In the previous chapter, we reviewed how theorists’ view of leadership has changed, from the belief that leaders are simply born to the idea that the best way to learn about leadership is to study the behaviors or practices of people who are viewed as leaders. Theorizing has evolved even further into an understanding of leadership as a complex process. Indeed, leadership is a transforming process that raises all participants to levels at which they can become effective leaders.

Leadership may best be understood as philosophy. At its core, understanding philosophy means understanding values. “Affect, motives, attitudes, beliefs, values, ethics, morals, will, commitment, preferences, norms, expectations, responsibilities—such are the concerns of leadership philosophy proper. Their study is paramount because the very nature of leadership is that of practical philosophy, philosophy-in-action” (Hodgkinson, 1983, p. 202). When we examine historical leaders, we often are analyzing the values and ethics that characterized their leadership. It is critical that we each develop our own personal philosophy—one we hope will include the elements of the model presented in this chapter.

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents a relational model of leadership to consider in building your own personal philosophy. Each of the elements of
the model is presented in detail to give you more information about each component.

Relational Leadership

Leadership has to do with relationships, the role of which cannot be overstated. Leadership is inherently a relational, communal process. “Leadership is always dependent on the context, but the context is established by the relationships we value” (Wheatley, 1992, p. 144). Although a person could exert leadership of ideas through persuasive writings or making speeches, most leadership happens in an interactive context between individuals and among group members. We emphasize once again: we view leadership as a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change.

Chapter Two presented an overview of how leadership theories and models have changed over time. These changing frameworks are reflected in the descriptive terms that have been affixed to the word leadership. Examples of these leadership theories and concepts include situational, transforming, servant-leadership, authentic leadership, and principle-centered leadership. We have used the term relational leadership as a reminder that relationships are the focal point of the leadership process.

Relational leadership involves a focus on five primary components. This approach to leadership is purposeful and builds commitment toward positive purposes that are inclusive of people and diverse points of view, empowers those involved, is ethical, and recognizes that all four of these elements are accomplished by being process-oriented.

The model provides a frame of reference or an approach to leadership in contemporary organizations. With these foundational philosophies and commitments, an individual can make a meaningful contribution in any organization. This model is not a leadership theory in itself, and it does not address the change outcomes.
for which leadership is intended. The Relational Leadership Model does not seek to describe the way leadership is currently practiced in all groups or organizations, but is an aspirational model that we propose in developing and supporting a healthy, ethical, effective group. It is a framework connecting five key elements that can serve as a responsive approach to leadership. Figure 3.1 offers a visual image of the elements of the model.

The components of relational leadership are complex concepts. Think about your own level of comfort or knowledge about each component as you read the related dimensions of each element. The model reflects how the organization’s or community’s purpose influences the components of being inclusive, empowering, and ethical. For example, the purpose of the Habitat for Humanity Club on campus is to engage its members to assist in providing houses for those who cannot afford them on their own. The purpose includes others, empowers them to use their leadership and talents to make a difference, and is ethical in that it benefits others and improves the quality of life in a community. How that purpose is achieved (the process) is just as important as the outcome. How the goals are accomplished and how others are involved in the process matters.

Figure 3.1. Relational Leadership Model.
in the leadership process. The purpose is vision-driven and not position-driven. Leaders and members promote the organization’s purpose through a shared vision and not for self-gain such as achieving a higher leadership position or fame.

Exhibit 3.1 identifies some important knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are embedded in each element. These reflect the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that would be helpful in understanding relational leadership. Brief applications of the core elements to the knowing-behing-doing model conclude each section. For example, in order to practice inclusiveness, you must

- Know yourself and others; engage yourself in learning new information as you develop the competencies required in your role (knowledge)
- Be open to difference and value other perspectives (attitudes)
- Practice listening skills, coalition building, interpersonal skills, and effective civil discourse (skills)

**Knowing-Being-Doing**

Individuals involved in the leadership process (leaders, members, co-creators, and so on) need to know themselves well before they can effectively work with others to influence change or achieve common purpose. It is not enough to simply drive an agenda or accomplish small or big wins. The leadership process calls for those engaged in it to be knowledgeable (knowing), to be aware of self and others (being), and to act (doing). The knowing-being-doing model represents a holistic approach to the leadership development of yourself and others. These three components are interrelated—the knowledge you possess can influence your ways of thinking, which can influence your actions. And it is also true that your beliefs and way of existing in this world (being) can influence your actions, which can influence your behaviors. This pattern of influence is circular and not on a straight path.
Other ways to view this holistic approach is by using the framework of knowledge, skills, and attitudes or head, heart, and practice. Palmer (1998) uses the phrase “head, heart, and practice” to describe the paradoxes in teaching and what happens when we keep the head (knowing and intellect) separated from the heart (being) and even further separated from practice (doing). Palmer argues that we need a synthesis of all three components in the teaching process. The same applies in the leadership process.

The Army coined the phrase “know, be, do.” People will collaborate with those who are credible (both leaders and members)—those who are knowing. Leaders need to demonstrate competence and maintain a certain amount of knowledge. Hesselbein and Shinseki (2004) offer four levels of skills essential to leadership: interpersonal skills, conceptual skills (ability to think creatively), technical skills (expertise required for position), and tactical skills (negotiation, human relations, and other skills necessary to achieve objectives) (p. 12). Knowing is an ongoing process that allows leaders to continue to develop, learn, and grow.

In the Army, the “be” means knowing what values and attributes define you as a leader (Hesselbein & Shinseki, 2004). “Your character helps you know what is right; more than that, it links that knowledge to action. Character gives you the courage to do what is right regardless of the circumstances or consequences” (p. 11). The Army’s acronym of leadership is LDRSHIP: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless service, Honor, Integrity, Personal courage (p. 11). That is the essence of the “be” of leadership. The Lao Tzu quotations throughout this book are another example of being. This Eastern reflection of having a sense of self and being centered in self-awareness is important to relating well with others.

The “doing” of knowing and being means acting. Character and knowledge are not enough in facilitating change in the leadership process. Doing attempts to produce results, accomplishes the vision, creates change, and influences others to act. Sometimes leaders will fail to act because of indecision or due to a fixation on perfection. “Competent, confident leaders tolerate honest mistakes that are not
Exhibit 3.1. Relational Leadership Model Compared to Knowing-Being-Doing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Component</th>
<th>Knowing (Knowledge and Understanding)</th>
<th>Being (Attitudes)</th>
<th>Doing (Skills)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purposeful</strong></td>
<td>How change occurs</td>
<td>Hopeful</td>
<td>Identifying goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Core elements of change</td>
<td>Committed</td>
<td>Envisioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role of mission or vision</td>
<td>“Can do” attitude</td>
<td>Meaning-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shared values</td>
<td>Likes improvement</td>
<td>Creative thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common purpose</td>
<td>Commitment to</td>
<td>Involving others in vision-building process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>social responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusive</strong></td>
<td>Self and others</td>
<td>Open to difference</td>
<td>Talent development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Values equity</td>
<td>Listening skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frames and multiple realities</td>
<td>Web-like thinking</td>
<td>Building coalitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Believes everyone can make a difference</td>
<td>Framing and reframing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Civil discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empowering</strong></td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Believes each has something to offer</td>
<td>Gate-keeping skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How policies or procedures block or promote empowerment</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Sharing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal mastery</td>
<td>Concern for others’ growth</td>
<td>Individual and team learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control is not possible</td>
<td>Values others’ contributions</td>
<td>Encouraging or affirming others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Willing to share power</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting self-leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practicing renewal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the result of negligence. A leader who sets a standard of ‘zero defects, no mistakes’ is also saying, ‘Don’t take any chances’” (Hesselbein & Shinseki, 2004, p. 15).

Learning is an outcome of the knowing-being-doing developmental model or feedback system. Be attuned to how new learning
is changing your attitudes and behaviors or is changing you in general. It is important to reflect upon how and what you are learning as you go through those cycles. “Leaders promote learning in at least three ways: through their own learning on a personal level, by helping others in their units [organizations] learn, and by shaping and contributing to an organizational culture that promotes learning” (Hesselbein & Shinseki, 2004, p. 133).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Component</th>
<th>Knowing (Knowledge and Understanding)</th>
<th>Being (Attitudes)</th>
<th>Doing (Skills)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical</td>
<td>How values develop</td>
<td>Commitment to socially responsible behavior</td>
<td>Being congruent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How systems influence justice and care</td>
<td>Confronting behavior</td>
<td>Being trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self and others’ values</td>
<td>Values integrity</td>
<td>Being reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical decision-making models</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>Having courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>Using moral imagination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establishes sense of personal character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expects high standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Puts benefit to others over self-gain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process-Oriented</td>
<td>Community process</td>
<td>Values process as well as outcomes</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group process</td>
<td>Quality effort</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relational aspect of leadership</td>
<td>Develops systems perspective</td>
<td>Meaning making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process is as important as outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Civil confrontation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Giving and receiving feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you continue reading this and the following chapters, consider how this model is adding to your knowledge. How can you take this information and incorporate it into your beliefs surrounding leadership? What actions can you take with this new knowledge? Consciously examining your thoughts, feelings, and actions allows you to continue to learn and grow both as a leader and as a human being.

**Relational Leadership Is Purposeful**

Being purposeful means having a commitment to a goal or activity. It is also the ability to collaborate and to find common ground with others to facilitate positive change. Creating positive change can mean working hard toward resolving differences among participants, finding a common direction, and building a shared vision to improve the organization or enhance others in some way. Even if a participant does not have a vision, that person knows enough to ask others, “Remind me what we are working toward. What do we all hope will happen?” Trusting the process, several in the group will chime in with their ideas, and someone will have the talent to express those words in terms of the vision and purpose that will bring nods of agreement from nearly every person present. It is important that all group members be able to articulate that purpose and use it as a driving force. That is an essential element in relational leadership.

The conventional paradigm of leadership often asserts that the positional leader must have a clear vision. Research, however, has shown two primary types of vision activity: personalized vision and socialized vision (Howell, 1988). Personalized vision refers to a person, usually the person with legitimate authority, announcing a dream or plan and imposing it on others. Participants seem to have little choice and must adopt this vision, which results in varying degrees of personal ownership or commitment. Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric (GE), is an excellent example of an
authoritative leader with a personalized vision. Although Jack Welch was a strong leader with a public presence, he did not single-handedly raise the profile of GE. Even though Jack Welch had the legitimate power to do so, it did not automatically ensure commitment from his employees. He started his tenure as CEO as a commanding leader and then, over time, developed a more humanistic leadership approach that inspired GE's employees with a values-based vision (O'Toole, 2003).

Socialized vision is building a vision from among group members, recognizing that people support what they help create. Sharing vision does not mean that each person must create and possess a vision, but that each person must be involved in the process of building a vision with others. “Effective leaders don’t just impose their vision on others, they recruit others to a shared vision. Especially in our digital age, when power tends to coalesce around ideas, not position, leadership is a partnership, not a sinecure” (Bennis & Thomas, 2002, p. 137). Think about your personality preferences. Do you think creatively and see possibilities in everything, or are you shaking your head right now, thinking “No way!” Do you have ideas about your future and a vision of how things might be? Such a vision is a picture of “a realistic, credible, attractive future” for yourself or your organization (Nanus, 1992, p. 8).

After hearing a presentation on empowering leadership and the importance of shared vision, one of our colleagues approached the presenter. She said, “I just am not creative or cannot articulate a vision. I am practical and realistic. I feel capable but am more of a maintainer than a builder. I can keep things going more than I am able to think them up in the first place.” The first piece of advice that organization consultant Burt Nanus (1992) shares with those trying to avoid failures in organizational vision is, “Don’t do it alone” (p. 167).

Being purposeful with a group vision that includes a positive change effort helps you set priorities and make decisions congruent with that dream. “Vision animates, inspirits, and transforms purpose
into action” (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1994, p. 101). This action component to vision is described well by the engraving in an eighteenth-century church in Sussex, England:

A vision without a task is but a dream,
a task without a vision is drudgery,
a vision and a task
is the hope of the world.

(From Transcultural Leadership, p. 106, by G. F. Simons, C. Vázquez, & P. R. Harris. Copyright © 1993, with permission from Elsevier.

“To be motivating, a vision must be a source of self-esteem and common purpose. . . . The core of the vision is the organization’s mission statement, which describes the general purpose of the organization” (Yukl, 1989, p. 336). One approach that is used by executives to develop shared visions is an exercise involving magazine articles. Organizational members are asked to identify their favorite magazine or a magazine closely related to the organization’s purpose and write a feature story that will describe the organization in the future (four or five years from the present time) using headlines (Yukl). This powerful activity allows everyone to dream together and to begin the visioning process using creativity, imagination, and passion.

Your individual, purposeful commitment to the shared vision of a group project means you will do your part, share resources, and support your teammates because you expect the same of them. Vision guides action. “It’s not what a vision is, it’s what a vision does” (Kazuo Inamori, as cited in Senge, 1990, p. 207). A vision of a homecoming weekend reaching the broadest possible group of alumni will guide all the committee’s choices about how to diversify that event.

“Success can be measured in many ways such as reaching your goal, involving new groups or individuals with new perspectives, and
creating awareness or change. In the organizations I have been involved with, success has come by including those who are highly motivated and want to make a difference and have a clear understanding of the goal to be achieved. When this happens, it becomes easier to accomplish tasks because everyone is working towards the same goal. It is beneficial to utilize special groups or individuals who have expertise on your project to gain new insight, help motivate others, and provide additional resources and support.”—Brynn DeLong is a member of the Blue Chip Leadership Program and majors in political science at the University of Arizona.

A vision inspires energy and purpose. Retired General Norman Schwarzkopf observed, “I have found that in order to be a leader, you are almost serving a cause” (Wren, 1994, p. 4). Purposeful participants have emotionally identified with a purpose and a dream. “There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared” (Nanus, 1992, p. 3).

**Working for Positive Change**

One common purpose that pulls people together is working toward change. Change processes can have various motives associated with them. The Relational Leadership Model supports positive change—that is, change that improves the human condition and that does not intentionally harm others. The antithesis of this is facilitating change that is destructive, like the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. When facilitating a positive change process, the means justify the ends.

Rost (1991) proposes that leadership happens when the group *intends* to accomplish change, not just when they *do* accomplish change. Having the intention of improving a situation, accomplishing a task, or implementing a common purpose is part of the change process. Change may not happen for many reasons, but the
core fact that the group intended to make a difference is central. John Parr (1994), president of the National Civic League, writes, “Positive change can occur when people with different perspectives are organized into groups in which everyone is regarded as a peer. There must be a high level of involvement, a clear purpose, adequate resources, and the power to decide and implement” (p. xiii).

Some situations are profoundly hard to change. It is hard to move away from the status quo—the way things are. Change theory proposes that change often begins when something unfreezes a situation. The cycle is often presented as unfreezing → changing → refreezing. This “unfreezing” may be caused by a trigger event, such as a carjacking in a remote campus parking lot, a campus riot following a sporting event, or a disappointingly small attendance at a group’s expensive activity. People pay attention to the problem with a focus they did not have prior to the incident. Unfreezing may also occur when external policies change—when a new law is enacted, for example. Unfreezing makes it possible to address an issue or policy that has not commanded the attention of those who need to address it. The change process is then engaged and the issue is addressed.

Even after a change is implemented, it would be an error in these times even to consider any issue “refrozen.” Instead, it is best to consider the outcome to be “slush,” so that the solution is seen not as final but as permeable and open to be readdressed easily. It may be best to consider solutions as automatically open for review, regularly evaluated, and flexible. The classic change model (Lewin, 1958), describing the change process as moving from the present state through a transition state to a desired state, still works, but we encourage a caution that the desired state should now be viewed as less rigid.

Change can be thought of as moving some situation away from the status quo to a different place. To understand why that movement is hard, examine the driving forces pushing for change and the resisting forces striving to keep change from happening to pre-
serve the status quo. Clearly, not all change is appropriate or supportable. When it is, the driving forces working toward change should be enhanced and the restraining forces minimized. This “force-field analysis” is a useful method for identifying aspects of the situation that could enhance change (Lippitt, 1969, p. 157).

Kotter and Cohen (2002) refer to the concept of “removing barriers in the mind” as another reason why people are resistant to change or to changing. “After years of stability, incremental change, or failed attempts at change, people can internalize a deep belief that they are not capable of achieving a leap. They may not say out loud ‘I can’t do it,’ but at some level they feel it, even when it is not true” (p. 112). It is important to understand that the mind can both disempower and empower individuals toward change.

We are constantly faced with the dynamic tension of how things are and how we think they ought to be. This “is-ought” dichotomy asks us to face reality but work toward true transformative change, real change—to move toward the more hopeful vision. This “creative tension” brings energy to the change effort (Senge, 1990, p. 150). Connecting personal hopes and commitments to a group vision is a creative process. This process can be time-consuming. As we describe more fully in Chapter Seven, when a group is newly formed, the process of building a group vision can be energetic and hopeful if the group quickly comes to agreement and commitment, or it can be anxious and cautious if the group shows little agreement. When joining an ongoing group in which a vision has already been established, new participants have to determine whether they can connect to that vision or feel they can help shape the continued evolution of the group’s vision over time.

**Relational Leadership Is Inclusive**

Being inclusive means understanding, valuing, and actively engaging diversity in views, approaches, styles, and aspects of individuality, such as sex or culture, that add multiple perspectives to a group’s
activity. As a foundation for valuing inclusion, you will have a chance to explore your own attitudes and attributes in Chapter Four and examine those of others in Chapter Five. Exhibit 3.1 highlights aspects of being inclusive to illustrate how you might explore this component. It means understanding how different groups or individuals might approach issues from different perspectives or frames, maintaining the attitudes that respect differences, and valuing equity and involvement. It means thinking of networks and webs of connection instead of seeing issues and problems as isolated and discrete. Being inclusive embraces having the skills to develop the talent of members so they can be readily involved. Listening with empathy and communicating with civility are communication skills that facilitate the inclusion of others. Inclusiveness breeds new leadership and creates a positive cycle that sustains the quality of an organization over time.

You saw in the last chapter that although many things seem unpredictable and even unconnected, there is unity in nature; seemingly unrelated parts influence each other as well as the whole. By applying these concepts to the leadership world, we learn to understand that the group or organization represents unity or wholeness built from and influenced greatly by the smallest subunits of that system. “As we move away from viewing the organization as a complex of parts and deal with it as a unity, then problems met in leadership can make more sense and solutions become obvious” (Fairholm, 1994, p. 59).

Individuals are important because they concurrently represent and influence the whole. The purpose, vision, and values of the whole come to life as each individual member describes and applies them. The goal is not to overcome the variations and differences among participants—indeed, those variations bring creativity and energy—but to build shared purpose. “Leading others to lead themselves is the key to tapping the intelligence, the spirit, the creativity, the commitment, and most of all, the tremendous, unique potential of each individual” (Manz & Sims, 1989, p. 225).
When, as a leader, you are able to empower others and create a sense of community among members, everyone will be compelled to contribute their unique talents. The group will then meet its potential to fulfill its purpose.”—Gina Pagel is a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Relay for Life and the president of the Student Wisconsin Education Association Chapter at Edgewood College.

Being inclusive means developing the strengths and talent of group members so they can contribute to the group’s goals.

Leaders enhance the learning of others, helping them to develop their own initiative, strengthening them in the use of their own judgment, and enabling them to grow and to become better contributors to the organization. These leaders, by virtue of their learning, then become leaders and mentors to others. (McGill & Slocum, 1993, p. 11)

It is not sufficient just to be a participative leader involving group members in the work of the organization. Organizations have to go further and recognize that in many cases the organizational culture has to change to effectively involve people who have different backgrounds and different views and who may not embrace the dominant cultural norms. In addition to its practice, the language of inclusivity is exceptionally important. How we talk about people in the organization, how we refer to them (colleagues versus subordinates or participants versus followers), and how the organization is structured are indicators of inclusive environments (Hesselbein, 2002). Think about the message being sent by using the word we instead of the word I. You might engage in a conversation with someone and hear an excessive use of the word I from that person. What impression did that individual make on you? Did you feel engaged in the conversation? Hesselbein describes the model of inclusion best by stating, from her own experiences,
Building the inclusive, cohesive, vibrant institution does indeed require the biggest basket in town—for it has to have room for all of us. Not just the favored few, those who look alike and think alike, but all who are part of the community of the future. When equal access prevails, the synergy of inclusion propels us far beyond the old gated enclaves of the past into the richness of opportunities that lie beyond the walls. (p. 20)

Groups would benefit by examining practices that might block inclusivity. A group might be so accustomed to voting on every decision that it has alienated members who find this process uncomfortable. Those members might like to use a consensus model of decision making to ensure that the views of all are included in each significant decision. For example, the extreme use of Robert's Rules of Order has the potential to cut off discussion when issues are unresolved and the direction is unclear. Another illustration is when a student union program committee traditionally provides music or movies of interest to only one segment of the campus. They would need to examine that practice and involve others with different interests in order to diversify programming. Organizational practices, such as always meeting at 9 P.M., might exclude the involvement of people such as adult learners and those who cannot be on campus at that time because of family or work obligations, or because commuting is a problem. When the group realizes, for example, that no commuter students, or students of color, or men are involved in their activities, that should be a signal that something is wrong. Other ways of communicating and consulting with people should be found, as should other ways of including diverse interests in group decision making.

**Involving Those External to the Group**

Being inclusive also means identifying the shareholders and stakeholders external to the group who have some responsibility (a share) or interest (a stake) in the change that is being planned. It would
be exclusive, not inclusive, for a group to assume that they should or could accomplish a major change alone. For example, an organization like the Latino Student Union might seek to change a campus practice about how scholarship programs are advertised to new Latino students. Being inclusive means the Latino Student Union should also consider which other campus groups or offices might be stakeholders in resolving this issue because they have a shared interest or could be affected by the consequences of any action (Bryson & Crosby, 1992). The Latino Student Union might then reach out to form coalitions or some involvement with such groups as the Council of Black Fraternity and Sorority Chapters, the Black Student Union, the Multicultural Affairs Committee of the Student Government Association, and other related student organizations like the Honors Program. In addition, the Latino Student Union should identify the shareholders in resolving the issue—the Financial Aid Office, the Dean of Students Office, and the Office of Minority Affairs. These offices would each want to get the word out to students about their programs and need not be thought of as negative or antagonistic to the changes. They might in fact appreciate help in resolving problems they too experience in the current process.

Stakeholders may not all hold the same view of a problem, and they may not all seek the same solutions. Bryson and Crosby (1992) clarify how a stakeholder’s position on an issue (ranging from high support to high opposition) is influenced by the importance with which they view the issue (ranging from least important to most important). This makes stakeholders’ responses more understandable (see Figure 3.2). As they work toward being more inclusive, relational leaders will want to assess possible stakeholder reactions in determining their approaches.

Even if stakeholders disagree on an issue, they should be involved. Involvement helps stakeholders gain new views on issues and may build support among various stakeholders toward an intended change. They also bring in an outside viewpoint, which contributes to the overall knowledge of the group. Stakeholders
might see dimensions of an issue that the group is blind to. Building support and forming coalitions are related skills for relational leaders.

**Relational Leadership Is Empowering**

“Thriving on change demands the empowerment of every person in the organization—no ifs, ands, or buts” (Peters, 1989, p. xiv). Empowerment has two dimensions: (1) the sense of self that claims ownership, claims a place in the process, and expects to be involved, and (2) a set of environmental conditions (in the group or organization) that promote the full involvement of participants by reducing the barriers that block the development of individual talent and involvement. Empowerment is claimed (“I have a legitimate right to be here and say what I feel and think”) as well as shared with others (“You should be involved in this; you have a right to be here too; tell us what you think and feel”). Being empowering means mitigating aspects of the environmental climate that can block meaningful involvement for others. Empowering environments are learning climates in which people expect successes yet know they can learn from
failures or mistakes. It is important to establish organizational environments that empower others to do and to be their best.

The root word in the concept of empowerment is *power*. Understanding power dynamics is essential in moving toward a philosophical commitment to empowerment. Where possible, positional leaders must be willing to share their power or authority, and participants must be willing to assume more responsibility for group outcomes. Power has traditionally been viewed on a zero-sum basis. Conventional approaches assumed that if one person in an organization is very powerful, then someone else has less power. In truth, different types of power exist concurrently among people in any kind of relationship. Power dynamics range from power “over” (autocratic approaches) to power “with” (collaborative approaches) or power “alongside” (collegial approaches). Some approaches to leadership would go further and describe power “from,” referring to the authority and power afforded to a leader from a group of participants. Effective positional leaders know that their power and ability to be effective comes from the members of their group—their participants (Kouzes & Posner, 1987).

Sources of Power

How a person uses power and reacts to the power of others must be examined in relational leadership. In their classic work, French and Raven (1959) identify five primary sources of power that individuals bring to their relationships with others. These bases of social power are expert power, referent power, legitimate power, coercive power, and reward power.

Expert power is the power of information or knowledge. Expertise may come through professional development and formal education (such as that received by engineers or dentists), from possessing specific information (such as remembering the results of a recent survey or knowing the rules in the student handbook), or from extended experience (such as being the mother of three children or being a seasoned baseball player). We trust experts and give
them power over us based on their assumed higher level of knowledge or experience.

Referent power refers to the nature and strength of a relationship between two or more people. Think of the wise senior who is so highly regarded that her words carry great weight in the group discussion.

Legitimate power is due to the formal role a person holds, usually because he or she has the responsibility and authority to exert some degree of power. For instance, the president of a student organization has power to make certain decisions due to the nature of his or her role. However, those in authority generally know that their legitimate power is fragile.

Coercive power influences individuals or groups through imposing or threatening punitive sanctions or removing rewards or benefits. Coercion accomplishes behavior change but usually at great cost to the relationships among those involved. Because leadership is an influence relationship, it is essential that this influence be “noncoercive” (Rost, 1993, p. 105).

Conversely, reward power influences behavior through the ability to deliver positive outcomes and desired resources. Rewards may be extrinsic, like raises, plaques, or special privileges. They may also be intrinsic—intangibles like praise or support.

You may intentionally use some source of power. For example, you might prepare very well before a meeting so you will be an expert on some topic. Conversely, others may attribute some source of power to you without your knowing what is happening, as, for example, when someone fears your disapproval because you have referent power. To empower ourselves and others, it is essential to understand power.

Understanding Power

In many cases, we give power away. We do it when we do not trust our own opinion if it contradicts that of an expert. We assume the expert knows more. Yet when the doctor too readily concludes that
you just need bed rest and you know it’s something more serious, you should insist that your doctor explore other alternatives. When the person with legitimate power announces a plan or an approach, we give power away if we do not say, “We would like to talk about that first because we might have some additional ideas that would be helpful.” We may also have power attributed to us that is undeserved. When the group assumes that because you are an English major you would be best at writing the group’s report, they may be in error.

Power is not finite and indeed can be shared and amplified. Some think that power should be framed differently and seen with a similar frame as love: the more you give away, the more you get. If the leadership paradigm of your colleagues is very conventional, they may see the sharing of power as indecisiveness or an avoidance of responsibility. Others may abuse the power shared with them, but those in legitimate authority roles who share their power usually find that they build stronger groups.

For the society to get its work done, leaders and the systems over which they preside must be granted some measure of power. It is a common experience for leaders today to have far less power than they need to accomplish the tasks that we hand them. They must have the power to get results (Gardner, 2003, p. 201).

Gardner goes on to say that those who hold power must be held accountable. Leaders are in a greater position of power when they hold themselves accountable first before waiting for others to implement a system of checks and balances.

Hoarding power in leadership risks negative responses from others, such as sabotage, withdrawal, resistance, anger, and other behaviors that would contradict the positive goals and objectives of the group. “The key gift that leaders can offer is power” (Bolman & Deal, 2003a, p. 341). When people can use and hear their voices in the life of an organization or community, they will feel a sense of justice and a belief that they matter.
Self-Empowerment

Empowerment is claiming the power you should have from any position in the organization. Self-empowerment then is the recognition that you have a legitimate right to be heard and the self-confidence to be part of a solution or the change process. “The E-word by itself is a non sequitur unless it’s used with self-discovery... it provides a means of empowering yourself as you explore your natural, educational, and professional attributes in sizing up your leadership prospects” (Haas & Tamarkin, 1992, p. 35). Murrell (1985, pp. 36–37) presents six methods through which you might become empowered:

1. Educating (discovering/sharing information and knowledge)
2. Leading (inspiring, rewarding, directing)
3. Structuring (creating structural factors such as arranging your day, bringing people to the table, changing policies or processes so that the change lives beyond the people who created it)
4. Providing (making sure others have resources to get their job done)
5. Mentoring (having close personal relationships)
6. Actualizing (taking it on—being empowered—claiming it)

Valuing the empowerment of all members creates a larger group of participants or citizens who generally take more ownership of group tasks and processes and who feel committed to the outcomes of the change.

Mattering and Marginality

Empowerment places you at the center of what is happening rather than at the edges, where you might feel inconsequential. This may be understood best by examining the concepts of mattering and marginality. Schlossberg (1989b) has extended and applied the work
of sociologist Morris Rosenberg on mattering to her own work in studying adults in transition. “Mattering is a motive: the feeling that others depend on us, are interested in us, are concerned with our fate . . . [which] exercises a powerful influence on our actions” (Rosenberg & McCullough, as cited in Schlossberg, 1989b, p. 8). In new situations, in new roles, or with new people, we may feel marginal, as if we do not matter unless the group welcomes us and seeks our meaningful involvement. In contrast, mattering is the feeling that we are significant to others and to the process. Think of the anxiety and perhaps marginalization of potential new members coming to their first meeting of the Campus Environmental Coalition—or any group. They could be scarcely noticed, become isolated, and perhaps be ignored, or they could be welcomed, involved, and engaged, and know that they matter. Think about the positive feelings imparted to a first-year student when an upper-class veteran of an organization requests his or her opinion on an issue.

**Empowering Environments**

Groups, organizations, or environments can promote mattering or can keep people on the periphery—in the margins. We need environments that promote the development of the human spirit on a local scale, thus creating a “fundamental shift of mind, in which individuals come to see themselves as capable of creating the world they truly want rather than merely reacting to circumstances beyond their control” (Kiefer & Senge, 1984, p. 68).

Empowerment is likely to happen in organizational environments where people recognize that things can always be better than they are now. These organizations expect to learn and seek new solutions. Empowering organizations seek to eliminate fear or humiliation and operate on trust and inclusivity. If you do not feel empowered in a particular group, you might assess the dynamics in the organization to see if they are encouraging or controlling. There may be an in-group and an out-group, and those in the out-group are excluded from access to information and opportunities to shape
decisions (Kohn, 1992). If the organizational dynamics are basically supportive, however, perhaps you need to enhance your self-empowerment by building competencies, networks, or attributes to let you make a meaningful contribution.

Empowerment and delegation are not the same thing. A leader cannot give tasks to participants to do, no matter how important those assignments may be, and simply assume that participants will subsequently feel empowered. Indeed, if the leader retains a great deal of power or control when delegating, participants may feel manipulated, unprepared, resentful, or victimized. Conversely, if a positional leader has clearly acted congruently in sharing authority and responsibility with the group and has its trust, then sharing tasks can be empowering and can enhance community. Empowerment is achieved by enabling the involvement of group members and conveying faith in them.

“I was recently elected President of the Executive Board at Endicott College, after residing as Vice President of my class for a year. The role of the executive board is to organize and run the Student Government Association (SGA). As the new Executive President, I plan to make some changes in the organization of the SGA. I am planning on making more class officers be involved in the activities and events run by the SGA. I aspire to make everyone feel as though they have a significant role in every issue that comes across SGA’s path. I believe when people feel that they are important they realize their potential. They also realize that when contributing to a greater whole, much personal satisfaction is gained. Once an individual is given the chance to take action and lead, they become more involved and dedicated on their own thereafter because they realize what they are accomplishing makes such a difference to the community.”—Elyse Goldstein is vice president of the class of 2007 at Endicott College and a student curator of the David Broudo Gallery.
Relational Leadership Is Ethical

A seven-year-old goes into the grocery store with his father. Upon arriving home, the father discovers that little Johnny has a pocketful of candy that was not a part of the purchase. Horrified at Johnny's stealing, the father demands that Johnny return the candy to the store, confess to the store manager, apologize for his behavior, and promise never to steal from any store again. For some of us, an incident like this was our first real lesson in what is good and what is bad, what is virtuous and what is immoral. Early in our lives, in lessons such as this one, we were taught to value honesty over dishonesty, kindness over cruelty, and doing the right thing over breaking the law.

Ethical and Moral Leadership

The Relational Leadership Model emphasizes ethical and moral leadership, meaning leadership that is driven by values and standards and leadership that is good—moral—in nature. The language we use to examine ethical, moral leadership is of utmost importance. Some have a tendency to use the terms ethics and morals interchangeably (Henderson, 1992; Walton, 1988). Others differentiate between them, yet draw a strong relationship between ethics and morals (Shea, 1988). Shaw and Barry (1989) define ethics as “the social rules that govern and limit our conduct, especially the ultimate rules concerning right and wrong” (pp. 2–3).

The derivation of ethics is from ethos, from the Greek words for “character” and “sentiment of the community” (Toffler, 1986, p. 10). Other definitions of ethics include “the principles of conduct governing an individual or a profession” and “standards of behavior” (Shea, 1988, p. 17). Being ethical means “conforming to the standards of a given profession or group. Any group can set its own ethical standards and then live by them or not” (Toffler, 1986, p. 10). Ethical standards, whether they are established by an individual or
an organization, help guide a person’s decisions and actions. For the purposes of this model, ethics will be defined as “rules or standards that govern behaviors” (Toffler, 1986, p. 10).

Stephen Covey, author of the best-selling book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (1989), uses the metaphor of “leadership by compass” to illustrate principle-centered leadership (p. 19). Principles, like values, ethics, standards, and morals, “provide ‘true north’ direction to our lives when navigating the ‘streams’ of our environments” (p. 19).

Professions often establish codes of ethics or standards that serve as normative expectations for people in a particular profession. Lawyers must adhere to the American Bar Association’s code of ethics for attorneys, and the American Medical Association promotes a code of ethics for physicians. Every McDonald’s restaurant prominently displays a code of standards that pledges excellence in its food and service. Upon closer examination, these organizations are promoting standards by which they expect professionals and employees to live.

Moral means “relating to principles of right and wrong” (Toffler, 1986, p. 10) or “arising from one’s conscience or a sense of good and evil; pertaining to the discernment of good and evil; instructive of what is good or evil (bad)” (Shea, 1988, p. 17). Morals are commonly thought to be influenced by religion or personal beliefs. Moral leadership is concerned with “good” leadership; that is, leadership with good means and good ends.

Our philosophy of leadership is values-driven. Again, our definition underscores this: leadership is a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change. Using this philosophy, leaders and followers act out of a sense of shared values—the desire to cause real change and a commitment to mutual purposes. The actions of leaders and participants emanate from a set of values, which we hope are congruent and shared. Values are “freely chosen personal beliefs” (Lewis, 1990, p. 9) or the “guiding principles in our lives with respect to the personal and social ends.
we desire” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993, p. 60). Simply stated, values are our personal beliefs.

Although there is much disagreement in the leadership literature over definitions and theory, and about whether leadership is values-neutral or values-driven, it is safe to say that most people expect leaders to do the right thing. In a 1988 Gallup poll of 1,200 workers and managers, 89% of the respondents “believed it was important for leaders to be upright, honest, and ethical in their dealings” (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 1993, p. 170). Unfortunately, only 41% of those surveyed believed that their supervisor exhibited these qualities (Hughes et al.). A 2003 Gallup Poll on Governance found that only 53% of those surveyed had “a great deal” or “a fair amount” of trust in the government of their state (Jones, 2003, p. 1). Trust in state governments has declined since the events of September 11, 2001. Securing and keeping the trust of your constituencies is central to leadership. When 1,500 executives from 20 countries were asked what the requirements were for an ideal chief corporate officer, personal ethics was ranked at the top of the list (Kidder, 1993). A Gallup Youth Survey conducted in 2003 revealed that 67% of youth between the ages of 13 and 17 reported “a great deal” to “a fair amount” of cheating in their schools, with half of them indicating that they also cheated (Kidder, 2005, p. 267).

As leaders and citizens, our challenge today is to close the gap between our expectations of ethical leadership and the reality of frequent breaches of ethical conduct by our leaders. We need bold, courageous leadership—leadership that is by word and deed ethical and moral. It is encouraging that a growing number of people express their abhorrence of the breaches of ethical conduct by national and local leaders and that a vast majority of the populace believe that ethics play a critical role in leadership.

John Gardner (1990) thoughtfully makes the connection between shared values and a moral commitment to do the right thing. He reflects:
In any functioning society everything—leadership and everything else—takes place within a set of shared beliefs concerning the standards of acceptable behavior that must govern individual members. One of the tasks of leadership—at all levels—is to revitalize those shared beliefs and values, and to draw on them as sources of motivation for the exertions required of the group. Leaders can help to keep the values fresh. They can combat the hypocrisy that proclaims values at the same time that it violates them. They can help us understand our history and our present dilemmas. They have a role in creating the state of mind that is the society. Leaders must conceive and articulate goals in ways that lift people out of their petty preoccupations and unite them toward higher ends. (p. 191)

Gardner implies that leadership “toward higher ends” is ethical in nature and includes positive, constructive ends rather than results or outcomes that are destructive, harmful, or immoral.

To underscore the importance of the relationship between leadership and ethics, we join with those scholars who propose that ethics is the central core of leadership. Without a commitment to doing the right thing or a sound code of ethical standards, leadership cannot emerge. Although some argue that the phrase “ethical leadership” is redundant because leadership cannot be experienced without an element of ethics, we feel that leadership that lacks ethical behavior and actions is anything but leadership. Consider the example of Adolf Hitler. Indeed, right now you may be thinking that Hitler was a leader but you are averse to what he was leading, and some leadership theorists would agree with you. We share the views of other scholars, however, that Hitler’s actions were not aligned with our notions of leadership. They were acts of dictatorship (Burns, 1978).
Burns (1978) elevates the importance of values and ethics in the leadership process through his theory of transforming leadership. He notes that “the ultimate test of moral leadership is its capacity to transcend the claims of multiplicity of everyday wants and needs and expectations, to respond to the higher levels of moral development, and to relate leadership behavior—its roles, choices, style, commitments—to a set of reasoned, relatively explicit, conscious values” (p. 46). Aligned with Burns’s bold thinking to cast leadership in a moral foundation is the recent shift in societal views, from leadership as values-neutral to leadership as values-driven (Beck & Murphy, 1994; Bok, 1982, 1990; Gandossy & Effron, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Northouse, 2004; Piper, Gentile, & Parks, 1993). Moral or ethical leadership is driven by knowing what is virtuous and what is good.

**Leading by Example**

As an exercise, a leader and a participant must ponder soul-searching questions such as, What do I stand for? How far am I willing to go to advance the common good or to do the right thing? Based on their research on leaders, Kouzes and Posner (1987) propose five practices of exemplary leadership. One of these practices is “Modeling the Way” or practicing what one preaches. Leaders “show others by their own example that they live by the values that they profess” (p. 187). What one stands for “provides a prism through which all behavior is ultimately viewed” (p. 192).

Leading by example is a powerful way to influence the values and ethics of an organization. This means aligning your own values with the worthy values of the organization. Exemplary leadership includes a congruency between values and actions. The aphorism attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson—“What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say”—implies an even greater emphasis on the importance of values being congruent with actions. Nobel Peace Prize recipient Jimmy Carter is the first contemporary
president said to have pursued higher goals after the presidency. Indeed, his work in diplomacy and in community service such as Habitat for Humanity attests to the congruence between his values and his actions. It is one thing to profess values and quite another to act on them.

Terry (1993) provides a cautionary note that action without authenticity erodes what can be considered ethical or moral leadership. Terry defines authenticity as “genuineness and a refusal to engage in self deception” (p. 128). Being true to oneself as a leader is a prerequisite for ethical and moral leadership.

The task of leading by example is not an easy one. Most, if not all, leaders begin with the goal of wanting to do the right thing. Some leaders get derailed by peer pressure or the temptation to trade leading for the common good with leading for personal gain or the uncommon good. What sustains ethical and moral leadership is a stubborn commitment to high standards, which include honesty and trustworthiness, authenticity, organizational values, and doing the right thing. It takes courage and chutzpah to stand among your peers and advocate a decision that is right yet unpopular. Imagine the tremendous courage of a fraternity chapter member or ROTC junior officer who says, “No, I do not think we should make our pledges drink until they pass out and then drop them off naked in the woods. It is not only dangerous but it is not how I want to bring them into our brotherhood. I won’t be a part of it, and I hope you will not either. I will help plan activities that are fun and more worthwhile, but we cannot do this.” Or the courage of a student who steps in and stops his peers from flipping over a car during a campus riot.

“To handle ethical dilemmas, the single most important quality to remember is to be honest with yourself and others. Tell the parties involved honestly and openly how you feel about the particular issue. Help them understand delicately your position, but stand strong in...
the dilemma. One other important aspect is listening and not jump-
ing to conclusions.”—Andrea Jean Grate, from Alfred University, was
a director of student orientation.

Although it appears that we are stating the obvious by stressing
the importance of leading by example and with integrity, there are,
regrettably, numerous accounts of local and national leaders who
have been caught embezzling, putting humans at risk for the sake
of profit, and hiding the truth. Richard M. Nixon began his presi-
dency with good intentions and then succumbed to political cor-
ruption. Leading with integrity is not a neat and tidy process, yet it
probably is the driving force that allows leaders to continue in their
capacities. We will return to the topic of ethical leadership in Chap-
ter Six with a closer examination of ethical decision making, ethi-
cal theories, and creating and sustaining ethical environments in
groups and organizations.

Relational Leadership Is About Process

Process refers to how the group goes about being a group, remain-
ing a group, and accomplishing a group’s purposes. It refers to the
recruitment and involvement of members, how the group makes
decisions, and how the group handles the tasks related to its mis-

sion and vision. Every group has a process, and every process can be
described. Processes must be intentional and not incidental. The
process component of the Relational Leadership Model means that
individuals interact with others and that leaders and other partici-
pants work together to accomplish change. The process creates
energy, synergy, and momentum.

When asked how her view of the universe as orderly in its
chaotic state has influenced her work with organizations, Wheatley
(1992) observed, “The time I formerly spent on detailed planning
and analysis I now use to look at the structures that might facilitate
relationships. I have come to expect that something useful occurs if I link up people, units, or tasks, even though I cannot determine precise outcomes” (p. 43–44). When groups design and implement ethical, inclusive, empowering processes that further a shared purpose, they can trust the processes to take them through difficult times, resolve ambiguous tasks, and be assured that together they will be better than they might be individually.

Too often, processes devalue the people involved by being highly controlled, valuing winning at all costs, excluding or shutting out those who have an interest in change, or expecting everyone to think and act alike. Attending to the process means being thoughtful and conscious of how the group is going about its business, so participants might say, “Wait a minute. If we do it this way, we'll be ignoring the needs of an important group of students and that is not our intent.” Wheatley (2003) believes that we live in a process world. She states that “we would do better to attend more carefully to the process by which we create our plans and intentions. We need to see these plans, standards, organization charts not as objects that we complete, but as processes that enable a group to keep clarifying its intent and strengthening its connections to new people and new information” (p. 516).

Several key processes are essential to relational leadership. These processes include collaboration, reflection, feedback, civil confrontation, community building, and a level of profound understanding called meaning making. We will discuss several of these here and in subsequent chapters. Being process-oriented means that participants and the group as a whole are conscious of their process. They are reflective, challenging, collaborative, and caring. Being process-oriented means being aware of the dynamics among people in groups. Many groups jump right into the task or goal and lose a focus on the process. When participants focus on the process of group life or community life, they are forced to ask, Why do we do things this way? How could we be more effective? Participants ensure that the groups keeps working and learning together.
Cooperation and Collaboration

Competition seems embedded in many of our American structures. The adversarial legal system, sports teams, the game of poker, and the competitive free market economy all illustrate the way competition permeates our shared life. It is hard to imagine a different paradigm. Even while avoiding trying to beat others and not needing to always be number one, many people feel a strong need to compete with themselves. Perhaps they need to better that last exam grade or beat their last video game score.

In the early 1980s, researchers at the University of Minnesota reviewed 122 studies conducted over a fifty-year period on the role of competitive, cooperative, or individual goal orientations in achievement. Researchers concluded that “cooperation is superior to competition in promoting achievement and productivity” (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1981, p. 56). They further distinguished the strong benefits of cooperation (not competition) in the internal functioning of the group from the incentives when competing with other external groups (Johnson et al.). Working cooperatively with other participants is a desirable process.

Studies consistently show that members of various kinds of groups prefer positional leaders and colleagues who establish cooperative or collaborative relationships with them instead of competitive relationships (Kanter, 1989; Spence, 1983; Tjosvold & Tjosvold, 1991). Even a group member who enjoys competition in athletics is not likely to enjoy working in a setting such as a sports team, committee, study group, or job site in which others are competitive and try to beat each other or use competitive practices like withholding information or degrading others’ contributions. Indeed, “the simplest way to understand why competition generally does not promote excellence is to realize that trying to do well and trying to beat others are two different things” (Kohn, 1992, p. 55). A person’s best work is done under conditions of support and cooperation, not under fear, anxiety, or coercion.
The concepts of cooperation and collaboration are different.

Collaboration is more than simply sharing knowledge and information (communication) and more than a relationship that helps each party achieve its own goals (cooperation and coordination). The purpose of collaboration is to create a shared vision and joint strategies to address concerns that go beyond the purview of any particular party. (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p. 5)

Wood and Gray (1991) assert that “collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain” (p. 146). For example, Microsoft and Intel collaborated on developing wireless applications for PDAs and smart phones. These companies had a shared vision that was achieved by working together rather than in competition with each other. Former presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, who were once in fierce political competition with one another, worked collaboratively on natural disaster relief projects in the face of the Southeast Asian tsunami in 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Both cooperation and collaboration are helpful processes: cooperation helps the other person or group achieve their own goals, whereas collaboration joins with another person or group in setting and accomplishing mutual, shared goals. The “collaborative premise” is a belief that “if you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community” (Chrislip & Larson, p. 14). It would be cooperation for the Habitat for Humanity group to send their membership recruitment flyer out with the Food Cooperative flyer to save postage or for them to attend another group’s event. It would be collaboration for those two groups and several others with a common environmental purpose to design a new flyer to attract...
new members to these shared causes or to work collaboratively together to plan a larger event.

“Part of being a leader is being a participant as well because by being a leader, you need to lead by example. Taking part in whatever you are leading will show that you are proud and enthusiastic to be involved with your particular group. Other members will also respect the fact that you are not only a leader, but that you are humble enough to participate like everyone else.”—Betsy Dedels is a member of Phi Beta Kappa and team captain of intramural volleyball. She majors in sociology at the University of Kentucky.

For the group to be effective, all members must be prepared to do their part. Chapter Two described how music provides a good metaphor for this kind of teamwork. Musicians must be individually skilled and committed, yet know that they are part of a collective—a team. Further, imagine a performance of jazz music with improvisational dance. Both dancers and musicians find wonderful rhythms and sounds, simultaneously interpreted, shaping each other’s work. The collaboration, respect, and commitment to their common purposes as dancers and musicians are obvious. Yet those artists did not just walk into a studio and create movement. The dancers knew their bodies and the musicians knew their instruments. They knew how and why and when to react. Their self-awareness of their own strengths, limits, talents, and abilities created the collaboration in their joint effort. In a parallel manner, think of a terrific class project in which individuals volunteer their knowledge and skills (“I can do the PowerPoint presentation” or “I can call those businesses for donations”), and the division of labor starts to shape a strong project. Knowing yourself well and seeking to know the members of the group creates a group atmosphere conducive to collaboration.
Meaning Making

Leadership requires a process of truly understanding (that is, making meaning) throughout the shared experience of the group. Meaning has both cognitive (ideas and thoughts) and emotional (feelings) components, which “allows a person to know (in the sense of understand) some world version (a representation of the way things are and the way they ought to be) and that places the person in relation to this world view” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 4). Part of this meaning making involves the recognition that in our rapidly changing world, we are continually challenged to see that data become information, information becomes translated into knowledge, knowledge influences understanding, understanding translates into wisdom, and wisdom becomes meaningful thought and action. Imagine this flow as

\[
\text{DATA} \rightarrow \text{INFORMATION} \rightarrow \text{KNOWLEDGE} \rightarrow \text{UNDERSTANDING} \rightarrow \text{WISDOM} \rightarrow \text{THOUGHT AND ACTION}
\]

Meaning making is “the process of arranging our understanding of experience so that we can know what has happened and what is happening, and so that we can predict what will happen; it is constructing knowledge of ourselves and the world” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 2). Drath and Palus make it clear that two understandings of the word meaning guide our thinking about meaning and leadership. One use is when symbols, like words, stand for something. This process of naming and interpreting helps clarify meaning and is essential for the perspectives needed in reframing and seeing multiple realities. For example, one person might call a particular action lawlessness, and another might call it civil disobedience. What one person might call destructive partying, another might see as group bonding and celebration. Coming to agreement on the interpretations of symbolic words and events helps a group to make meaning. Senge (1990) refers to these as “mental models.”
The second use of the word meaning involves “people’s values and relationships and commitments” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 7). People want to matter and to lead lives of meaning. When something is of value, one can make a commitment, find personal purpose, and risk personal involvement—it matters, it has meaning. In contrast, if something is meaningless or of no value, then it does not engage emotion and build commitment. However, we should be careful not to judge too quickly. Sometimes, important matters may seem to have no value. For example, a group of students expressing concern about getting to their cars in remote parking lots after late-night classes deserves a careful hearing. Those listening may be student government officers who live in nearby residence halls or campus administrators who have parking spaces near their buildings. The relational empathy skill of trying to see things from the perspective of another will validate that meaning. (Refer to Chapter Five for more on relational empathy.)

Understanding how we make meaning helps a group frame and reframe the issues and problems they are seeking to resolve. The framing process involves naming the problem and identifying the nature of interventions or solutions that might be helpful. If a problem is framed as, “The administration won’t provide money for additional safety lighting,” it leads to a set of discussions and strategies focused on changing the administration. Reframing means finding a new interpretation of the problem that might create a new view that helps a group be more productive (Bryson & Crosby, 1992). Reframing this same problem might bring a new awareness of coalitions, shareholders, and stakeholders if it were readdressed as, “How can we unite the talent of our campus to address the problem of a dramatic rise in crimes against women?”

Reflection and Contemplation

Vaill (1989) proposes that the rapid pace of change and the need to make meaning from ambiguous material requires individuals and groups to practice reflection. Reflection is the process of pausing,
stepping back from the action, and asking, What is happening? Why is this happening? What does this mean? What does this mean for me? What can I learn from this? Lao Tzu (Heider, 1985) encourages time for reflection:

Endless drama in a group clouds consciousness. Too much noise overwhelms the senses. Continual input obscures genuine insight. Do not substitute sensationalism for learning. Allow regular time for silent reflection. Turn inward and digest what has happened. Let the senses rest and grow still. Teach people to let go of their superficial mental chatter and obsessions. Teach people to pay attention to the whole body’s reaction to a situation. When group members have time to reflect, they can see more clearly what is essential in themselves and others. (p. 23)

Smith, MacGregor, Matthews, and Gabelnick (2004) believe that “reflective thinking should be metacognitive” (p. 125). Metacognition is “thinking about one’s thinking—now considered essential for effective learning and problem solving” (p. 126). Reflection can be accomplished when a group intentionally discusses its process. If groups discuss their process at all, they usually reflect only on their failures. They try to find out what went wrong and how to avoid those errors again. To be true learning organizations, groups also need to reflect on their successes and bring to every participant’s awareness a common understanding of answers to such questions as, Why did this go so well? What did we do together that made this happen? How can we make sure to work this well together again? Horwood (1989) observes that “Reflection is hard mental work. The word itself means ‘bending back.’ . . . The mental work of reflection includes deliberation . . . rumination . . . pondering . . . and musing” (p. 5). Reflection is a key process in becoming a learning community.

In a study of successful leaders, Bennis (1989) observed that these effective leaders encouraged “reflective backtalk” (p. 194).
They knew the importance of truth telling and encouraged their colleagues to reflect honestly what they think they saw or heard. “Reflection is vital—at every level, in every organization . . . all [leaders] should practice the new three Rs: retreat, renewal, and return” (p. 186). One form of group reflection is when the group processes (discusses) a shared experience. As a difficult meeting winds down, any participant (or perhaps the group’s adviser) might say, “Let’s take time now at the end of this meeting to process what we liked about how we handled the big decision tonight and what we think we should do differently next time.” Reflection is also useful for keeping a group on track. A group might intentionally review its goals and mission in the middle of the year and discuss how their activities are supporting that mission or whether they should be redirected. Reflection is an essential component of a process to keep individuals and the whole group focused and intentional.

Contemplation is a form of reflection that allows us to think deeply about the events around us, our feelings, and our emotions. Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) describe contemplation as “the cerebral metabolic process for meaning making. The food that we chew and swallow, that then enters our stomach, only nourishes us, only becomes part of our bloodstream, muscles, nerves, and body chemistry when it is metabolized” (p. 143). The experiences of life operate in a similar way. In the absence of reflection and contemplation, the knowledge that we acquire and the experiences that we go through can “end up like the residue from food we don’t metabolize” (p. 143). Reflective practices allow us to think about what is occurring around us and to us and then to make meaning from those experiences.

What Would This Look Like?

You will acquire many leadership skills over time. It is easy to confuse some management tools—like running meetings or planning agendas—with real leadership. Using the principles of relational leadership, you can reframe typical skills like agenda planning so
that they are more effective. The goals of the agenda for your group meeting will not be just to get through the topics to be presented or decided in the quickest time but will involve the most people, empower voices that might have been excluded before, make sure no one is railroaded and that fair decisions are made, involve others in building an agenda, and use collaborative practices.

Remember the times you have been to a meeting whose leader made all the announcements. A small group of two or three in-group members seemed to run the whole show, and you never said a word. We have all had that experience. You felt marginalized and might have wondered why you even bothered to attend. Think of a meeting in which people disagreed hotly and then someone quickly moved to vote on an issue. A vote was taken with the resulting majority winning and a dissatisfied minority losing or feeling railroaded.

Imagine the differences in a meeting whose positional leader or convener says, “It is our custom to make sure everyone is involved and heard before we try to resolve issues. The executive committee has asked three of you to present the key issues on the first agenda item; we will then break into small groups for fifteen minutes to see what questions and issues emerge before we proceed and see what we want to do at that point. In your discussion, try to identify the principles that will be important for us to consider in the decision we eventually make.” Even if you do not agree with this approach, you would feel more comfortable suggesting a different model because the tone of the meeting is one of involvement and participation.

Chapter Summary

Conditions in our rapidly changing world require that each of us become effective members of our groups and communities in order to work with others toward needed change and for common purpose. The way we relate to each other matters and is symbolic of
our social responsibility. Taking the time needed to build a sense of community in a group acknowledges that relationships are central to effective leadership. Relational leadership is purposeful, inclusive, empowering, ethical, and about process. Attention to those practices builds a strong organization with committed participants who know they matter.

What’s Next?

After understanding the various ways leadership has been viewed and the current need for new models of leadership that value relational approaches, it is essential to understand people as participants in those relationships. Perhaps the most important person to understand is you. The next chapter, which begins Part Two, encourages you to explore aspects about yourself that are important in leadership; following that is a chapter exploring aspects of others and how they may be different from yours. The final chapter in Part Two addresses the importance of integrity in the leadership process and in establishing relationships with others.

Chapter Activities

1. Think of a leader whom you would consider to be a role model, someone who practices what he or she preaches and lives by high standards. Think of local, national, or historical exemplars. What is it about the role model you identified that qualifies that person as an exemplary leader? What values does he or she profess, and what practices does he or she consistently live by?

2. Describe your leadership philosophy using all three components of the knowing-being-doing model.

3. Describe your leadership compass. What principles or ethics guide your personal life and your leadership?
4. Identify a situation in which you successfully used one or more of French and Raven’s sources of power. What contributed to your effective use of each of those sources of power? Think of an example of a leader who abused one of these sources of power. What were the consequences of that person’s leadership?

5. As you review the five elements of this Relational Leadership Model, which are most comfortable for you and why? Which involve knowledge, skills, or attitudes that you have not yet learned or developed?

6. In their simplicity, models often omit concepts that could have been included. What concepts would you add to any of the five elements of this model, or what new elements do you think should be included?

Additional Readings


