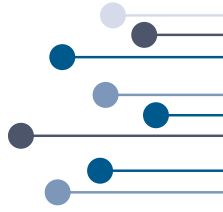


Normative Leadership Theories



The whole point of studying leadership is to answer the question “What is good leadership?”

—Philosopher and ethicist Joanne Ciulla

There is nothing more practical than a good theory.

—Social psychologist Kurt Lewin

What’s Ahead

In this chapter, we will look at leadership theories specifically designed to improve the ethical behavior of leaders and followers. These include transformational leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, aesthetic leadership, responsible leadership, and Taoism. As I did in discussing ethical perspectives in Chapter 5, I’ll describe each theory and then make some suggestions for applying it as a leader. I’ll also offer some cautions about the limitations of each approach.

Theories are key to the study of any discipline, including leadership. They organize knowledge in a field, explain the relationships between important concepts and variables, and help scholars and practitioners make predictions about what strategies will be effective. Theoretical approaches to leadership generally fall into one of two categories: descriptive or normative. Descriptive theories, as the name implies, describe *how* leaders act. Early researchers at the University of Michigan and Ohio State University, for instance, identified two underlying dimensions to leadership styles: task and relationship.¹ They found that some leaders are more focused on tasks while others are more focused on building relationships with followers. Normative leadership theories, in contrast, tell leaders how they *ought* to act. These theories (1) are explicitly built on moral principles or norms and

(2) provide guidelines for promoting ethical leader behavior. Proponents of each normative approach argue that adopting their perspective will enable leaders to function as both moral persons and moral managers. In this chapter I'll introduce several normative leadership theories that can help you cast more light than shadow.

Transformational Leadership: Raise the Ethical Bar

Interest in transformational leadership began in 1978 with the publication of the book *Leadership* by James MacGregor Burns, a political scientist, historian, and former presidential adviser.² Burns contrasts traditional forms of leadership, which he calls “transactional,” with a more powerful form of leadership that he calls “transforming.” Transactional leaders appeal to lower-level needs of followers—that is, the needs for food, shelter, and acceptance. They exchange money, benefits, recognition, and other rewards in return for the obedience and labor of followers; the underlying system remains unchanged. In contrast, transformational leaders speak to higher-level needs, such as esteem, competence, self-fulfillment, and self-actualization. In so doing, they change the very nature of the groups, organizations, or societies they guide. Burns points to Franklin Roosevelt and Mahatma Gandhi as examples of leaders who transformed the lives of followers and their cultures as a whole. In a more recent work, *Transforming Leadership*, Burns argues that the greatest task facing transformational leaders is defeating global poverty, which keeps the world's poorest people from meeting their basic needs for food, medicine, education, and shelter.³

Moral commitments are at the heart of Burns's definition of transforming leadership. “Such leadership,” states Burns, “occurs when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.”⁴ Transformational leaders focus on terminal values such as liberty, equality, and justice. These values mobilize and energize followers, create an agenda for action, and appeal to larger audiences.⁵ Transforming leaders are driven by duty, the deontological ethical approach described in Chapter 5.⁶ They are guided by universal ethical principles, feel a sense of obligation to the group, and treat followers with respect. They are also altruistic, making sacrifices for followers, empowering others, and focusing on shared goals and objectives. Transformational leaders engage in higher-level moral reasoning, demonstrate greater integrity, are more successful at leading organizational ethical turnarounds, encourage the development of positive ethical climates, institutionalize ethical practices, and foster corporate social responsibility.⁷

In contrast to transformational leaders, transactional leaders emphasize instrumental values such as responsibility, fairness, and honesty, which make routine interactions go smoothly. They take a utilitarian approach, judging the morality of actions based on their outcomes. They use their power and position to convince followers to comply so that both they and their subordinates will benefit. More focused on the self, transactional leaders are concerned with protecting their interests rather than with promoting the interests of the group. They are more likely to be controlling than empowering.

In a series of studies, leadership expert Bernard Bass and his colleagues identified the factors that characterize transactional and transformational forms of leadership and demonstrated that transformational leaders can be found in organizations.⁸ They discovered that transactional leadership has both active and passive elements. Active transactional leaders engage in *contingent reward* and *management-by-exception*. They provide rewards and recognition contingent on followers' carrying out their roles and reaching their objectives. After specifying standards and the elements of acceptable performance, active transactional leaders then discipline followers when they fall short. *Passive-avoidant* or *laissez-faire* leaders wait for problems to arise before they take action, or they avoid taking any action at all. These leaders fail to provide goals and standards or to clarify expectations.

According to Bass and Avolio, transformational leadership is characterized by the following:

- *Idealized influence*: Transformational leaders become role models for followers who admire, respect, and trust them. They put followers' needs above their own, and their behavior is consistent with the values and principles of the group.
- *Inspirational motivation*: Transformational leaders motivate by providing meaning and challenge to the tasks of followers. They arouse team spirit, are enthusiastic and optimistic, and help followers develop desirable visions for the future.
- *Intellectual stimulation*: Transformational leaders stimulate innovation and creativity. They do so by encouraging followers to question assumptions, reframe situations, and approach old problems from new perspectives. Transforming leaders don't criticize mistakes but instead solicit solutions from followers.
- *Individualized consideration*: Transformational leaders act as coaches or mentors who foster personal development. They provide learning opportunities and a supportive climate for growth. Their coaching and mentoring are tailored to the individual needs and desires of each follower.

Burns believed that leaders display either transactional or transformational characteristics, but Bass found otherwise. Transforming leadership uses both transactional and transformational elements. Explains Bass: “Many of the great transformational leaders, including Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy, did not shy away from being transactional. They were able to move the nation as well as play petty politics.”⁹ The transformational leader uses the active elements of the transactional approach (contingent reward and management-by-exception) along with idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.¹⁰

The popularity of the transformational approach probably has more to do with practical considerations than with ethical ones. Evidence from more than 100 empirical studies establishes that transforming leaders are more successful than their transactional counterparts.¹¹ Their followers are more committed, form stronger bonds with colleagues, work harder, and persist in the face of obstacles. As a result, organizations led by transforming figures often achieve extraordinary results: higher quality, greater profits, improved service, military victories, and better win–loss records. James Kouzes, Barry Posner, Tom Peters, Warren Bennis, and Burt Nanus are just some of the popular scholars, consultants, and authors who promote the benefits of transformational leadership.¹²

Burns originally believed that the transforming leader is a moral leader because the ultimate products of transformational leadership are higher ethical standards and more ethical performance. However, his definition didn’t account for the fact that some leaders can use transformational strategies to reach immoral ends. A leader can act as a role model, provide intellectual stimulation, and be passionate about a cause. Yet the end product of her or his efforts can be evil. Hitler had a clear vision for Germany but left a trail of unprecedented death and destruction.

Acknowledging the difference between ethical and unethical transformational leaders, Bass adopted the terms *authentic* and *pseudo-transformational* to distinguish between the two categories.¹³ Authentic transformational leaders are motivated by altruism and marked by integrity. They don’t impose ethical norms but allow followers free choice, hoping that constituents will voluntarily commit themselves to moral principles. Followers are viewed as ends in themselves, not as a means to some other end. Pseudo-transformational leaders are self-centered. They manipulate followers in order to reach their personal goals. Envy, greed, anger, and deception mark the groups they lead. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., deserve to be classified as transformational because they promoted universal brotherhood. Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad appeared to be pseudo-transformational because he encouraged followers to reject those who hold different beliefs. A list of the products of transformational and pseudo-transformational leadership is found in Box 7.1. You can use this list to determine whether or not the leader described in Case Study 7.1 is transformational.

• • • BOX 7.1 PRODUCTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL AND PSEUDO-TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP • • •

Transformational Leaders

- Raise awareness of moral standards
- Highlight important priorities
- Increase followers' need for achievement
- Foster higher moral maturity in followers
- Create an ethical climate (shared values, high ethical standards)
- Encourage followers to look beyond self-interests to the common good
- Promote cooperation and harmony
- Use authentic, consistent means
- Use persuasive appeals based on reason
- Provide individual coaching and mentoring
- Appeal to the ideals of followers
- Allow followers freedom of choice

Pseudo-transformational Leaders

- Promote special interests at the expense of the common good
- Encourage the dependence of followers and may privately despise them
- Foster competitiveness
- Pursue personal goals
- Foment greed, envy, hate, and deception
- Engage in conflict rather than cooperation
- Use inconsistent, irresponsible means
- Use persuasive appeals based on emotion and false logic
- Keep their distance from followers and expect blind obedience
- Seek to become idols for followers
- Manipulate followers

SOURCES: Bass, B. M. (1998). The ethics of transformational leadership. In J. B. Ciulla (Ed.), *Ethics, the heart of leadership* (pp. 169–192). Westport, CT: Praeger; Bass, B. M., & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10, 181–217.

Applications and Cautions

Applications

- Start small.
- Employ the full range of leadership behaviors.
- Recognize the universal appeal of transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership can seem intimidating at first. Its proponents set a lofty standard—raising the level of morality in an organization or society while transforming its performance. However, you can act as a transformational leader no matter how modest your leadership role. Chances are you have benefited from the influence of lower-level transformational leaders. You can probably think of a coach, teacher, shift manager, counselor, pastor, or other figure who had a lasting impact on you and your team. You can exert similar positive influence by engaging in the behaviors that demonstrate idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. (Complete Self-Assessment 7.1 to determine how likely you are to use transformational strategies.) Keep in mind that transformational leaders also master active transactional tactics. Be prepared to penalize those who fall short of performance standards or break the rules, reward those who reach their objectives, and so on.

The good news is that you can use transformational behaviors in many contexts, ranging from small informal groups and military units to large complex organizations. Furthermore, transforming leadership appears to be effective in a variety of cultures. Researchers at the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Project asked managers in 62 cultures to identify the characteristics of successful leaders. Nine transformational attributes were universally associated with outstanding leadership: motive arouser, foresight, encouraging, communicative, trustworthy, dynamic, positive, confidence builder, and motivational.¹⁴

Cautions

- Don't equate success with transformation.
- Transformational leadership has been criticized as leader-centric.
- This approach may foster dependence in followers.

Unfortunately, many writers and researchers appear more interested in what works than in what is right. To them, transformational leadership equates with successful or effective

leadership; leaders are transforming because they achieve extraordinary, tangible results, such as rescuing failing corporations or winning battles. These theorists are less concerned with whether leaders foster higher moral standards or whether transforming tactics serve ethical ends.

It should be noted that transformational theorists have been labeled as “leader-centric” for paying too much attention to leaders while downplaying the contributions of followers. One critic describes the image presented by transformational theorists this way: “The picture is one in which extraordinary leaders exercise a unidirectional influence on more-or-less willing followers, who are presumably little more than empty vessels awaiting a transfusion of insight from their betters.”¹⁵ These skeptics have reason for concern. Burns, Bass, and other proponents of transformative leadership argue that leaders play the most important role in determining group morality and performance. Leaders craft the vision, challenge the status quo, and inspire. At times, they may decide to transform the organization in spite of, not because of, followers, as in the case of the CEO who overrules the recommendations of his staff in order to bring about change. Critics of transformational leadership argue that followers are just as important to the success of a group as leaders, if not more so. After all, followers do most of the work. Worse yet, transforming leaders can silence dissent and encourage subordinates to sacrifice their legitimate self-interests in order to meet the needs of the group.¹⁶

So much focus on the leader can create dependence and undermine such values as shared decision making and consensus. Followers won’t act independently if they continually look to you for guidance. You may also get an inflated sense of your own importance, which can tempt you to cast shadows. Bass believes that the distinction between pseudo-transformational and authentic transformational leadership addresses these concerns. Authentic transforming leaders are much less prone to ethical abuses, he asserts, because they put the needs of others first, treat followers with respect, and seek worthy objectives. You’ll need to decide for yourself whether transformational theorists have adequately responded to the dangers posed by their perspective.

Servant Leadership: Put the Needs of Followers First

Servant leadership has roots in both Western and Eastern thought. Jesus told his disciples that “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all” (Mark 1:43–44, New International Version). As we’ll see in the final section of this chapter, Chinese philosophers encouraged leaders to be humble valleys. Robert Greenleaf sparked contemporary interest in leaders as servants. Greenleaf,

who spent 40 years in research, development, and education at AT&T and 25 years as an organizational consultant, coined the term *servant leader* in the 1970s to describe a leadership model that puts the concerns of followers first.¹⁷ Later he founded a center to promote servant leadership. A number of businesses (e.g., the Container Store, Aflac), nonprofit organizations, and community leadership programs have adopted his model.¹⁸ Margaret Wheatley, Peter Block, Max DePree, and James Autry have joined Greenleaf in urging leaders to act like servants.

The basic premise of servant leadership is simple yet profound: Leaders should put the needs of followers before their own needs. In fact, what happens in the lives of followers should be the standard by which leaders are judged. According to Greenleaf, when evaluating a leader we ought to ask, “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?”¹⁹

By continually reflecting on what would be best for their constituents, servant leaders are less likely to cast shadows by taking advantage of the trust of followers, acting inconsistently, or accumulating money and power. Theorists have identified a number of attributes that characterize servant leaders (see Box 7.2). While the lists of attributes vary, five related concepts appear central to servant leadership:

1. *Stewardship*. Being a servant leader means acting on behalf of others.²⁰ Leaders function as the agents of followers, who entrust them with special duties and opportunities for a limited time. Servant leaders are charged with protecting and nurturing their groups and organizations while making sure that these collectives serve the common good. Stewardship implies accountability for results. However, stewards reach their objectives through collaboration and persuasion rather than through coercion and control.

2. *Obligation*. Servant leaders take their obligations or responsibilities seriously. (Turn to Case Study 7.2 for a description of one group of leaders and followers who lost sight of their obligations.) Max DePree, former CEO of Herman Miller, a major office furniture manufacturer, offers one list of what leaders owe their followers and institutions.²¹

- *Assets*: Leaders need to ensure financial stability as well as the relationships and reputation that will ensure future prosperity. Leaders must also provide followers with adequate tools, equipment, and facilities.
- *A legacy*: When they depart, leaders ought to leave behind people who find more meaning, challenge, and joy in their work.
- *Clear institutional values*: Servant leaders articulate principles that shape both individual and organizational behavior.

- *Future leadership*: Current leaders are obligated to identify and then develop their successors.
- *Healthy institutional culture*: Servant leaders are responsible for fostering such organizational characteristics as quality, openness to change, and tolerance of diverse opinions.
- *Covenants*: Covenants are voluntary agreements that serve as reference points for organization members, providing them with direction. Leaders and followers who enter into a covenant are bound together in pursuit of a common goal.
- *Maturity*: Followers expect a certain level of maturity from their leaders. Mature leaders have a clear sense of self-worth, belonging, responsibility, accountability, and equality.
- *Rationality*: Leaders supply the reason and understanding that help followers make sense of organizational programs and relationships. A rational environment builds trust, allows followers to reach their full potential, and encourages ongoing organizational learning.
- *Space*: Space is a sense of freedom that allows followers and leaders to be and express themselves. Leaders who create adequate space allow for the giving and receiving of such gifts as new ideas, healing, dignity, and inclusion.
- *Momentum*: Servant leaders help create the feeling that the group is moving forward and achieving its goals. Momentum arises out of a clear vision and strategy supported by productive research, operations, financial, and marketing departments.
- *Effectiveness*: Effectiveness comes from enabling followers to reach their personal and institutional potential. Servant leaders allow followers to assume leadership roles when conditions warrant.
- *Civility and values*: A civilized institution is marked by good manners, respect for others, and service. Wise leaders can distinguish between what is healthy for the organization (dignity of work, hope, simplicity) and what is superficial and unhealthy (consumption, instant gratification, affluence).

3. *Partnership*. Servant leaders view followers as partners, not as subordinates. As a consequence, they strive for equity or justice in the distribution of power. Strategies for empowering followers include sharing information, delegating authority to carry out important tasks, and encouraging constituents to develop and exercise their talents. Concern for equity extends to the distribution of rewards as well. For example, both employees and executives receive bonuses when the company does well.

4. *Emotional healing.* Servant leaders help followers and organizations recover from disappointment, trauma, hardship, and broken relationships.²² They are both empathetic and highly skilled as listeners. They create climates that facilitate the sharing of personal and work-related feelings and issues. Emotional healing restores a “sense of wholeness” to both individuals and organizations.

5. *Elevating purpose.* In addition to serving followers, servant leaders serve worthy missions, ideas, and causes. Seeking to fulfill a high moral purpose and understanding the role one plays in the process make work more meaningful to leaders and followers alike. Consider the example of three bricklayers at work in the English countryside. When asked by a traveler to describe what they were doing, the first replied, “I am laying bricks.” The second said, “I am feeding my family by laying bricks.” The third bricklayer, who had a clearer sense of the purpose for his labor, declared, “Through my work of laying bricks, I am constructing a cathedral, and thereby giving honor and praise to God.”

• • • **BOX 7.2 SERVANT LEADER ATTRIBUTES** • • •

empathy
agreeableness
(Washington, Sutton, & Field, 2006)

competence

integrity/honesty

altruistic calling
persuasive mapping
(Babuton & Wheeler, 2006)

emotional healing
wisdom

organizational stewardship

listening
awareness
foresight
commitment
to the growth of people
(Spears, 2004)

empathy
persuasion
stewardship

healing
conceptualization
building community

vision
trust
pioneering
communication
visibility
listening
delegation
(Russell & Stone)

honesty
service
empowerment
credibility
influence
encouragement

integrity
modeling
appreciation of others
competence
persuasion
teaching

Sources

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For much of the theory's history, support for servant leadership was anecdotal, consisting largely of lists of servant characteristics and examples of servant leaders. More recently, scholars have begun to subject servant leadership to empirical testing. Servant leadership questionnaires like the one in Self-Assessment 7.2 have been developed, and researchers are exploring the impacts of servant leadership on followers and organizational performance. So far they have discovered that:

- Servant leaders help satisfy follower needs and boost followers' job satisfaction and job performance.
- Followers give servant leaders higher character ratings.
- Top-level servant leaders encourage lower-level leaders to act as servants.
- Servant leadership prompts employees to go beyond their job descriptions to help others.
- Employees led by servant leaders are less likely to quit their jobs.
- Servant leadership creates an ethical, trusting organizational climate.
- Servant leadership can increase profits.
- Servant leaders help team members believe in their group's ability to accomplish its tasks.
- Servant leadership is accepted across a variety of cultures, although the importance of the dimensions of servant leadership varies between societies.²³

Applications and Cautions

Applications

- Focus on followers.
- Act as a steward.
- Cultivate self-awareness.
- Pursue elevating purposes.

Servant leadership is founded on altruism, which, as we saw in Chapter 5, is essential to ethical leadership. You can serve only if you commit yourself to the principle that others should come first. You are far less likely to cast shadows if you approach your leadership role with one goal in mind: the desire to serve. A great number of ethical abuses stem from leaders acting selfishly. Instead, act out of a sense of stewardship and obligation, promoting the growth of followers and the interests of the larger community. Remember what you “owe” followers. Share, rather than hoard, power, privilege, and information.

To function as a servant leader you need to cultivate self-awareness. Servant leaders listen to themselves as well as to others, take time for reflection, and recognize the importance of spiritual resources. They are also acutely aware of the importance of pursuing ethical purposes that bring meaning and fulfillment to work. Serving a transcendent goal means that every act of leadership has a moral dimension.

Cautions

- Servant leadership seems unrealistic.
- It may not work in every context.
- It poses the danger of serving the wrong cause or offering unwise service.
- The term *servant* carries a negative connotation.

Servant leadership has not met with universal approval. Cynicism is often the first response when this model is presented. “Sounds good in principle,” listeners respond, “but it would never work at my company [in my family, at my condominium association meeting—fill in the blank].” Like other skeptics, you may have been “walked

on” whenever you tried to be nice to poor performers at work, rebellious teenagers, or nasty neighbors. You may agree with others who equate a servant attitude with passivity.

Skepticism about servant leadership may stem in part from a misunderstanding that equates service with weakness. Servant leaders need to be tough. Sometimes the best way to serve someone is to reprimand or fire that person. Nevertheless, there may be situations in which servant leadership is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to implement, such as in prisons or military boot camps, or during emergencies.

Misplaced goals are problems for servant leaders and followers alike. The butler in the novel *The Remains of the Day*, by Kazuo Ishiguro, illustrates the danger of misspent service. He devotes his entire life to being the perfect servant who meets the needs of his English employer. Sadly, his sacrifice is wasted because the lord of the manor turns out to be a Nazi sympathizer. The desire to serve must be combined with careful reasoning and values clarification. You need to carefully examine who and what you serve, asking yourself questions such as the following: Is this group, individual, or organization worthy of my service? What values am I promoting? What is the product of my service: light or darkness?

You are also charged with giving wise service. Lots of well-intentioned efforts to help others are wasted when leaders fail to do their homework. After the earthquake in Central Asia in 2005, for example, outdoor equipment manufacturers donated high-tech mountaineering tents to victims. Unfortunately, such tents are highly flammable, and some caught fire from candles, kerosene lanterns, and cooking fires, burning and killing adults and children. After the Haiti earthquake, members of an Idaho church group who traveled to Haiti to provide aid were jailed when they tried to take orphans out of the country. It turned out that the children weren't orphans after all. Some critics go so far as to argue that not only are some humanitarian efforts wasted, but they can also make problems worse and foster dependence in recipients.²⁴

Finally, members of some minority groups, particularly African Americans, associate the word *servant* with a history of slavery, oppression, and discrimination. If the negative connotations surrounding the word are keeping you from embracing the idea of servant leadership, you may want to abandon this term and focus instead on related concepts such as altruism and the virtues of concern and compassion.

Authentic Leadership: Know Yourself and to Your Own Self Be True

Ancient Greek and Roman philosophers prized authenticity. “Know thyself” was inscribed on the frieze above the oracle of Delphi and appears in the writings of Cicero and Ovid.²⁵ Greek thinkers also exhorted listeners “to thine own self be true.” Modern scholars have rediscovered the importance of this quality. Proponents of authentic leadership theory (ALT) identify authenticity as the “root construct” or principle underlying all forms of positive leadership. The practice of authentic leadership leads to sustainable (long-term) and veritable (ethically sound) organizational performance.²⁶

Authenticity has four components: self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency.²⁷ *Self-awareness* means being conscious of, and trusting in, our motives, desires, feelings, and self-concept. Self-aware people know their strengths and weaknesses, personal traits, and emotional patterns, and they are able to use this knowledge when interacting with others and their environments. *Balanced processing* describes remaining objective when receiving information. Inauthentic responses involve denying, distorting, or ignoring feedback we don’t want to acknowledge. We may have to accept the fact that we aren’t very good at certain activities—accounting, writing, playing basketball—or that we have problems managing our anger. *Internalized moral perspective* describes regulating our behavior according to our internal standards and values, not according to what others say. We act in harmony with what we believe and do not change our behavior to please others or to earn rewards or avoid punishment. *Relational transparency* refers to presenting the authentic self to others, openly expressing true thoughts and feelings appropriate for the situation.

According to Bruce Avolio, Fred Luthans, and their colleagues at the University of Washington, the Gallup Leadership Institute at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and elsewhere, authentic leadership has a strong moral component. These scholars make ethics a starting point for their theory, just as Burns does for transformational leadership. This moral element is reflected in their definition of authentic leaders as “those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character.”²⁸ Such leaders acknowledge the ethical responsibilities of their roles, can recognize and evaluate ethical issues, and take moral actions that are thoroughly grounded in their beliefs and values. In order to carry out these tasks,

they draw on their courage and resilience—the ability to adapt when confronted with significant risk or adversity.²⁹

Because authenticity is so critical to positive leadership performance, Avolio, Luthans, and others are interested in how leaders develop this quality. They report that critical incidents called *trigger events* play an important role in the development of the moral component of authentic leadership.³⁰ These events, like the crucible moments described in Chapter 3, can be positive or negative and promote introspection and reflection. Trigger experiences are often dramatic—facing racial hatred, visiting a village in a poor developing country—but can also be more mundane, such as reading a significant book. Sometimes a series of small events, like several minor successes or failures, can have a cumulative effect, triggering significant thought. Leaders develop a clearer sense of who they are, including their standards of right and wrong, through these experiences. They build a store of moral knowledge that they can draw on to make better choices when facing future ethical dilemmas.

Authenticity can also be fostered through training and education. For example, trainers and educators can help leaders develop their moral capacity by (1) encouraging them to think about the possible consequences of their leadership decisions, (2) enhancing their perspective taking through discussion and training, (3) exposing them to common moral dilemmas to help them recognize the ethical issues they will face in their jobs, (4) building their belief in their ability to follow through on choices, (5) helping them develop strategies for adapting and coping with new ethical challenges, and (6) pairing them with moral leaders so they can observe authentic behavior firsthand.³¹

Authentic leadership produces a number of positive ethical effects in followers.³² Followers are likely to emulate the example of authentic leaders who set a high ethical standard. They feel empowered to make ethical choices on their own without the input of the leader and are more likely to act courageously. They align themselves with the values of the organization and become authentic moral agents themselves. Leader authenticity also fosters feelings of self-efficacy (competence), hope, optimism, and resilience in followers. Authentic followers, for their part, provide feedback that reinforces the authentic behavior of leaders and increases the leaders' self-knowledge. (See “Focus on Follower Ethics: Authentic Followership” for more information on the characteristics of authentic followers.) They also reward their leaders by giving them more latitude to make difficult, unpopular choices. Authentic leadership and followership are more likely to develop in organizational climates that provide the information and other resources that employees need to get their work done, encourage learning, treat members fairly, and set clear goals and performance standards.

FOCUS ON FOLLOWER ETHICS

Authentic Followership

Authenticity is the mark of ethical followership just as it is for ethical leadership. Authentic leaders and followers encourage transparency, self-awareness, and moral behavior in each other. Together they build open, healthy relationships and collaborate to achieve worthwhile objectives. Followers have the greatest impact on leaders when they develop psychological ownership, foster trust, and practice transparency.

Psychological ownership. Authentic followers feel as if they “own” the organizations where they work and volunteer. This sense of ownership is based on a sense of belonging (“This is *my* home”), a sense of identity (“I am a student at _____ University”), a sense of accountability (“*I* am responsible for this project”), and a sense of efficacy (“*I can* do this task”). Ownership encourages a variety of ethical behaviors, including (1) meeting the needs of customers when they first come in contact with the firm, (2) taking responsibility for making decisions at lower organizational levels, (3) going beyond what the job requires, and (4) doing whatever it takes to solve problems.

Trust. Authentic followers are vulnerable. They admit their mistakes and encourage their leaders to do the same. For example, when pharmacists admit to “near misses” (nearly filling prescriptions with the wrong medications), they prompt their supervisors to take further steps to reduce potential errors. Authentic followers don’t take advantage of their leaders who admit their mistakes. They also build trust with their leaders by taking on challenges without being asked.

Transparency. Authentic followers say what they mean. By sharing their thoughts, values, and feelings, they help create transparent relationships with their leaders. These relationships are marked by honesty, feedback, and effective communication. Authentic followers also contribute to the creation of transparent organizational climates. In transparent climates, policies and procedures are visible to everyone. Members share important goals and values and put the needs of the group above their own concerns. Because they feel safe, employees reveal problems rather than creating the impression that everything is fine.

SOURCE: Avolio, B. J., & Reichard, R. J. (2008). The rise of authentic followership. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations* (pp. 325–337). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Proponents of ALT argue that authenticity pays practical as well as ethical dividends. They cite evidence that authentic leadership is linked to higher follower performance, commitment, satisfaction, and effort.³³ Authentic leaders, particularly because they act with integrity, engender more trust, and trust, in turn, has been linked to higher organizational productivity and performance (see Chapter 9). The positive emotions fostered by leaders also enhance performance. Followers who believe in their abilities are more likely to take initiative and to achieve more, even in the face of difficult circumstances. Feelings of hope and optimism foster willpower. Resilience enables followers to recover more quickly from setbacks.³⁴

ALT has moved into the next stage of development. Most of the initial articles and chapters on authentic leadership offered propositions about ALT that were not supported by empirical research, but now an ALT scale has been developed and tested.³⁵ Validation of the scale demonstrates that authentic leadership, while sharing features with transformational and servant leadership, is a distinct construct.

Applications and Cautions

Applications

- Recognize the significance of authenticity.
- Develop the four components of authenticity.
- Foster authenticity in others.

Advocates of ALT argue persuasively for the importance of authenticity—incorporating values, moral perspectives, virtues, and character in their definition of authentic leadership. Authentic leadership is effective as well as ethical. Authenticity multiplies the impact of leaders and lays the foundation for long-term organizational success. With this in mind, seek to be an authentic leader. Cultivate the four components of authenticity: Develop self-awareness, maintain objectivity when receiving information, rely on internal standards and values, and openly present yourself to others. Consider the trigger events in your life and what they reveal about who you are. Foster authenticity in others through your example and the training strategies described earlier.

Cautions

- ALT overstates the significance of authenticity.
- Theorists tend to equate authenticity with morality.
- Authenticity can be defined as a personal characteristic or as a perception.
- The theory needs to be tested in other cultures.

While authenticity is a critical component of ethical leadership, the underlying premise of ALT, that authenticity is the source of all positive forms of leadership, is subject to debate. There may be some other as yet undiscovered source instead. Or there may be multiple sources of ethical leadership. Proponents of ALT also seem to equate self-awareness with morality. The clearer you are about your self-concept, they claim, the more likely you are to act ethically. Yet the core values of some leaders promote self-seeking, destructive behavior. Then, too, expressing your “true” self can produce undesirable consequences. Take the case of the boss who fails to temper his criticism of a subordinate. By accurately reflecting what he feels at that moment, he may do lasting damage to the self-concept of his employee. The critical boss believes he is acting authentically; the unfortunate employee and observers probably will conclude that he is callous instead.

Investigations into the effects of authentic leadership have also identified a fundamental tension in the theory. On one hand, authenticity has been tied to the personal traits described earlier. On the other hand, for authenticity to have a positive influence on organizational behavior, observers must perceive that the leader’s behavior is authentic.³⁶ Authenticity then becomes a product of perception, not of personal beliefs and behaviors. Leaders who hope to be successful must project an authentic image. In other words, *being* authentic is no longer enough—you must also *appear* authentic. This could tempt you to be untrue to yourself. You might fail to act on your values and self-understanding for fear that such behavior could be seen as inauthentic. In addition, an inauthentic (pseudo-authentic) leader could mislead followers by projecting an authentic image.³⁷ Further research and analysis are needed to resolve this apparent contradiction between the personal and perceptual dimensions of ALT. To date, ALT research has largely been conducted in the United States. Authenticity may not be an important element of ethical leadership in other cultures.

Aesthetic (Beautiful) Leadership

Aesthetic leadership, like authentic leadership, has its roots in classic Greek thought. The word *aesthetic* or *aisth* in ancient Greek means “feeling through physical perceptions.”³⁸ Our sensory encounters with people, events, objects, and settings generate emotions. We then construct meanings based on those feelings. Take the case of an unsuccessful job interview, for example. Both individuals see, hear, listen to, smell, and touch one another during the meeting. Each then comes away from the encounter with feelings about the interview and the other party. The interviewer may be disappointed with the applicant and conclude that she or he was not prepared for the session. The frustrated interviewee may go home and complain about how the company representative was cold and distant.

The aesthetic perspective emphasizes the sensory and emotional dimension of organizational life.³⁹ From this vantage point, organizations serve as stages, and leadership is more of an art than a science. Leaders, like artists, make skillful use of dramatic elements (ritual, ceremony, gestures, oratory), design (they transform visions and programs into reality), and orchestration (they bring diverse individuals together to achieve worthy goals).⁴⁰ Followers serve as audiences who make aesthetic judgments about leaders and their performances. Successful leaders generate strong positive emotions and attributions. For example, President John F. Kennedy was youthful, energetic, and glamorous. In his speeches, such as the one in which he called upon the United States to put a man on the moon, he appealed to the aspirations of Americans and engaged their imaginations.⁴¹ He is remembered as a highly effective leader even though he accomplished much less than other, less attractive presidents, like Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. (Read the description in “Leadership Ethics at the Movies: *A Ripple of Hope*” to see how President Kennedy’s brother Robert also functioned as an aesthetic, transformational leader.)

LEADERSHIP ETHICS AT THE MOVIES

A Ripple of Hope

Key Cast Members: Frank Mankiewicz, John Lewis, Adam Walinsky, Thurston Clarke

Synopsis: On April 4, 1968, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, and riots broke out in cities across the nation. That evening, Senator Robert Kennedy, a presidential candidate, was scheduled to deliver a campaign speech to a largely African American audience in Indianapolis. Senator Kennedy ignored the warnings of police and addressed the angry crowd, some of whom were armed and ready to do violence. Standing on the back of a flatbed truck, the candidate spoke for the first time in public about the assassination of his brother John and quoted a Greek poet on the wisdom that can come through suffering. He appealed to both Blacks and Whites to put aside their hatred to work together to create a country that would meet the needs of all of its citizens. When the crowd dispersed, members of both races were hugging one another; the city remained calm. Tragically, Robert Kennedy was himself assassinated just a few months later in California.

Rating: Not rated

Themes: transformational leadership, authentic leadership, aesthetic leadership, leadership performance, compassion, courage

(Continued)

(Continued)

Discussion Starters

1. Why did Kennedy decide to give the speech despite the warnings of police? What might have happened had he canceled his scheduled appearance or given only a brief formal statement acknowledging King's death?
2. Why did Kennedy wait until this incident to talk publicly about the death of his brother?
3. What made his speech so powerful and beautiful?

Ethics is integral to aesthetic leadership. For the ancients, aesthetics meant pursuing goals that serve humankind. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) believed that leaders should pursue “human flourishing” and the “good life.” Plato (428–348 B.C.E.) argued that beauty must serve a good (moral) purpose. Aesthetic and moral judgments overlap. The most ethical course of action is also the most aesthetically pleasing or beautiful.

University of Exeter leadership professor Donna Ladkin identifies three components that contribute to a beautiful leadership performance.⁴² The first is mastery. An ethical/beautiful leader is competent and possesses the necessary skills and abilities to perform in a given moment. He or she can improvise, applying the correct skills to a particular situation. The second component is coherence. The ethical/beautiful leader is authentic, acting in a way that is consistent with his or her message and purpose. The third component is purpose. The ethical/beautiful leader serves the best interests of the community and improves the human condition.

Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger provides one example of a beautiful leadership performance.⁴³ On January 15, 2009, the commercial passenger aircraft that Sullenberger was piloting hit a flock of birds after taking off from New York's La Guardia Airport. Sullenberger immediately realized that he couldn't reach the nearest landing strip in New Jersey, so he decided to put the aircraft down on the Hudson River. He avoided bridges and nearby high-rise buildings while bringing the plane down with its nose up and its wings level. Once the plane was on the water, he walked through the cabin twice to make sure all passengers and crew members were safely off before he left. Not a single life was lost in the incident. Captain Sullenberger's behavior stands in sharp contrast to the ugly behavior of the captain of the *Costa Concordia* cruise ship in 2012. When his ocean liner crashed into the rocks off the Italian coast, Francesco Schettino abandoned ship and headed for shore, leaving many passengers still on board (32 died). Later the captain denied that he was in charge of the ship at the time of the crash—a claim contradicted by the ship's data recorder.⁴⁴

Applications and Cautions

Applications

- Recognize the physical dimension of leadership.
- View leadership as a performing art.
- Make aesthetic judgments.

Leadership has a physical or sensory dimension. Followers will make attributions about your motives and effectiveness based on the interactions they have with you. Your behaviors will determine whether they think you are honest or dishonest, competent or incompetent, and so on. With this in mind, you should view leadership as a performing art. Make skillful use of the dramatic elements described above. Put on performances that reflect mastery, coherence, and purpose. To function as an artful leader, you will need to serve high moral purposes and demonstrate practical wisdom, courage, and other virtues.⁴⁵ Use beauty as a standard for judging the performances of other artist leaders.

Cautions

- Aesthetic leadership theory ignores the rational dimension of leadership.
- Definitions of beauty vary.
- Performances can be dishonest.

Resist the temptation to treat leadership as only an art. Leadership is best viewed as both an art and a science. Recognizing the aesthetic dimension of leadership doesn't mean that you should reject its rational aspects. To succeed, you will need to understand how organizations operate, make wise choices, engage in strategic planning, and so on. It is also not clear that followers share a given standard of beauty. They may not always agree on what is beautiful (ethical), demonstrating the truth of the old adage "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Viewing leadership as performance can also tempt you to engage in deceit. Leaders can hide their true intentions and manipulate audiences (see the discussion of authentic leadership above). In the early days of what is now Virgin Group, for example, company founder Richard Branson would use pay phones to call clients. He would start by ringing the operator and claiming that he'd lost his money in the phone. The operator was then required to connect his call and would say to the person answering, "I have Mr. Branson for you." This created the false impression that Branson was important enough to have someone to place his calls.⁴⁶

Responsible Leadership: Promote Global Good Through Ethical Relationships

Responsible leadership is an offshoot of global corporate social responsibility (CSR). Socially responsible corporations operating in a global economy try to improve social conditions and the environment in addition to making a profit. (Social responsibility is described in more detail in Chapter 9.) These businesses pay a living wage to workers in developing countries, for example, and adopt environmentally friendly practices like recycling and reducing energy use and pollution. Responding to the claims of stakeholders is an important element of CSR. Stakeholders consist of any group affected by an organization's operations. For a multinational corporation, stakeholders include, for example, domestic and foreign governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), suppliers, customers, and employees in locations around the world.

European researchers Nicola Pless and Thomas Maak believe that leaders can help their corporations become forces for global good by exercising responsible leadership.⁴⁷ Responsible leaders build ethical relationships with stakeholders. These relationships then create a sense of shared purpose as well as motivation to address social and environmental problems. Maak and Pless define responsible leadership as

a values-based and principle-driven relationship between leaders and stakeholders who are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose through which they raise one another to higher ethical levels of motivation and commitment for achieving sustainable value creation and responsible change.⁴⁸

Like transformational leadership, responsible leadership elevates the morality of the parties involved. However, responsible leadership incorporates all stakeholder groups affected by the leader and the organization, not just immediate followers. Responsible leaders establish a “web of inclusion” that connects with diverse constituencies. Relationship building can't be done from a position of authority. Instead, responsible leaders must function as equals who bring people together for a common purpose.

Character plays an important role in responsible leadership. Responsible leaders are authentic (see the section on authentic leadership above) and demonstrate such virtues as honesty, respect, service, and humility. They reflect moral maturity, practice reflection and critical thinking skills, and can generate creative ethical solutions. Drawing from this moral core, responsible leadership then manifests itself in the following roles:⁴⁹

1. *The leader as steward.* Responsible leaders act as guardians of individual and organizational values, maintaining personal and collective integrity while helping the organization act responsibly. They are also custodians, protecting (and hopefully enriching) the values and resources they have been entrusted with. Stewardship incorporates a global perspective and considers the needs of the environment and future generations.
2. *The leader as servant.* Responsible leaders are focused on the needs of followers. They care for them through providing a safe and meaningful work environment, paying fair wages, listening to their concerns, and supporting their development. Responsible leaders also serve the needs of stakeholders through dialogue, by integrating the perspectives of many different groups, and by putting the good of the community above selfish concerns.
3. *The leader as coach.* Responsible leaders develop and support others, motivating diverse individuals and groups to work together to reach a common vision. This requires open communication, conflict management, managing cultural differences, and providing appropriate feedback. Moral development is an important element of coaching. Ethical leaders help others develop their moral reasoning and reflection skills.
4. *The leader as architect.* Responsible leaders focus on building integrity cultures, which are work environments that help diverse employees engage in meaningful labor; feel respected, included, and recognized; and reach their potential. Responsible leaders also engage in ongoing dialogue with external stakeholders.
5. *The leader as storyteller.* Responsible leaders communicate shared values and meaning through stories. Stories bring to life the organization's vision and values, help create meaning, and assist followers in making sense of the world. By sharing stories, leaders create a corporate identity, foster cooperation, and communicate their visions about their organization's social and environmental responsibilities.
6. *The leader as change agent.* Responsible leaders shape both the process and the product of change. They create a values-based vision, mobilize followers, keep change momentum going, and deal with the anxiety that always surrounds change efforts. In addition, they ensure that change helps create businesses that are founded on core values and sustainable over the long term.
7. *The leader as citizen.* Responsible leaders are just as concerned about the health of the community as they are about the health of their businesses. They recognize that private business and the public sphere are interdependent. Businesses need healthy communities in order to thrive, and healthy communities need the support of thriving businesses.

Maak and Pless outline an ambitious agenda for responsible leadership. They believe that corporate leaders have a duty to act as agents of social change and as “agents of world benefit.”⁵⁰ Multinational corporations exert greater and greater economic power and enjoy more and more

privileges. Therefore, they have a moral obligation to promote social justice by trying to solve political and social problems. Responsible leaders join government and nonprofit leaders in promoting human rights, alleviating poverty and hunger, and fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other illnesses. Such collaboration creates *social capital*—a network of structures, resources, and lasting positive relationships—which can then be used to address other social problems.⁵¹

Applications and Cautions

Applications

- Encourage corporate social responsibility.
- Play the roles of the responsible leader.
- Broaden your focus to outside the organization.

Few of us are in a position to lead multinational corporations in the fight against global problems like poverty and substandard housing. Yet you can do your part to ensure that your organization is socially responsible. You can act as steward, servant, coach, architect, and storyteller no matter what your organizational status. Weave your own web of relationships founded on ethical principles and values. Act out of high character and demonstrate sound moral reasoning, building relationships grounded in trust and integrity. Be concerned about the needs and development of others, both inside and outside the organization. The creation of a more just global society is an ambitious goal, but it is one worth pursuing.

Of the theories discussed in this chapter, only responsible leadership incorporates globalization and stakeholder theory. It encourages leaders to work with others to solve difficult problems on every continent. This approach to leadership ethics highlights the fact that you must be concerned about all those who are affected by your actions, not just immediate followers.

Cautions

- Responsible leadership theory is in the early stages of development.
- Its principles overlap with those of other theories.
- Corporations are resistant to an expanded social role.
- Proponents reflect a liberal bias.
- The theorists focus exclusively on business leadership.

Responsible leadership theory is in the early stages of development, which accounts for many of its shortcomings.⁵² To this point, only a small group of scholars have joined Maak and Pless in exploring the implications of responsible leadership, although the number is rapidly growing. Limited empirical evidence has been offered to support the theory's tenets. In fact, conducting research on the theory is a daunting task since investigators must examine values, decisions, and behaviors at many different levels—individual, organizational, societal, and global. The theorists incorporate elements of authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership into their model. They are just beginning to clarify how their theory relates to these other approaches.

You may take issue with Pless and Maak's bold assertion that corporations and their leaders need to be agents of social justice and world benefit. They advocate that businesses take on responsibilities usually associated with governments to address global problems, such as world hunger. Like a great number of observers, you may be uneasy about multinational corporations acting as "quasi-states." Or you might take issue with liberal bias of the theory's advocates. Further, the traditional conception of social responsibility is much more limited than that advocated in responsible leadership. Corporate leaders typically tie their social efforts to their business goals, as in the case of a building supply company supporting a Habitat for Humanity construction project. Then, too, multinational businesses generally target problems related to their operations and locations. For instance, a socially conscious manufacturer will focus on improving living conditions in the communities surrounding its plants. Few corporate leaders appear ready to tackle global issues like the shortage of clean water and widespread poverty, as proponents of responsible leadership urge them to do. (See Case Study 7.3 for one example of a business leader taking on a major global concern.)

Additional theoretical development may address what is perhaps the greatest concern about responsible leadership, which is whether this perspective can serve as a general theory of leadership ethics. Maak and Pless developed their theory to foster greater social responsibility in multinational corporations. They specifically address business leaders. However, you may conclude that the components of responsible leadership would seem to apply to every type of organizational leader. Educators, agency heads, mayors, governors, and others also have to build values-based, principle-driven relationships with diverse stakeholder groups to achieve ethical objectives.

Taoism: Lead Nature's Way

Taoism (pronounced "Dowism") is one of the world's oldest philosophies, dating back to ancient China (600–300 B.C.E.). The nation had enjoyed peace and prosperity under a series of imperial dynasties but had become a patchwork of warring city-states. Groups

of philosophers traveled from one fiefdom to another offering leaders advice for restoring harmony. The Taoists were one of these “100 Schools of Thought.”⁵³

The *Tao Te Ching* (usually translated as *The Classic of the Way and Its Power and Virtue*) is Taoism’s major text. According to popular tradition, a royal librarian named Lao-tzu authored this book as he departed China for self-imposed exile. However, most scholars believe that this short volume (5,000 words) is actually a collection of the teachings of several wise men or sages.

Taoism divided into religious and philosophical branches by 200 C.E. Religious Taoists sought to extend their lives through diet and exercise and developed a priesthood that presided over elaborate temple rituals. Today Taoist religious practices are popular in both the East and the West, but those interested in Taoist leadership principles generally draw from the movement’s philosophical roots. These principles are described for Western audiences in such books as *The Tao of Leadership*, *The Tao of Personal Leadership*, and *Real Power: Business Lessons From the Tao Te Ching*.

Understanding the “Way,” or Tao, is the key to understanding Taoist ethical principles. The Tao is the shapeless, nameless force or “nonbeing” that brings all things into existence, or being, and then sustains them. The Tao takes form in nature and reveals itself through natural principles. These principles then become the standards for ethical behavior. Ethical leaders and followers develop *te*, or character, by acting in harmony with the Tao, not by following rules and commandments. Laws reflect a distrust of human nature and create a new class of citizens—lawbreakers—instead of encouraging right behavior. Efforts to reduce crime, for example, seem to increase it instead:

Throw away holiness and wisdom,

And people will be a hundred times happier.

Throw away morality and justice,

And people will do the right thing.

Throw away industry and profit, and there won’t be any thieves.⁵⁴

“Leave well enough alone” seems to capture the essence of Taoist ethics. Consistent with their hands-off approach, Taoist sages argue that he or she governs best who governs least. Leading is like cooking a small fish: Don’t overdo it. The ideal Taoist leader maintains a low profile, leading mostly by example and letting followers take ownership.

When the Master governs, the people
Are hardly aware that he exists.
Next best is a leader who is loved.
Next, one who is feared.
The worst is one who is despised.
If you don't trust the people,
You make them untrustworthy.
The Master doesn't talk, he acts.
When his work is done,
The people say, "Amazing:
We did it, all by ourselves!"⁵⁵

Taoists rely on images or metaphors drawn from nature and daily life to illustrate the characteristics of model leaders. The first image is that of an uncarved block. An uncarved block of stone or wood is nameless and shapeless, like the Tao itself. Leaders should also be blocklike, avoiding wealth, status, and glory while they leave followers alone.

The second image is the child. Children serve as another reminder that wise leaders don't get caught up in the pursuit of power and privilege but remain humble. Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated childlike character. He dressed simply in clothes he made himself, owned almost nothing, and did not seek political office. Yet he emerged as one of history's most influential leaders.

The third image is water. Water provides an important insight into how leaders ought to influence others by illustrating that there is great strength in weakness. Water cuts through the hardest rock, given enough time. In the same way, the weak often overcome the powerful.⁵⁶ Authoritarian governments in Soviet Russia, Argentina, and the Philippines were overthrown not by military means but through the efforts of ordinary citizens. Leaders who use "soft" tactics (listening, empowering, and collaborating) rather than "hard" ones (threats and force) are more likely to overcome resistance to change. Flexibility or pliability is an important attribute of water as well. Water seeks new paths when it meets resistance; leaders should do the same.

The fourth image is the valley. To the Taoists, the universe is made up of two forces: the yin (negative, dark, cool, female, shadows) and the yang (positive, bright, warm, male, sun). Creation operates as it should when these forces are in balance. Although both the yin and the yang are important, Taoists highlight the importance of the yin, or feminine side, of leadership, which is represented by the valley metaphor. Leaders should seek to be valleys (which reflect the yin) rather than prominent peaks (which reflect the yang).

The fifth image is the clay pot, which celebrates emptiness by elevating nothing to higher status than something. The most useful part of a pot is the emptiness within. Similarly, the most useful part of a room is the empty space between the walls. Leaders ought to empty themselves, putting aside meaningless words, superficial thinking, technology, and selfishness. By being empty, leaders can use silence, contemplation, and observation to better understand the workings of the Tao and its ethical principles.

Applications and Cautions

Applications

- Use “soft” tactics.
- Focus on being, not doing.
- Temper your use of power and privilege.
- Follow nature’s example.

Taoist thinkers encourage you to be flexible; use “soft” tactics that facilitate teamwork, such as listening and negotiation. Collaboration is becoming increasingly important in today’s workplace as organizations become leaner and flatter. Taoists also emphasize being rather than doing. Act blocklike and childlike to develop your character. Embrace silence and contemplation, cultivate the inner self, reject ambition, and seek to serve rather than to be served.

Taoism cautions against the abuse of power and privilege. The authors of the *Tao Te Ching* reject the use of force except as a last resort. They criticize the feudal lords of their day for living in splendor while their people sank into poverty and starvation. It is difficult to imagine that Taoist sages would approve of the vast difference in pay between American executives and employees, for example, or give their blessing to politicians who enjoy extravagant lifestyles at taxpayer expense. In addition, Taoists encourage you to look to nature for insights about leadership. Contemporary authors have begun to follow their lead, identifying leadership lessons that can be drawn from the natural world.⁵⁷

Cautions

- Taoism denies reason.
- Taoists reject codes and laws.
- The approach is ambiguous about many moral issues.
- Taoism does not adequately explain evil.

There are some serious disadvantages to Taoist ethics. In their attempt to follow nature, Taoists encourage leaders to empty themselves of, among other things, reason. Intuition has its place, but, as we saw in Chapter 6, we need to draw upon logic as well. Taoists are rightly skeptical about the effectiveness of moral codes and laws. Nevertheless, laws can change society for the better. For example, civil rights legislation played a significant role in reducing racial discrimination and changing cultural norms. In organizations, reasonable rules, professional guidelines, and codes of conduct can and do play a role in improving ethical climate (see Chapter 9).

Although Taoism has much to say about the shadow of power and our relationship to the world around us, you'll find it is silent on many common ethical dilemmas, such as the case of the manager asked to keep information about an upcoming merger to herself (see Chapter 1). What does it mean to follow nature's example when faced with this decision? Perhaps the manager should keep quiet to keep from intruding into the lives of followers. Nonetheless, withholding information would put her in the position of a mountain instead of a valley, giving her an advantage.

Basing moral decision making on conformity to principles manifested in the natural world promotes ethical relativism. The Taoists believe that the ethical action is the one that blends with natural rhythms to produce the desired outcome. In other words, what works is what is right. This approach seems to ignore the fact that what may "work" (generate profits, create pleasure, ensure job security, earn a raise) may be unethical (result in an unsafe product, destroy public trust, exploit workers). Like pragmatism, an ethical perspective introduced Chapter 5, Taoism seems to lack a moral center. Natural conditions are always changing: Seasons shift; plants and animals grow and die. The flexible leader adapts to shifting circumstances. However, this makes it impossible for the leader to come to any definite conclusion about right or wrong. What you determine to be the right moral choice in one context may be wrong in another.

One final concern should be noted: Taoism's firm conviction that humans, in their natural state, will act morally seems to deny the power of evil. My thesis has been that leaders and followers can and do act destructively, driven by their shadow sides.



IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- Seek to be a transforming leader who raises the level of morality in a group or an organization. Transformational leaders speak to higher-level needs and bring about profound changes. They are motivated by duty and altruism and marked by personal integrity. Dimensions of transformational leadership include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.
- Putting the needs of followers first reduces the likelihood that you will cast ethical shadows. Servant leaders are stewards who have significant obligations to both their followers and their institutions, practice partnership, promote healing, and serve worthy purposes.
- Be careful who and what you serve. Make sure your efforts support worthy people and goals and are carefully thought out.
- Authentic leaders have an in-depth knowledge of themselves and act in ways that reflect their core values and beliefs. Authenticity multiplies the effectiveness of leaders and promotes ethical behavior in followers. To function as an authentic leader, you will have to demonstrate self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency.
- Aesthetic leadership emphasizes the sensory and emotional dimensions of organizational life. View leadership as an art and put on beautiful/ethical leadership performances that demonstrate mastery, coherence, and moral purpose.
- Responsible leaders build ethical relationships with stakeholders both inside and outside the organization in order to address global problems. In order to act as a responsible leader, you will need to act as a steward, a servant, a coach, an architect, a storyteller, a change agent, and a citizen.
- Taoists argue that nature and elements of everyday life serve as sources of ethical leadership lessons. You can learn from uncarved blocks, children, water, valleys, and clay pots.

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION, CHALLENGE, AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. What additional applications and cautions can you add for each approach described in this chapter? Which perspective do you find most useful? Why?
2. Brainstorm a list of pseudo-transformational and transformational leaders. What factors distinguish between the two types of leaders? How do your characteristics compare with the ones presented in the chapter?
3. Discuss the following propositions in a group:

- Business leaders have an ethical duty to address global problems like poverty and hunger.
 - Ethical leadership is beautiful leadership.
4. Make a diligent effort to serve your followers for a week. At the end of this period, reflect on your experience. Did focusing on the needs of followers change your behavior? What did you do differently? What would happen if you made this your leadership philosophy? Record your thoughts.
 5. Write a case study. Option 1 is to base your case on someone you consider to be an authentic leader. How does this person demonstrate authenticity? What impact has this person had on followers and her or his organization? What can we learn from this leader's example? Option 2 is to base your case on someone you consider to be a responsible leader. How does this individual play the roles of responsible leadership? How has his or her business been an agent of global good? What can we learn from this leader's example?
 6. Identify the trigger events in your life. How have they contributed to your moral development as a leader?
 7. Analyze an instance in which you believe that a leader put on a beautiful performance. How did that individual demonstrate mastery, coherence, and purpose?
 8. Which image from nature or daily life from Taoism do you find most interesting and helpful? Why? Can you think of additional natural metaphors that would be useful to leaders?
 9. Read a popular book on transformational leadership or on a transformational leader. Write a review. Summarize the contents for those who have not read it. Next, evaluate the book. What are its strengths and weaknesses from an ethical point of view? Would you recommend it to others? Why or why not?

STUDENT STUDY SITE

Visit the student study site at www.sagepub.com/johnsonmecl5e to access full SAGE journal articles for further research and information on key chapter topics.

CASE STUDY 7.1

Transforming Clear Lake College

Clear Lake College was in serious trouble in 2000.¹ Enrollment at the midwestern school had dropped from 650 to 600 undergraduates. Because it had no emergency endowment fund, Clear Lake counted on tuition

revenue to pay its bills. The loss of so many students threatened to close the 90-year-old institution. The college's president, who seemed unable to respond to the crisis, resigned.

The school's board of directors appointed Samuel (Sam) Thomas as the next president. Thomas had a PhD in higher education but came to Clear Lake directly out of a marketing position in business. Unlike his predecessor, Thomas didn't hesitate to make bold, sometimes risky decisions. He hired a new admissions staff, convinced faculty to agree to a salary and benefits freeze, and spent several hundred thousand dollars to launch the college's first graduate degree program.

The 2001 school year saw a surge in new students. The graduate program was a big success, and Sam used his marketing background to improve the college's visibility. An entrepreneur at heart, he encouraged faculty and staff to develop additional programs for new markets. In the next 10 years, enrollment grew to nearly 2,000 students. The college added more graduate degrees and several new undergraduate majors. Clear Lake College earned a national listing as "one of America's hidden educational gems."

Thomas had many admirable leadership qualities. To begin, he was a "people person" who enjoyed mixing with donors, students, faculty, and administrators at other schools. No one would think of calling him "Dr. Thomas." He was "Sam" to everyone. Second, he was more than willing to tackle tough problems and fire those who weren't performing up to standards. Third, he kept his word to faculty and staff. When the financial picture of the school improved, he raised faculty salaries dramatically. Fourth, he had an uncanny ability to sense new educational markets. He never made a major miscalculation when it came to proposing additional programs.

Yet all was not well under Sam's leadership. His friendly exterior masked an explosive temper. He dressed down faculty and other employees in public meetings and made personnel decisions on his own, based on his instincts rather than on hard data. A number of employees were let go without warning, and many of his hires lasted less than a year. In several instances, the college had to offer generous severance packages to dismissed employees in order to avoid costly lawsuits. Sam's autocratic style wasn't limited strictly to personnel decisions. He would change the school's governance structure without consulting faculty, who expected to participate in these choices. In addition, he engaged in micromanagement. He read minutes from every department meeting held on campus, for example, and didn't hesitate to send scathing memos if he disagreed with a group's conclusions.

Sam received many accolades for his success at Clear Lake College. He was credited with the school's turnaround and was named as the area's outstanding citizen one year. He was popular with other university presidents, serving on national collegiate boards and commissions. Clear Lake's board was eager to renew his contract despite the concerns of the faculty. Unfortunately, Sam's successes made him less, not more, flexible. Frustrated by faculty criticism, he made even fewer efforts to consult them when making decisions. He began to call students who had offended him into his office to berate them.

By the end of the first decade of the new century, it looked as if the college had "out-grown" Sam's leadership style. After all, the school was much bigger and more complex than it had been when he took over. Thomas

had no intention of stepping down, however. He referred to Clear Lake as “my college” and continued to be involved in every detail of college life. In fact, he had to be forced to resign when he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 2010. The college has continued to grow under the leadership of a new president who, while maintaining a good deal of decision-making power, relies heavily on his vice presidents and has very little input in the day-to-day operations of most departments.

Discussion Probes

1. What elements of transactional and transforming leadership did Thomas exhibit?

2. Was Sam a transformational or a pseudo-transformational leader?
3. How would you evaluate the actions of the college’s board of directors?
4. Have you ever had to confront a leader about her or his behavior? If so, what did you say or do? What was the outcome of the encounter? Would you do anything differently next time?
5. How do you determine when to remove a leader, particularly one who has a proven track record of success?

Note

1. This is a fictional case inspired by actual events.

CASE STUDY 7.2

From the Secret Service to the Secret Circus

The life of a Secret Service agent is a life of sacrifice. Agents assigned to protect the president and other dignitaries must put their jobs first. They set aside vacations and family obligations in order to travel with the president. Unlike other law enforcement employees, they do not always get to go home at the end of the day. At any moment they may be called upon to risk their lives to save their charges. When President John F. Kennedy was shot, agent Rufus Youngblood pushed Vice President Lyndon Johnson, who had been riding two cars behind Kennedy in the same motorcade, to the floor of the vehicle and threw himself over the seat

to cover his body, shouting, “Get down! Get down!” Agents also stepped between President Ronald Reagan and shooter John Hinckley. No wonder, then, that the Secret Service has been the most revered agency in the federal government.

Recent scandals have threatened the sterling image of the Secret Service, however. The most serious took place in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2012. An advance team of Secret Service agents and military personnel assigned to make arrangements for a presidential visit invited 20 prostitutes to their hotel. A dispute then broke out when an agent refused to pay one of the women. Twelve Secret Service employees (including three supervisors) were investigated. Eight were fired, three were cleared, and one lost his security clearance. Seven soldiers and two marines were also disciplined. Bringing

any outsiders into a safe zone compromises the agency's mission. As Senator Susan Collins of Maine, ranking Republican on the Senate Homeland Security Committee, pointed out (tongue in cheek): "Thank goodness it was just prostitutes. They could have been spies planting equipment. They could have blackmailed or drugged agents. This is Colombia, for heaven's sake."¹

The Cartagena scandal wasn't the first involving agents traveling while on duty. In 2002, agents were sent home from the Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah, for abusing alcohol and having underage girls in their hotel rooms. In 2011, Secret Service employees may have hired prostitutes and strippers before President Obama's visit to El Salvador. The behavior of some employees while traveling prompted others in the agency to nickname road trips the "Secret Circus." There have also been a number of incidents involving off-duty agents, including cases of domestic violence, solicitation of prostitution, burglary, and driving under the influence of alcohol.

The culture of the Secret Service is part of the problem. Women are significantly underrepresented in protection teams, making up only 10% of agents and uniformed officers. In this macho climate, heavy drinking and sexual activities are tolerated, making the women who do serve uncomfortable. Male agents put loyalty to other men first, which may account for the results of a survey of Secret Service personnel that found that only 58% would report ethical problems.

The Secret Service has taken steps to improve personnel behavior both on and off the road, including assigning chaperones, banning foreign nationals from hotel rooms,

limiting the consumption of alcohol while off duty, and prohibiting drinking within 10 hours of going on duty. These measures, and the appointment of the agency's first female director, Julia Person, may not be enough to curb misbehavior, however, if agents once again lose sight of their mission, which requires sacrifice in order to serve and protect the nation's leaders.

Discussion Probes

1. Should Secret Service agents be held to a higher ethical standard than other government employees both on and off the job?
2. Will the new rules and the appointment of a female director prevent future scandals in the Secret Service?
3. What additional steps can the agency take to change its culture?
4. How can the Secret Service encourage more women to join its protection teams?
5. How can the agency reinforce the importance of its mission?

Note

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CASE STUDY 7.3

Yvon Chouinard: Putting the Environment First at Patagonia

Few business leaders take their social responsibilities as seriously as Yvon Chouinard. Chouinard started his career in the 1950s as an elite rock climber, scaling walls at Yosemite and elsewhere. Dissatisfied with available climbing gear, Chouinard began manufacturing pitons—metal stakes that climbers hammer into rocks to secure ropes—and selling them out of the trunk of his car. In 1973 he formed the Patagonia Company to sell shirts, climbing shorts, and other outdoor clothing items.

Chouinard's love of climbing and the outdoors is reflected in Patagonia's extraordinarily strong environmental commitment. Early on, Chouinard declared that his company was an "environmental villain" for making pitons that damaged rock. He then discontinued making pitons (his core business) and began offering aluminum chocks instead. In a few months the sales of the chocks were soaring. The company donates 1% of its proceeds from sales (pretax) to environmental causes. Patagonia was the

first major company to sell fleeces made out of recycled plastic bottles. When it realized the environmental harm done by traditional cotton farming methods, the firm switched to making items out of organic fibers.

Recently, Patagonia representatives have taken to telling prospective customers to buy only what they need. According to the company's vice president of global marketing: "We want our customers to do some research and make an educated decision about whether they really need the product, and how to use it. So it's a case of 'Buy less, buy smart.'"¹ Patagonia also offers a free repair service to discourage buyers from tossing their damaged or worn garments and asks customers to sign a pledge to return items they no longer need to company outlets to be recycled. The firm claims that it is able to recycle 100% of its polyester goods, pulling off the buttons and zippers and sending the garments to Asia for remanufacturing. Patagonia's Footprint Chronicles initiative enables consumers to track all the steps of a product's life cycle online, from raw materials through design and manufacture to disposal or remanufacturing.

Chouinard's environmental vision extends well beyond his company. Patagonia cofounded the Sustainable Apparel Coalition with other clothing manufacturers and retailers, including Wal-Mart, Target, and Levi Strauss, with the goal of reducing the environmental impact of their businesses. Patagonia's founder seeks "to create a company others companies want to emulate" and reports that leaders of other businesses have turned to him for advice on how to preserve the environment. Patagonia and other companies are helping to create a national park in Chile, which will be two-thirds the size of Yellowstone.

To ensure that Patagonia's green commitment continues after he is gone, Chouinard was the first company leader to file "benefit corporation" papers in California. The California legislature created this new corporate category for firms that "create material positive impact on society and the environment." This law protects companies that want to donate proceeds to social causes from lawsuits brought by shareholders claiming that these policies dilute their stock value. (Similar programs can be found in other states.) Businesses registered as benefit corporations have to file annual reports outlining the public benefits they provide and have to be evaluated by third parties that determine if they have met the required standards. Patagonia can now continue to contribute to environmental causes even if the company goes public following the death of Chouinard and his wife. After registering his company as a benefit corporation, the 72-year-old Chouinard said: "My work is over. I feel that we've done what we set out to do. This benefit corporation allows us a way to ensure the values of my company continue."²

Patagonia's environmental focus has not hurt its bottom line. The company had to lay off employees only once in its history (a moment Chouinard recalls as extremely painful). During the recent sluggish economy, sales rose more than 30% in a 12-month period, to \$540 million. Financial analysts suggest that the increase may be due in part to the fact that many Americans, instead of traveling abroad, elected to stay home and participate in outdoor activities. But there can be no doubt that Chouinard and Patagonia have created relationships with stakeholders who share their commitment to a greener world.

Discussion Probes

1. How does Yvon Chouinard function as a responsible leader?
2. Can you think of other business executives who also meet the criteria for responsible leadership?
3. Could leaders of publicly held corporations follow Chouinard's example? Should they try to do so?
4. Does Patagonia put too much emphasis on the environment? Who might be hurt by this commitment?
5. Should all U.S. states adopt benefit corporation laws? What are the potential benefits and costs of doing so?

Notes

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SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.1

Transformational Leadership scale

Instructions: Think about a situation in which you either assumed or were given a leadership role. Think about your own behaviors within this context. To what extent does each of the following statements characterize your leadership orientation?

Very Little	A Moderate Amount					Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Have a clear understanding of where we are going.						
2. Paint an interesting picture of the future for my group.						
3. Am always seeking new opportunities for the organization/group.						
4. Inspire others with my plans for the future.						
5. Am able to get others to be committed to my dreams.						
6. Lead by "doing," rather than simply by "telling."						
7. Provide a good model for others to follow.						
8. Lead by example.						
9. Foster collaboration among group members.						
10. Encourage employees to be "team players."						
11. Get the group to work together for the same goal.						
12. Develop a team attitude and spirit among employees.						
13. Show that I expect a lot from others						
14. Insist on only the best performance.						

15. Will not settle for second best.
16. Act without considering the feelings of others.
17. Show respect for the personal feelings of others.
18. Behave in a manner thoughtful of the personal needs of others.
19. Treat others without considering their personal feelings.
20. Challenge others to think about old problems in new ways.
21. Ask questions that prompt others to think.
22. Stimulate others to rethink the way they do things.
23. Have ideas that challenge others to reexamine some of their basic assumptions about work.
24. Always give positive feedback when others perform well.
25. Give special recognition when others' work is very good.
26. Commend others when they do a better-than-average job.
27. Personally compliment others when they do outstanding work.
28. Frequently do not acknowledge the good performance of others.

Scoring

Reverse your scores on questions 16, 19, and 28. There are seven dimension scores to be computed. *Articulate vision*: Sum your responses to questions 1–5 and divide by 5. *Provide appropriate model*: Sum your responses to questions 6–8 and divide by 3. *Foster acceptance of goals*: Sum your responses to questions 9–12 and divide by 4. *High performance expectations*: Sum your responses to questions 13–15 and divide by 3. *Individual support*: Sum your responses to questions 16–19 and divide by 4. *Intellectual stimulation*: Sum your responses to questions 20–23 and divide by 4. *Transactional leader behaviors*: Sum your responses to questions 24–28 and divide by 5.

My scores are

Articulate vision _____
 Role model _____
 Foster goal acceptance _____
 Performance expectations _____
 Individual support _____
 Intellectual stimulation _____
 Transactional leader behavior _____

A high score of 6 and greater reflects a strong orientation to engage in each of these behaviors. A low score of 2 or less reflects that you are unlikely to engage in each of these behaviors.

SOURCES: Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Moorman, R. H., & Fetter, R. (1990). Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. *Leadership Quarterly*, 1, 107–142. Scale reprinted from Pierce, J. L., & Newstrom, J. W. (2011). *Leaders and the leadership process: Readings, self-assessments and applications* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 369–370. Used by permission.

SELF-ASSESSMENT 7.2

Servant Leadership Questionnaire

Instructions: You can use this questionnaire to rate the servant leadership behaviors of one of your leaders or ask someone else to rate you. Respond to each question on the following scale: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *somewhat disagree*, 3 = *somewhat agree*, 4 = *strongly agree*. The scale rates five dimensions of servant leadership, which are described below. Add up the item ratings to come up with the total score for each component. Add the component scores to come up with a total servant leadership rating (range 24–96).

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. This person puts my best interests ahead of his/her own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. This person does everything he/she can do to serve me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. This person is one I would turn to if I had a personal trauma. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. This person seems alert to what's happening. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. This person offers compelling reasons to get me to do things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. This person encourages me to dream "big dreams" about the organization. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. This person is good at anticipating the consequences of decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. This person is good at helping me with my emotional issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. This person has great awareness of what is going on. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. This person is very persuasive. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. This person believes that the organization needs to play a moral role in society. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 12. This person is talented at helping me to heal emotionally. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. This person seems in touch with what's happening. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. This person is good at convincing me to do things. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. This person believes that our organization needs to function as a community. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. This person sacrifices his/her own interests to meet my needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. This person is one who could help me mend my hard feelings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. This person is gifted when it comes to persuading me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. This person is talented at helping me to heal emotionally. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. This person sees the organization for its potential to contribute to society. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. This person encourages me to have a community spirit in the workplace. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. This person goes above and beyond the call of duty to meet my needs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. This person seems to know what is going to happen. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. This person is preparing the organization to make a positive difference in the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Scoring

Altruistic Calling (deep-rooted desire to make a positive difference)

Item 1 _____

Item 2 _____

Item 21 _____

Item 22 _____

Total _____ out of 16

Emotional Healing (fostering spiritual recovery from hardship or trauma)

Item 3 _____

Item 8 _____

Item 12 _____

Item 17 _____

Item 19 _____

Total _____ out of 20

Wisdom (awareness of surroundings and anticipation of consequences)

Item 4 _____

Item 7 _____

Item 9 _____

Item 13 _____

Item 23 _____

Total _____ out of 20

Persuasive Mapping (use of sound reasoning and mental frameworks)

Item 5 _____

Item 6 _____

Item 10 _____

Item 14 _____

Item 18 _____

Total _____ out of 20

Organizational Development (making a collective positive contribution to society)

Item 11 _____

Item 15 _____

Item 20 _____

Item 21 _____

Item 24 _____

Total _____ out of 20

Overall score _____ out of 96

SOURCE: Adapted from Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management, 31*, 300–326. Used by permission. Published by SAGE Publications.

NOTES

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