft Leadership

Leadership depends on three aspects — how you communicate with others; how you make decisions; and how you take action. When you can execute these three activities effectively you become a successful leader. However, to evolve as a soft leader, you must communicate with an emphasis on soft skills; make decisions by blending your head, heart, and gut; and take action keeping the ground realities and goals in your view without compromising task-orientation. There are 11 Cs that constitute soft leadership. They are character, charisma, conscience, conviction, courage, communication, compassion, commitment, consistency, consideration, and contribution. It is highly challenging for people to cultivate these 11 characteristics. However, if any person is able to acquire more than 6 of these traits, they get into the fold of soft leadership. Figure 1 connects 11 Cs that collectively constitute soft leadership.
Soft leadership is a blend of courageous leadership, thought leadership, servant leadership, and inspirational leadership. It suggests a soft approach rather than a hard approach. It believes in a transformational rather than transactional approach. It appreciates people-orientation rather than task-orientation. It underscores partnership rather than the so-called traditional command-and-control approach. It is the need of the hour for the new generation especially Gen Y who are eager to apply it to unlock their potential to contribute their best to organizations. It stresses soft skills rather than hard skills. It emphasizes personality, attitude, and behavior rather than technical competency or domain knowledge which can be acquired when people possess the right attitude and behavior. Succinctly, soft leadership can be defined as the process of setting goals; influencing people through persuasion; building strong teams; negotiating them with a win-win attitude; respecting their failures; handholding them; motivating them constantly; aligning their energies and efforts; recognizing and appreciating their contribution in accomplishing the organizational objectives with an emphasis on soft skills. It is based on the right mindset, skillset, and toolset.

Settling the Dispute

*I was never ruined but twice: once when I lost a lawsuit, and once when I won one.*

— Voltaire
After listening to Marshall and Mark, Stephen sensed that his elder sister Sharon was involved in this fraud indirectly. He decided to talk with Sharon to take initiative and be fair in the issue as she was the oldest member of the family. He tried calling her over the phone several times but Sharon did not pick up his call. He telephoned his mother Sarah in an attempt to better understand the situation. Sarah informed Stephen that she had registered the entire property in the name of Wilson. Stephen was shocked. He questioned his mother and her previous statements that both sons were equal and the property would be divided equally between them. Sarah informed Stephen that she had been lying to him for all these years. Stephen felt that he was cheated by his mother and other siblings. Finally, he approached a local political leader, Bob, who was not related to them and informed that he was cheated by his brother and siblings. Bob took the initiative and called Stephen, Wilson, and Sarah in for discussion and listened to them carefully. He chastised them and ordered them to give 40 percent of the share to Stephen and close the issue amicably and the remaining 60 percent to Wilson because Wilson was caring for his aged mother Sarah.

Summary

*Rather fail with honor than succeed by fraud.* — Sophocles

When Stephen talked with his mother, he recorded the conversation on his smartphone clandestinely. He also secretly recorded the conversation of his mother Sarah when family elders Marshall and Mark revealed the fraudulent transaction. They served as witnesses for all stakeholders to resolve the matter. Though research in this case revealed this act was committed at the behest of Chris and Sharon. To conclude, Wilson was the fraudster and Chris and Sharon were the abettors. It was a clear case of betrayal and breach of trust. Hence, Wilson, Chris, and Sharon must be punished legally. Stephen was the hero who brought everything into the limelight with his intelligence and abilities and exposed the culprits. Bravo Stephen! He must take care of his aged mother Sarah.

It is obvious from this case study that truth cannot be hidden for too long. The truth will come out one day. It was not the money that mattered to Stephen but what bothered him was the betrayal of his brother and siblings. To conclude, parents must settle their property disputes amicably when things are calm and steady through open dialogue and discussion to ensure the healthy functioning of the family and set an example for their next generations.

*Whoever commits a fraud is guilty not only of the particular injury to him who he deceives but of the diminution of that confidence which constitutes not only the ease but the existence of society.* — Samuel Johnson

References


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About the Author

Professor M.S. Rao, Ph.D. is the Father of “Soft Leadership” and Founder of MSR Leadership Consultants, India. He is an International Leadership Guru with 38 years of experience and the author of over 45 books including the award-winning ‘21 Success Sutras for CEOs’ URL: http://www.com/21-Suc_ess-Sutras-Ceos-Rao/dp/162865290X. He is a C-Suite advisor and a sought-after keynote speaker globally. He brings a strategic eye and long-range vision given his multifaceted professional experience including military, teaching, training, research, consultancy, and philosophy. He is passionate about serving and making a difference in the lives of others. He trains a new generation of leaders through leadership education and publications. His vision is to build one million students as global leaders by 2030 URL: http://professormsraovision2030.blogspot.in/2014/12/professor-m-s-raos-vision-2030-one_31.html. He advocates gender equality globally (#HeForShe). He was honored as an upcoming International Leadership Guru by Global Gurus URL: https://globalgurus.org/upcoming-leadership-gurus/. He coined an innovative teaching tool — Meka’s Method; leadership training tool — 11E Leadership Grid; and leadership learning tool — Soft Leadership Grid. He invests his time in authoring books and blogging on executive education, learning, and leadership. Most of his work is available free of charge on his four blogs including http://professorms_raovision2030.blogspot.com. He is a prolific author and a dynamic, energetic and inspirational leadership speaker. He can be reached at msrcltrg@gmail.com.
Q: Firstly, congratulations on your new book, The Character of American Democracy. Is this your first?

This is my first book. I have done quite a bit of writing in my work in academia and public service, but this is my first and I think my last book.

Q: Why your last?

It's tiring.
Q: When did you begin writing?

As I recall, I started this in 2017 and I think I finished it in the late fall of 2018.

Q: Actually, that didn’t take long!

It seemed like it!

Q: What was the precipitating factor that motivated you to write this book?

Well, I have always felt that professional ethics are integrally tied to democracy and I also believe to a strong capitalist economy. And I realized that, as I listened to some politicians and to some in the public, respond to unethical behavior on the part of politicians that there really was not a clear understanding of the role that ethics play in democracy. And if you don’t have an ethical democracy, you don’t have democracy because unethical behavior significantly undermines the democratic process, as well as who we are as a nation. And I decided that there was a need for a book that simply and directly makes that point.

Q: Did you have any allies in this process?

I am very blessed to have many allies. I’m talking to one right now. And family and friends with whom I have worked over the years as well as about half a dozen people who had worked with me in public office. I asked them to review my initial draft and several of them responded, “I want you to finish what you have started so I can read the rest!”

Q: And what part did Rep. John Lewis and Leon Panetta play in the launch of this book?

Well, they are very ethical gentlemen and they have demonstrated throughout their careers, their time in public service as well as personally, that integrity is critical to leadership and it is critical to democracy. And they have been friends since I served in Congress. I reached out and asked them if they would be willing to read the book and provide a statement and they very kindly did so.

Q: Would you say that integrity and ethics are integral to the character of American democracy? And since we’re seeing a paucity of both from the White House right now, does that mean that our democracy is under attack?

I do believe that our democracy is at risk, as well as our leadership role in the world. Not just our moral leadership, but our strategic leadership is at risk.
Q: Why strategic leadership?

If we don’t have intellectual integrity, we can’t have good strategic leadership. Integrity applies to a variety of situations. Personal integrity, for example, is another. Intellectual integrity is critical to good policy making because when we make decisions that are not based on fact, but are based on a desire to control and to make political gains, that undercuts our strength.

Q: So, would you say that pursuit of higher education is necessary for all American citizens in order to gain that requisite knowledge of fact?

I believe that lifelong learning is critical to a democratic society. I learn things every day that I simply did not know the day before. And I’ll never know a fraction – not even a small fraction – of what I would like to know. But if we can improve information literacy in this age of technology, we can make great strides in leadership here, but also in leadership globally. I think information literacy is one of the greatest challenges that we face. When we don’t have the information literacy that we need across the population, we don’t make the best decisions in a world that has become more complex. When I first voted in 1972, international trade was a much smaller percentage of overall trade; international relationships were important but not to the extent they are today. Even jobs that people hold are more complex today. I remember one time going to McDonald’s and their computer system was not working. They couldn’t function. That reflects a level of complexity that did not exist thirty or forty years ago. And at a time when decision-making requires more and better information, information literacy is critical.

Q: So, in that vein, do you believe that colleges are important?

I do believe that higher education is very important.

Q: Do you believe that college should be free?

I am not an advocate of free college, but I am 100% behind affordable college. And I think it is critical that we make college affordable for every student who wants to go to college and is willing to put forth the effort to earn the degree. And I say that from personal experience. I had both a National Defense Student Loan and an academic scholarship at Valparaiso University and that made it possible for me to go to college. And then when I went on to graduate school, at Indiana University, I was able to have my tuition covered by working in the business placement office and later in the doctoral program, by teaching as an associate instructor. That made it affordable.

Q: Education and healthcare are typically symbiotically related: it is difficult to be a lifelong learner and not be healthy in the process. Without good health, one certainly can’t be productive nor subscribe to an educational regimen. Many democratic socialist
nations – including Scandinavian countries, France, Germany, and Italy – have treated these two areas as a right. Is it possible to do something like that in this country?

I think the model that the United States needs to develop would be one that is workable for a very large and diverse population. Quite frankly I have concerns about an exclusive centralized health care system because I worry about what would happen if a very conservative president and Congress were to be elected and decided that they were going to restrict coverage based upon what they decide is morally acceptable. For example, women’s health and a woman’s right to choose.

Q: So, you’re saying if healthcare were centralized, under that hypothetical, the concern is that a conservative president could, with one stroke of the pen, sign an executive order and just basically eliminate that element of women’s health? Is that the concern?

Yes. But I also believe that there are efficiencies in a market economy. And I believe strongly in incentives for healthy living. I think a system that combines government-supported/public healthcare and private sector healthcare would be the best approach.

Q: So, you would endorse a partnership of the two to provide services and ensure nationwide coverage?

Yes.

Q: I know that you wrote this book pre-Covid. So, would you still support this type of private-public partnership even though the virus has disproportionately impacted communities of color who are, in many instances, least able to financially shoulder its consequences?

We are also seeing the private sector work with the government sector to address this crisis. Lilly (pharmaceuticals) for example, is moving very rapidly on the development of an antibody treatment.

Q: But so is the University of Oxford – in a country with nationalized healthcare?

Yes. Both the public and private sectors are making a contribution.

Q: I believe the administration has pledged one billion dollars to that entity?

I think that a balanced partnership is what works best.

Q: In the face of the virus, there have been more calls to extend Obamacare coverage but instead we’re seeing a
retraction due to current administration policies. Would that still be considered part of this partnership?

Oh yes! And I think that it’s also important to recognize that if you were to shift from the private sector to an exclusively public sector, that would have a huge impact on the economy.

Q: How so?

You would, over a very short period of time, eliminate certain jobs. Over time other jobs may be created in the public sector, but the transition would, I think, be very disruptive.

Q: But haven’t we experienced a radical type of transition in the past? For instance, we moved from horse-and-buggy to combustion vehicles to electric vehicles and now we are transitioning from traditional energy grids to renewables? I know that just yesterday BP announced the elimination of 10000 jobs worldwide due to less oil demand. But you’re also seeing elevated hiring levels in the renewable energy sector. It might be disruptive, but don’t you believe that certain changes warrant disruption?

But we would still be moving into a centralized government program that would be running an industry, which would reduce, and in some cases eliminate, the incentives that lead to innovation and opportunity.

Q: Isn’t there that cross over anyway, for instance between private sector healthcare insurance and Medicaid? As it stands the private and public health care sectors working together? Isn’t there this overlap already?

We do, and having served in Congress, I have seen firsthand how some who serve in public office want to impose their personal religious and moral beliefs on the public. I think that often times people look at a centralized or socialized system as a simple answer.
to a much larger and more complex problem. I think there is value in a market economy, as well as value in well-designed and administered public programs.

Q: In studying leaders worldwide, there appears to be a solid track record of many female heads of state and government with respect to implementing progressive energy policies and effective Covid-control measures. In fact, a recent 2020 Forbes article points to female leadership throughout the world as a marker for effective policymaking, especially in the time of managing Covid. This appears to be evident in New Zealand, Iceland, Norway, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Taiwan, and Singapore and now, in light of your own record, in the area of ethics especially, do you see that there is in advantage overall with female leadership in government?

I think that there is an advantage in diversity. Research shows over and over that when you have leadership that is comprised of different people who come from different backgrounds and experiences, that’s when you get the best decision making, whether its corporate, government, or not-for-profit. Diversity leads to better decisions.

Q: However, there is not much diversity in these countries I just named – largely homogeneous populations?

But, there is benefit to gender diversity, as well as racial and ethnic diversity.

Q: True — in many of these governments, there has been a quota system to ensure diverse and equal representation. And with respect to New Zealand’s Prime Minister — Jacinda Ardern has been characterized as someone who really listens to the public, is empathetic, and who grounds her decisions in fact and science. You explain the innerworkings of capitalism, integrity, and ethics in the book so where does empathy stand in relationship to a sound democratic government?

Empathy, I believe, is very consistent with moral imagination, which is the ability to understand others with whom we don’t share common experiences. And that leads to better decision-making and there’s research that shows that, as well. The development of social capital for both individuals and organizations helps them perform better at their jobs and perform better as an organization. And much of that comes from empathy ... from having moral imagination. Moral imagination is often misunderstood as imagining something as moral, but it actually refers to having empathy or an ability to care about others.

Q: It’s ironic you say that because I was listening a couple nights ago to Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) during commentary on a new anti-lynching bill introduced in the Senate. She said that her friends have communicated with her about her lack of action in the face of race relations and policing reforms. She said in speaking with their friends, Senators Cory Booker and Kamala Harris, she realized the fact of white privilege. She realized that she had not lived their lives and that she needed to become more empathetic. Other Republicans seem to live or have left a legacy marked by empathy -
Senator Mitt Romney and former Senator Richard Lugar to name a few (who actually wrote the inaugural letter to the Journal of Values-Based Leadership). But in a broader sense, would you say that you are seeing a change in today's GOP?

I think that the Republican Party has changed dramatically and it started in the Newt Gingrich era where the focus was on elections rather than sound policy. I think it really manifested itself in something very counter to what we stand for in democracy when President Trump was elected. I think his presidency is a reflection of things that have happened in the country, rather than simply being a reflection of him.

Q: An accelerant?

An accelerant.

Q: With education, and the need for active citizenship and for everyone to be informed, what do you say about Fox News as a conduit to convey reliable information? I think that there is a place in journalism for conservative and liberal and moderate presentation of facts. In other words, there is a place for analysis of facts, but there is not a place for untruths.

Q: Not a place for untruths?

Yes. There is not a place for untruths.

Q: And Fox News has been labeled by many as a perpetrator of untruths, has it not? Do you think Fox News is channeling misinformation?

I think the mission of Fox News is to promote a particular ideology rather than to report the news. And I believe much of that ideology is contrary to the character of American democracy. I also believe that any time you have individuals with the title of news anchor or news reporter espousing ideology that is not consistent with the Constitution of our country, then there is potential for undermining American democracy.

Q: When you see the peaceful protests in Lafayette Park across from the White House a couple weeks ago, with a certain level of...
paramilitary presence used to disperse the crowds, do you have any fear for our democracy? Could this be an undermining of the US Constitution?

I think that oftentimes the cost of this type of action can be severe.

Q: Here at your farm in Argos, Indiana, am I right to surmise that this is a Republican stronghold? If so, how is it that you were raised a Democrat? I believe you mentioned in the book that your parents were both Democrats?

My dad was a Democratic precinct committee man and I was out registering voters with my mom when I was 6. I remember that she volunteered for the Democratic Party — while she would only register Democrats, she would provide information to anybody who asked about where and how they could register to vote.

Q: Why were your parents in the Democratic Party, especially living in a predominantly Republican section of the country?

Well, at that time, it was much more balanced. One of the reasons we were out registering voters in 1958 was that we wanted to help a neighbor get elected county sheriff and he won. But I also think that the Democratic Party recognizes the complexity of the issues and we know that complex problems usually cannot be solved with a simple one-line answer. My parents have always understood that.

Q: Like “Defund the Police”?

De-militarize. This is what the goal should be. But I found the Democratic Party to be more thoughtful, and the values are very consistent with what I think the founding fathers had in mind when they wrote the Constitution.

Q: But were the founding fathers not slave owners?

Of course, that was wrong.

Q: But when we look at morals and ethics across-the-board, was there a natural deficiency with the founding fathers and hence then with the documents they produced?

That is why we have had constitutional amendments to correct what was allowed in the original document. Correcting wrongs always seems to take longer than it should, which is why we must stay active and never give up.

Q: Like the 13th and 14th Amendments which you reference multiple times in the book. I believe, you are for an equal opportunity type of
capitalism? Do you think that we are way past Jim Crow and abiding by equal opportunities for all?

*Oh, I think we have a long way to go.*

**Q:** What do we need to do?

*I do not think there is one simple answer but we need to ensure that everybody, regardless of background and economic status, has an education. In the State of Indiana, that means we need to get rid of vouchers that are draining too much money from the public schools and turning it over into the hands of people who are trying to make money off of the educational system.*

**Q:** Should private schools be closed?

*I think that private schools are great. But I think vouchers that drain money from public school systems should be eliminated.*

**Q:** Would you say that public schools in the State of Indiana are in a crisis mode? Even pre-Covid?

*I think that we are in a serious time ... and we need to change direction.*

**Q:** Off the cuff, if Vice President Joe Biden wins in November, would you consider being tapped for secretary for the Department of Education?

*I would be honored to be asked to serve in a Biden administration. I respect him a great deal. And I believe he has both the understanding and the ability to correct the wrongs that have occurred under this administration.*

**Q:** You worked under two democratic administrations: Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. Do you think that they held up constitutional ideals?

*Oh, they are very committed to constitutional ideals and they both understand democracy. They ran for public office because they believe in the country they served.*

**Q:** How would you say that they believed in the country? Could you be more specific?

*They believe in the values of what is the greatest democratic experiment in the history of the world. They both understand that democracy is not just about the policies that get developed but it's also about how we develop the policies. And how we listen to everyone. They were both and still are so good at bringing together people who have different points of view and figuring out how to find workable solutions. And one of the problems in democracy that you see on both the right and the left is that you have people who think that they have to have their way and that it is wrong to compromise.*
But democracy is built on compromise. You don’t compromise constitutional values but you have to compromise on the specific form that the policy takes.

Q: Shortly after his inauguration, Barack Obama stated reflectively that he was the president of all Americans. But what have seen over the last several years is a president only serving his base. Would you say that this was a major dichotomy between the two styles of leadership?

There was a huge difference in how President Obama and President Clinton served versus how President Trump tries to run things.

Q: And presently?

It's very unnerving. It is.

Q: In comparing your book to other contemporary writings, I would like to reference Ian Bassin, the executive director of Protect Democracy. Bassin cites an “elephant graph” which shows growing wealth disparities in this country – part of the reason for America’s democratic decline. But he cautions that finance only tells part of the story as other factors indicate a threat to democracies around the world. He notes how democracy has been distorted by such things like climate change, migration, globalization, tribalism, the rise of social media, Russian interference, and partisan gerrymandering. The cumulative effect has been to fuel skepticism about the functioning of American democracy. Worldwide we are seeing other threats to a democratic system of governing. India currently is facing institutionalized discrimination directed toward its Muslim population and Brazilian president Bolsonaro has silenced the country’s own health department and the press overall concerning Covid-related cases and deaths. Is this a downward trend anticipated to only accelerate?

I think it is a troubling trend which will not be resolved with one election. And because it is a trend globally, the role of the United States in correcting it is as important now as any other time in history. It is as important as our role in World War II, for example, and it is very important that we have leadership in this country that understands democratic principles and understands how ethics and integrity fit in democracy.

Q: World leadership seems to be an oxymoronic ideal with the nationalism and isolationist policies rendered so far. Would you agree that President Trump has isolated us?

I think that he simply does not appreciate the role that the United States needs to play. Not only does he fail to understand the role of the presidency, he appears not to even care. It appears that he ran for office for personal gain rather than to lead what is, again, the greatest democratic experiment in the history of the world. His time in office makes it clear that democracy is fragile. And when the voters fail to put enough time
into learning the issues, studying the issues, and studying the backgrounds of the candidates, this failure puts us all at risk. It puts this country at risk.

Q: I believe that is what General Kelly recently intimated – we as voters need to study the backgrounds, and intent of, our candidates. And without that, we are simply not informed. And if you are not informed, you are not an active citizen. And without active citizenry, you have a demise of democracy? Is that a logical conclusion?

Yes. An informed citizenry who upholds the values of democracy is important to the democracy’s success … and even to its continuation.

Q: And would you say that other distortions like partisan gerrymandering, uncurbed influence by third party actors and countries, migration, and globalism are undermining democracies worldwide? Are you seeing those on the rise right now?

Globalization and technology contribute to a more complex environment that makes it more challenging to make the right decisions as a citizen. And it also can make it more difficult to fight election interference by an adversary who uses technology to do so. An adversary can hack into a Facebook account or falsify who they are on Facebook and widely distribute information. And research shows that false information is distributed more widely and more rapidly than factual information. It is probably more entertaining and more interesting and that is why I’m going to repeat that we have a responsibility to develop information literacy.

Q: Also, in the recent past our leaders have negotiated in this complex world some of these problems – with Iran, nuclear capabilities (leading to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action JCPOA) – and with the world, tackling climate change. But then the current president has withdrawn from both, essentially breaching trust. How can we ever rebuild that trust worldwide?

I think it is important to recognize that globalization and technology and other developments that have increased the complexity of our environment are not unique to the United States. They exist all around the world. And there is no question that there are many around the world who would like the United States to be the kind of leader it has historically been. I think a change in the presidency is needed. Vice President Biden would restore our role as a world leader of character. He has both the commitment to our democracy and the
understanding of issues. I think a change in leadership would send a strong message around the world.

Q: What if Trump wins re-election?

I think that that would be a real challenge for the United States and for the world.

Q: How so?

We would see more of what we have seen, but on steroids. Going back to the role that the United States has played in the world, I want to use the Marshall Plan after World War II as an example. The idea that you can take your ball and go home and somehow be a winner is very baffling to me. How could anyone even think that that works? You cannot win a ball game if you are not on the court or on the field. You can’t. You can’t win a gold medal at the Olympics if you don’t compete. And most of us realize that we have to work with people to get along. This approach of pulling out of international organizations - pulling out of the World Health Organization, for example - just makes an official look very childish and uninformed.

Q: I was in Iceland during the 2018 Helsinki Conference where Putin and Trump fielded questions. That conference was broadcast in the lobby of our hotel and I was the only American. When our president disavowed our own intelligence communities in favor of Vladimir Putin many asked me if I thought Trump would be forced to resign because of those statements. Of course, nothing happened. It now seems that we are not just disfavored, we have become the laughing stock of so much of the world. Do you see that as well?

Remember when he was speaking at the United Nations and they laughed? That is not a show of strength by the United States.

Q: Strength for this White House seems to be breaking up peaceful protesters by militarized police so he could hold up a Bible. Isn’t it moral strength that we need? One of points made in The Character of American Democracy, is that yes, democracy is under attack but, when you see protesters every single day – not just in major metropolitan centers but in Ipswich Utah – is that not a good sign that democracy is cherished?

Yes, I’m actually beginning to feel optimistic.

Q: Why are you optimistic and does your book reflect this optimism?

I am optimistic for a couple of reasons. I have been teaching students who have demonstrated that they understand what democracy is and that they have values and a commitment to a career that will be consistent with a democratic system. But I am also optimistic because the public has responded. Occurrences over the past several months – including a recognition that President Trump has not effectively handled the
Coronavirus pandemic in large part because he has not been honest about it – are now resonating with the public. But, I am even more encouraged by the young people who have said, “Enough is enough!” Regarding police brutality – most police officers do not engage in those kinds of horrible acts. But, it should never happen. And an assault on anyone must be recognized as an assault on all of us, because we are all brothers and sisters in democracy. It does appear to me that we are finally being more honest as a nation about how unfairly we treat minorities. And I honestly believe that people – and some of this comes from scientific research – now realize that we are all more similar than we are different. And we need to look at people’s hearts and not the color of their skin.

Q: That same statement was made by Barack Obama, by the way, after concluding his 2nd administration. He said that after all of those years of service and travels around the world what he discovered was that we are more all the same then anything else.

Yes, we are!

Q: And then your emphasis on honesty is basically evidenced by General Colin Powell recently.

We have a problem if we don’t tell the truth about what it is. The example I use in the classroom is about ice cream. If I am not honest with myself and about how much ice cream I eat, my clothes won’t fit!

Q: Everyone must own up to his or her part.

Yes! You cannot discriminate against someone else without undermining who we are as a people and as a nation. You cannot. And if you lie to yourself, you are getting in the way of progress and solving problems. And that’s why ethics are so important. We must have integrity in leadership.

Q: Your book keys in on self-reflection. In order to diagnose a problem, you cannot disassociate yourself from it. You’re either part of the solution or part of the problem.

Yes!
Q: So back to the current protests. Why do you believe that the death of George Floyd might be igniting something new that Michael Brown’s and Eric Garner’s deaths never did?

I think that the video of how he died really opened a lot of people’s eyes.

Q: But didn’t we see that with Eric Garner though, right?

There has been a frustration that has been building for a number of years and having a president who does not acknowledge the problem and who has not been honest about the problem, I think has led people to finally say we need to take action because leadership in Washington will not.

Q: Do you think that after 3 years of misinformation and the dissemination of conspiracy theories have resulted in more and more people questioning what is happening?

I believe there has been something of an awakening, I know we all have unconscious biases and we see them in other people more easily than we see them in ourselves. But I think that watching the president’s response to the killing of George Floyd, there were probably some people who said my gosh, I know people like that, and I’m not going to stand for it anymore.
Title: *The Character of American Democracy — Preserving our Past, Protecting our Future*
Author: Jill Long Thompson

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It is tempting when picking up a book to wonder just how much experience the author has in the subject at hand while concomitantly questioning his or her expertise. But Jill Long Thompson, the author of the soon-to-be-released *The Character of American Democracy*, manifests an unsurpassed record of principled leadership and a long, celebrated legacy of public service.

Having attained a B.S. in Business Administration from Valparaiso University followed by MBA and doctoral degrees in Business from the Indiana University Kelley School of Business, Long Thompson began a long succession of political positions.

Quite remarkably, in 1986, Long Thompson became the first woman in the State of Indiana to win the nomination for the U.S. Senate, and three years later, successfully secured a Congressional seat which she held for several consecutive terms until 1995. As a member Congress she served on the Agriculture and Veterans’ Affairs Committees. She was also a National Vice Chair of the Democratic Leadership Council and a speaker at the 1992 Democratic National Convention in New York.

From 1995 to 2001, Long Thompson served as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development during the Bill Clinton Administration, managing 7,000 employees and a $10 billion budget while overhauling single-family loan programs and helping to create thousands of jobs in economically-challenged rural communities.

In 2008, Long Thompson won the Democratic nomination for governor of Indiana, again making her mark as the first woman in Indiana history, this time to be nominated for governor by a major party.
In 2012, at the pinnacle of her political career, Long Thompson served as Chair and CEO of the Farm Credit Administration (FCA) during the Barack Obama Administration, in charge of a multi-billion-dollar budget.

Following years of teaching at Indiana University, Long Thompson authored this work, focusing her examination on the synergistic interplay of ethics, democracy, character, citizenry, capitalism, and leadership. She introduced a comprehensive ethics reform bill in 1993 – Congressional Ethics Reform Act, HR 2735 – the focus of which was to ban all gifts from lobbyists to congressional representatives. Reviewing the circumstances of this bold move reminded me of the micro actions of late Dr. Quentin Young, a tenacious advocate of healthcare ethics and reform: as the former chairman of the Department of Medicine of Cook County/Stroger Hospital, Young banned all pharmaceutical sales representatives from the facility, citing undue influence in physician’s plans of treatment. Like Young, Long Thompson champions the eschewing of every potential influence – from a soft drink to an all-expense paid vacation – that might impact the decision-making process of those deigned to serve the public good.

In its totality, The Character of American Democracy reminded me that we are living at a time of unprecedented challenges – both universal in nature as well as intrinsic to America’s unique history. Never has its leadership, character development, sense of ethics, appreciation of diversity, search for trust, and intolerance of corruption been put to such a test. Long Thompson provides guidance by identifying, defining, and applying those fundamental components of ethical leadership necessary to lead the nation and the world in corrective action; by checking indifference and mismanagement which unequivocally undermine the rule of law; and by balancing individual freedoms with serving the interests of the collective good.

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Predominant Themes of “The Character of American Democracy

The Predicate Gift. Americans were bestowed the gift of a constitutional democracy premised upon the principles of self-governance and individual liberties, yet accompanied by burdens and challenges. The setting of its adoption was far from unblemished, however, as the majority of its authors owned slaves, fractionalized Native American Indians, and rendered women as largely irrelevant to the political process. The Constitutional Preamble “for a more perfect union” would be a continuing objective, tested by such momentous events as the Civil War, waves of immigration, extension of voting rights, a Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement, and more currently, extremist isolationist measures and policies. No doubt, as the author points out, the American democratic system has been subject to a lengthy learning process.

Essential Definitions. Long Thompson explores key terms intrinsic to the American system of government and economic growth.

• **Character**: Empathy and understanding are cited as important attributions of character whereas its individual components are specifically identified as trustworthiness, citizenship, fairness, responsibility, caring, and respect.
• **Capitalism:** Noting the historical and current unequal opportunities precluding full participation of the populace in a market-based economy, the author remains positive about its potential when subject to a wisely-based regulatory scheme environment which promotes social responsibility.

• **Democracy:** Central to the proper functioning of a democratic government is integrity and essential to the maintenance of integrity are the dual agents of “accountability and transparency.” Democracy is predicated on values-based leaders as well as a well-informed and thoroughly-involved citizenry. As Long Thompson stresses, “Democracy is a shared responsibility, and we must look inward to ourselves, as well as outward to our leaders and fellow citizens, to make it work.”

• **Fairness:** A just government demands the development and implementation of fair policies and directives and the rejection of any philosophies or actions which marginalize segments of the populace, whether though overt or covert acts of racism, gender-related discrimination, or other nefarious practices which hinder equitable application.

**Noted Distinctions.** Comparing and contrasting certain subjects is imperative to this study of American democracy. For example,

• **Government vs Business:** As Long Thompson explains, “running a government is not like running a business. Businesses exist to generate a profit while providing a product that serves the needs or wants of the customer. Governments exist to provide order and security for a society.” Business profit objectives must be tempered with sound regulatory administration and a commitment to stakeholder involvement. The individual freedoms and liberties of the American-style of government must be counterbalanced by the need to serve the collective good.

• **Ethics vs. Morality:** A distinction is made by the author between actions deemed ethical and guiding morals or principles. Ethics refers to the widely-shared, intuitively-premised universal understanding of what is right and wrong. Morals, on the other hand, are better associated with personal norms, often predicated on individual outlooks and opinions.

**Present Challenges.** Long Thompson decries that the “lack of ethics and character among our nation’s leaders in both the public and private sectors makes this one of the most disconcerting times in my life. Even more disconcerting is the fact that the public outcry is not as great as it should be. We must fight the tendency among some to see unethical behavior as normal or, even worse, as acceptable.” She cites numerous manifestations of distortion in governance:

• **Unabated Political Spending:** Well-regulated campaign financing has largely been reversed as the result of the 2010 US Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision, infusing massive corporate spending and influence into the political arena.

• **Unchecked Conflicts of Interest:** Lack of mandatory financial disclosure has elevated the pursuit of individual gain in the highest office. The author cites the
promotion of presidential-based business involving family-owned hotels and golf courses as key examples.

- **Restricted Access to the Polls**: Compromising the significance of the vote ostensibly undermines democracy. As evidence of this threat, Long Thompson cites gerrymandering, the reduction of polling stations, and the purging of voting lists.

- **World Standing**: The signing of the Constitution signaled the emergence of American ideals onto the world stage, crystallizing a profound leadership role which grew exponentially over the next 250 years. The emoluments clauses served as checks on financial misdeeds, setting the stage for international emulation. The author notes that while the United States continues to be a world leader, the country has been more respected and influential under the leadership of other presidents as compared to the current administration. For instance, the Marshall Plan of post-WW II and development of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have given way to wholesale isolationism. The country’s traditional leadership role in formatting alliances has now been diminished. While America is not the world leader as it has been in the past, the author is quick to emphasize America’s potential to rally together to share resources and ameliorate deleterious circumstances – characteristically part of the functioning of any democracy.

- **Rule of Law**: The US Constitution established a system of separate but equal branches of government, all operating under a rigorous set of checks and balances. Yet the rule of law is seriously put into question when ethical guideposts are obscured and unethical behavior sanctioned. The author cites the disgraced former Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich as an example of such questionable behavior (reviewer note: pardoned by President Trump on February 19, 2020).

- **Corruption and Oversight**: From Wells Fargo’s corporate policies of creating ghost financial accounts to charges of self-dealing by the White House, American institutions and ideals are under assault by incidences of unbridled corruption. Long Thompson asserts that unfettered oversight must be restored to ensure a strong, well-functioning democracy.

- **Pursuit of Truth and the Role of the Press**: The antithesis to conveying truthful information is the intentional dissemination of falsehoods. The author emphasizes the need for a well-informed electorate, necessary to fully participate as engaged citizens in a democracy. To that end, the press must be allowed to move forward unfettered, yet with a moral directive to strive for factually-based reporting. This rationale is in line with Thomas Jefferson’s admonition that “our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.” Long Thompson recognizes that a free press is quintessential to the infrastructure of a democracy, yet has the responsibility to deliver and uncover the truth. And the public, as part of its exercise of citizenship, must be equipped with the abilities to discern which sources of information are the most credible.
The Need. In her advocation of ethical leadership, character-building, sound governance, and an unfailing commitment to ensure equal market and political opportunities, Long Thompson depicts a public hungry for grace and decorum, chivalry and mutual respect. In a democracy where everyone has a role in making government work, the key to achieving these objectives is through:

- **Introspective Examination:** While it is easy to critique others' opinions and political leanings, it is imperative for each citizen to identify, define, and eschew personal prejudices – which may include conformity, gender, and racial biases – which nefariously work to undermine objective thinking and mindful action. For one is not able to treat others fairly until he or she is able to eliminate biases in the quest to gain greater objectivity.

- **External Examination and Public Critique:** Long Thompson underscores the importance of debate, discussion, and disagreement to the preservation of American democracy. This view coincides with Benjamin Franklin’s directive that it “is the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority” and what has been ascribed to Thomas Jefferson that “dissent is the highest form of patriotism.”

Expectations and Mandates. To properly strengthen American democracy, the author stresses that there are obligations which all its constituents must undertake:

- **Active Citizenship:** Americans must take their citizenship roles seriously by not simply paying their taxes and voting for their representatives, but by respecting the rights of others and by striving “to become informed and stay informed on candidates, public officials, and policy.”

- **Seek and Embrace the Truth:** It is every citizen’s obligation to seek, demand, and disseminate the truth for in truth comes safety and trust. Concomitantly, those who spread falsehoods either flagrantly or more obtusely must be called out and held accountable. Lying by public officials not only misleads the public but undermines basic democratic principles.

- **Equal Opportunity Capitalism:** The author concludes that capitalism can be allowed to function properly where participants have equal market opportunities, diversity created by generations of immigrants is celebrated, a well-designed regulatory environment is established, and collective bargaining rights are strengthened and respected.

Conclusion. Long Thompson concludes this masterful work by interjecting certain unassailable maxims: *character matters and loss of ethical leadership is a dangerous and imminent threat to democracy.* In the words of Dwight Eisenhower “a people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.” The plea is for the American public to relish and preserve the gift of democracy or be faced with its disintegration.

— Elizabeth F.R. Gingerich, Editor-in-Chief, JVBL
Ritch K. Eich, a lifetime learner with decades of service and experience in the corporate, armed services, academic, and family-based worlds, has launched a leadership manual and memoir that warrants widespread attention and implementation in the workplace...and in life. It is not surprising that this book is dedicated to healthcare workers, who have exhibited tenacity and adherence to purpose in fighting the ravages of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Not only is the author’s dedication fitting of his character, but a prime example of the three characteristics pursued in this book: Grit, Grace, and Gratitude. Eich taps into a lifetime of experiences, not for self-congratulation, but to identify what has worked as well as what needs to be avoided within these three interrelated discussions. His use of examples – both past and present – helps animate these selected traits.

GRIT

Eich defines grit as “the passionate pursuit of hard goals that awes and inspires you and others to become better people, flourish emotionally, take positive risks and live your best lives.” This definition incorporates the traits of courage and strength, necessary to persevere one’s goals and to fortify character while concomitantly remaining conscientious of others’ needs. Adversity and nonacceptance do not deter the gritty leader who continuously displays endurance and resilience, highlights the positive, and continues to move forward despite the odds.

In his discussion, Eich emphasizes that grit includes the courage of a person to change organizations through “bold, innovative, and sometimes controversial major change initiatives.” This leader should not be blind, however, in this pursuit but rather should seek to identify realistic avenues to pursue his or her objectives. The inspired leader must embed the chosen initiative while engaging the entirety of the organization to join in the effort: “Leaders must get ahead of these monumental challenges [world poverty, terrorism, climate change] with values-based leadership that moves us to a far better, sustainable future.” The author uses such examples as Oakland A’s manager Billy Beane – who radically changed how the game of baseball was played through data-driven results.
Further, the gritty leader endeavors to risk using untraditional methods of change and development, making aspirational leadership into a reality grounded in foundational values. The key attributes of a gritty leader should include empathy—a true understanding of and caring for those following—and the necessary patience to be prepared for a long venture marked with mistakes made, noted, and corrected. The gritty leader does not perfunctorily challenge accepted mores and traditions, but is bold and ready to institute new ways. This leader must be ready to compromise—civilly, and not begrudgingly—and be prepared to take responsibility, being accountable for any setbacks experienced along the way.

Grit as defined by Eich refers to the determination made possible through personal growth, talent development, and leadership achievement. It accentuates a willingness to stay the course and is an indispensable element of entrepreneurship. Grit relates to the intuitive leanings of guts over talent—a display of often incalculable passion and the perseverance for fulfilling long-term goals in both life and business. Eich acknowledges that the gritty leader seeks to achieve goals even amidst discouragement. This pathway is not just a question of survivability, but a journey of determination powered by an innate sense of the drive to succeed. And that “stick-to-it-ness” often is the propulsion of both morality and genuine and sustaining happiness. Grit is what ultimately makes a life purposeful and fruitful. It is humility with enduring focus, ever receptive to criticism and other points of view. This tenacity to attain certain objectives should not, however, occur as a result of sacrificing or hurting others.

Several additional examples used to display this trait include Cokie Roberts and Sally Ride in the advancement of women in journalism and space exploration, respectively, as well as the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, who—in the Spring of 2018—experienced the tragic and violent loss of peers and mentors yet stood tall to engage in the gun debate, banding together to put pressure on the Florida legislature to make policy changes. Cesar Chávez is also highlighted as a determined leader who fought tirelessly to expose and remediate harsh working conditions of migrant farm workers.

The gritty leader also champions greater diversity in the process of decision-making: diversity of gender, race, and economic status—as such reflects society at large and hence functions as an integral way to elicit policy change, develop new products, and process needed feedback. Many of the author’s examples show remarkable individuals who forecasted the future and did the right without waiting for acceptance—like Brooklyn Dodgers’ general manager Branch Rickey and player Jackie Robinson—both risking the immediate environment of racial division, choosing the right and moral path. Chosen paths of courage ultimately prove alignment with developing community values, and, as a bonus, often generate long-term financial benefits.

Eich focuses on the importance of inclusivity as the moral and necessary tool to garner a larger swarth of talent, skill sets, and world experiences. Grit exemplified in this way enhances a company’s image and reputation and solidifies customer loyalty, tapping into purchasing power and stimulating creativity for even newer ventures. [The interviewer
would also cite another example of a humble, talented, and tenacious leader, standing his ground for what he believes – quarterback Colin Kaepernick – a trait noticed by Nike in its campaign to “Believe in Something”.

**GRACE**

Borrowing from life and work experiences – Eich maintains that grace is a combination of many values, including the cherishing of others, being mutually respectful, treating others with dignity, showing gratitude, being encouraging and helpful, and displaying quiet self-confidence without arrogance. Grace lifts the spirits of colleagues, teammates, and co-workers, and delivers an invaluable source of positive energy that lifts spirits. The leader imbued with grace is competent, always remaining composed and ready to quietly help others to succeed with an enthusiastic, positive disposition.

Grace, as defined by the author can further be described as being accessible, ready to roll up one’s sleeves and join in the task at hand. The graceful leader eschews greed and polarizing politics, and rather leads with an astute decorum in his or her treatment of others. Summarily, “No leader wants to fail but not enough yet realize the indisputable linkage between treating everyone with genuine respect and recognition of their worth and the organization’s sustained competitive advantage – the difference between positive and inclusive versus negative and alienating.” Further, as the author explains, for true success in business, those in control must teach skill competency and improvement but, in the process, be receptive to feedback, leaving room for a certain degree of vulnerability which is necessary for relationship-building.

Grace in leadership must involve learning which transcends complacency with current knowledge and opens the mind to new concepts, ways of thinking, and alternate processes. Grace helps to move past the status quo and narrowmindedness that often accompanies mental stagnation. Graceful leadership cannot be personalized, but rather must be recognized as the outcome of communal dialogue and knowledge application. Grace allows for the expression of one’s values but ascribes value to others wherever possible. It celebrates past successes but does not dwell on isolated accomplishments.

Eich remarks that life and work are sustained on the creation and maintenance of relationships – personal connections which must be developed and sustained through honesty, open communication, mutual trust, and genuine care, with no hidden agenda. For this indeed is grace in action. He cites leadership examples who exemplify this trait, e.g., Jacinda Ardern of NZ (direct and honest, listening to constituents and gaining their trust) and former Senator John McCain from Arizona who criticized his party and president on many issues, risking party shunning and transcending power and position. Finally, grace rejects rudeness – especially as it has been amplified by divisive politics, inaction, wrong action, and COVID confinement. It embraces patience, purpose, and tolerance. He uses Anthony Fauci, M.D., Director of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at NIH, as a leader who champions these characteristics without concern of negative political consequences, guiding us all during a pandemic.
GRATITUDE
Eich accentuates the maxim that when leaders show appreciation and value those under their influence, the workforce tends to work hard to live up to leader expectations. When workers feel that their work is appreciated and their ideas actually listened to, there is a renewed dedication to do their very best. And “thank you” does not need to wait until a significant accomplishment is achieved – acknowledging the little victories goes far and should be implemented whenever possible.

One genuine way of showing gratitude is through using the personal, handwritten note; it shows thoughtfulness, time, effort, and vestment ... something social media just cannot convey. Howard Schultz of Starbucks is used an example of a grateful leader who praised the efforts of his workers and colleagues. Another way of conveying gratitude to one’s constituents is by taking measures to improve the immediate environs. Playing live or streaming in recorded music, exhibiting artwork, and installing gardens or simply bringing in plants can effectively accomplish this objective. [There are several examples that come to mind: Rush Hospital in Chicago, Illinois has done just that with the construction of a garden area within its premises and the corridor display of children’s artwork; O’Hare has used part of its Terminal 3 to vertically grow herb and vegetable crops which are used in airport restaurants; and the cities of both Chicago and Portland (Oregon) have capitalized on using rooftop gardens to both help insulate many commercial and government buildings while improving the aesthetics of the workplace.]

Through sincere gratitude, an effective vision can be created and communicated pervasively to generate acceptance by and invigorate workers, friends, and followers. Communication is key and appreciation of efforts essential.

CONCLUSION
Core values undergird a successful enterprise. These values then identify purpose which advance to vision. Vision should be driven deep into the organization’s workforce. The true leader seeks continual input as the vision materializes and must personally model this vision for others to show seriousness of commitment. The values-based leader must clearly articulate values at every opportunity and remain aware of one’s own thoughts and principles and be willing to alter them as exposure reveals new and better ways.

Eich has defined the gritty, graceful, and appreciative leader as one who understands that leadership does not occur within a vacuum but is founded on myriad interrelationships. This leader fosters ethical practices and a just environment “of which community-model thinking and authentic leadership are essential components.” For the best companies are the ones that transcend profits and embrace purpose. They have carved out a clear company brand and a solid, respectful identity, one that “actually lives and breathes through its people, inside and outside of the company.”
It was the beginning of the 1970s when so many of us heard the phrase, “information overload,” for the first time. Coined by American writer and futurist, Alvin Toffler, in his popular book, Future Shock, Toffler focused upon the danger of modern technologies at that time, digital and communication processes that would impact global cultures for decades to come. Future Shock particularly refers to the rapid transference from an “industrial society” to a “super-industrial society” — prompting the reader to draw similarities with our current post-industrial digital age quickly transforming into a more individually-customized, momentary, “on demand,” market. Such changes, both then and now, have profound societal consequences, even perceived as disturbing as people become increasingly overwhelmed, confused, and isolated by such a rapid transition.

Emilio Iodice’s Future Shock 2.0, originally released in 2014, has been making a resurgence in today’s literary market, primarily due to its eerily prescient narratives – with most occurring in fictitious year 2020. The author hypothesizes what geopolitical and economic life will be like six years in the future. He determines that while modern economic growth occurring after the turn of the century – and primarily triggered by China – may have flourished to a certain degree, it wholly failed to address inequality in wealth generation. Significant income disparity ultimately stirs deep disconnection between citizens and their national leaders, ultimately undercutting democratic values in governance. In targeted year 2020, American political governance would become oligarchal, eschewing its quintessential American democratic principles that had previously been cherished and emulated throughout the world – especially after World War II. This oligarchal government emerges as the result of the rise and concentration of economic elites and organized business interests, rendering individual citizens largely impotent politically. Additionally, the author forecasts that China’s rise and emergence as an economic powerhouse would dominate developing nations, using them as infrastructure experiments that would reap very little of the financial rewards while shouldering disastrous environmental consequences. Such nations would submit to a succession of dictatorial regimes — without full public awareness and meaningful intervention.

The book parallels Alvin Toffler’s original work in proclaiming that “knowledge is the most democratic source of power,” but would be subverted in a growing dystopian
In Iodice’s accounting, nationwide martial law would be imposed with the suspension of First Amendment rights. Curfews would be put in place, and governments would entrust military forces to establish order by any means possible.

Iodice paints year 2020 as a spiraling devolution into a Wild West scenario – a dystopian nightmare. Several of the book’s 2014 predictions unfortunately have come true to a certain degree. For instance, unprecedented immigration struggles were predicted to occur at the Southern border of the United States to such an extent that mass murders would go unchecked and underreported. Immigration would accelerate as poorer, developing countries would fail to adequately address the loss of productive output, only offering inadequate social safety nets. Immigrant boats would be met either by unforgiving countries or by the lethal oppression of national border guards.

In Iodice’s 2020, a series of weather-related calamities would empty government coffers. Government officials would be under constant threat of assassination and nations would be pushed to the brink of bankruptcy. In fictional 2020, there would be a proliferation of unregistered lethal weapons and unchecked incendiary devices. Hunger would be prevalent. Consumers would lose their purchasing power and unemployment levels would skyrocket. Other bellwether characteristics would consist of:

- a downward spiral of consumption rates;
- sweeping trade restrictions with China;
- the imposition of austerity measures; and
- sovereign debt defaults – all of which would collectively deepen the global recession.

The precipitating event signaling such malaise and societal demise in Future Shock 2.0 concerns the opening up of global economies to cheap Chinese goods and loan dependencies which result in the dual closure of the local and national manufacturing firms. China had firmly moved into African and Latin American countries, negotiated contracts for finished goods and mineral imports, and flooded those nations with its own skilled and menial workforces to build each nation’s infrastructure – but tailored to its own needs.

With the spread of worldwide pandemics, high unemployment rates, a global recession, elitist governments, and racial protests – all forecasted in Future Shock 2.0 – the author’s spot-on clairvoyance embedded in each page transforms 2020 into a fictional dateline report of neo-colonist activity. Iodice craftily uses certain fictional characters within the book to demonstrate the impact of the scourge of modern colonialism throughout the world. Several of these characters include:

- A displaced Southern manufacturing plant owner who despairs over his loss of business conceded overseas;
- A Western seaboard ocean harvester whose hulls are poisoned by environmental factors;
- A Mexican immigrant and an African laborer – both struggling for better lives and livelihoods;
• A former factory worker in Southeast Asia, suffering from environmentally-related health ailments and made a victim of power politics; and
• A Chinese journalist who defies anti-sedition Chinese laws by attempting to publish stories about a growing pandemic emanating from sick pigs, whose carcasses now clog waterways and pollute fields [the reviewer draws parallels to China’s current anti-sedition law, activated on July 1, 2020, meant to target all criticism of the government – a legislative move that will inevitably undermine free speech in Hong Kong].

Iodice correctly predicts other world events that appear to have come true in real year 2020, including a devastating financial crisis in the euro zone, a rocked American economy, and worldwide environmental catastrophe. Other events predicted for 2020 in Future Shock 2.0 that still may come to pass include:

• A major, pro-democratic, grass-roots uprising in China — unleashed to displace the nation’s one-party rule — largely resulting from environmental ruin marked by the complete contamination of the Yangzi River by deadly industrial pollutants, the creation of “cancer communities,” and years of unchecked corruption of government officials;
• A breakdown of the rule of law leading to the invocation of marshal law in the United States, and prompting the nation’s first female president to vacate the White House — a virtually unprecedented move; and
• A domino-like toppling of governments resulting from political factionalism, an expanding income gap, compromised international trade agreements, extreme famine and thirst, the growing presence of counterfeit pharmaceuticals, irreversible environmental damage, and general social turmoil.

Future Shock 2.0’s description of massive societal change is also depicted in what is commonly known as the “elephant graph.” The graph, which economist Branko Milanović popularized in 2013, is actually a chart that shows income growth by percentiles of the global income distribution in the two decades leading up to the 2008 global financial crisis. The graph, which mimics the shape of an elephant, indicates as its wide mid-section the emergence of rising incomes – especially as experienced in China, India, and other beneficiaries of globalization – whereas its rising trunk reflects the financial largesse of the world’s top one per cent. Against this backdrop of rising economic segregation lies the stagnant incomes of American and European working and middle-class families, creating growing support within their ranks for populist rebellions and the eventual jettisoning of democratic traditions seemingly rendered as obsolete.

Iodice’s forecasts are largely predicated upon circumstances where greed has overcome logic and sound investment policies have been entirely abandoned, leading to an overall bureaucratic nightmare and the cessation of regular essential services.

Sound hauntingly familiar?

In support of his fictional narrative, the author interjects selected quotes from world leaders, supporting his call to awareness and action. For example,
• Pope Francis warns that: “In society and the world in which we live, selfishness has increased more than love for others, and that men [and women] of good will must work, each with his [her] own strengths and expertise, to ensure that love for others increases until it is equal and possibly exceeds love for oneself.

• Al Gore: As I have said for many years throughout this land, we’re borrowing money from China to buy oil from the Persian Gulf to burn it in ways that destroy the future of human civilization. Every bit of that has to change.

• And finally, Jane Goodall: Change happens by listening and then starting a dialog with the people who are doing something you don’t believe is right.

Like Alvin Toffler, Iodice expresses optimism by pointing out that we still have a degree of control of the future. Echoing his predecessor’s words, Iodice warns that while change is essential to humankind, rapid change must not be unguided or accelerated. As Toffler originally explained:

...our first and most pressing need, therefore, before we can begin to gently guide our evolutionary destiny, before we can build a human future, is to halt the runaway acceleration that is subjecting multitudes to the threat of future shock while, at the very same moment, intensifying all the problems they must deal with long- war, ecological incursions, racism, the obscene contrast between rich and poor, the revolt of the young and the rise of potentially

Control of the future is needed to counteract both the predicted and predictable: expansion of poverty rates, increasing reliance on social programs to ease the loss of manufacturing jobs, unquelled social uprisings, American and international stock markets plunging to record lows as a combination of economic and psychological fears change business-as-usual indelibly, and unabated environmental degradation. Without such meaningful and pervasive attention and action, discontent and misfortune may just translate into complete chaos – a forecast of sorts.

— Elizabeth F.R. Gingerich