Effective Leadership: Vision, Values and a Spiritual Perspective

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I propose that the creation and maintenance of personal and collective spirituality requires a setting of Heart--in which Grace and Coherence abound. This setting, in turn, requires spiritual leadership. The five Best Practices of Legacy Leadership that are offered by Jeannine Sandstrom and Lee Smith (2017) offer a wonderful foundation for constructing a concept of effective spiritual leadership. However, there are additional challenges and opportunities to be found when a spiritual perspective is taken regarding each of these five Best Practices—as Sandstrom and Smith (2005) have done.

It is in this expanded version of Legacy Leadership regarding spiritual leadership that we find Robert Bellah's coherence and Paul Tillich's grace. Ultimately, as Tillich reminds us, grace is found in the formation and ongoing improvement of community. Habits of the Heart are thriving when a Legacy Leadership model of Vision and Values is introduced. We borrow from Sandstrom and Smith's presentation of this sixth Best Practice and focus specifically on ways in which this sixth practice of leadership is represented in an expanded version of the five other Best Practices. We begin with Best Practice One.

Leadership Practice One: Vision and Values

At its best, Sandstrom and Smith's first Best Practice requires the holding of a vision that resides above and beyond immediate, secular concerns. It is about the identification of intentions that are truly of importance (with regard to sustainability and achieving the greater good). It is about discernment— what is the source of our vision and values and are we embracing this vision and these values on behalf of that which is best and most authentic within our self.

From a spiritual perspective, Best Practice One is about the establishment and enactment of a plan by all individuals and all humankind. This best practice is about embracing and encouraging remembrance of these sacred intentions and plans. This overarching, "grander" vision and attendant values take priority over secular vision and values, and those holding this vision and these values never waver regarding their priority. Personal values are in alignment with collective values. Members of the community will "walk the talk" at all times, and intentionally model the established values. These values are integrated into everything that a leader does.

Identifying Values and sharing commitment to a Code of Conduct

In the world we live in today, values are vague and ambiguous, up for grabs, so to speak. Each person defines values as it suits him or her. There are no more absolute truths. However, we need not abandon values or absolute truth. We can live righteously - rightly, according to a set of shared values. What is truth? What is good? The world, perhaps unknowingly, has, throughout its history, engaged spiritual texts to shape its laws, institutions, and systems as well as moral and value standards. While these texts

have often been ignored, it does not mean that mankind doesn't know in its collective heart what is right, what is true, what is good.

When we look into the Hebrew bible, we find a specific set of values that were clear for this specific Israeli community--from the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai to the proverbs, the bold teachings of the prophets and Jesus' words of right living at his "Sermon on the Mount," and everything in between. Yahweh's disdain for compromise was very evident. He knew and – in the Jewish and Christian traditions – still knows we are all too human. Given this knowledge, Yahweh and the divine sources of guidance in many other spiritual traditions have provided clear guidance--and boundless grace and forgiveness for those times of failure.

However, that gift does not mean we ignore the fundamental values to which we have made a community. Scriptures in many spiritual traditions tell us that we are known by our fruit. That means the world sees something different in us. It does not (should not!) see the same abandonment of values for personal satisfaction. As Sandstrom and Smith (2005) note: our fruit is the visible evidence of a life based on a set of shared values. It defines everything we are, and all that we do. We are known and honored by what we do, not just what we say, proclaim or expect of other people. It is about "walking the talk." It is about finding "fierce resolve" in meeting our moral obligations as spiritually oriented leaders.

Covenant marriages exemplify this fierce resolve. When two people decide to make a covenant commitment to one another, they are pledging faithful loyalty to one another on behalf of a greater good—often the prospect of having children and raising a family. The covenant marriage also comes with substantial support. Not only do the two members of the couple make a commitment to one another, their two families or origin also commitment to supporting the couple throughout their life together. It would seem that it takes a community (or at least two families) to "raise" a couple and a new family.

Establishing a Vision of the Future

An appreciative perspective (Bergquist and Mura, 2011) focuses on the way in which to "catch people doing it right." This is an important, secular approach to appreciation. However, something more is added when we embrace a spiritual perspective. Appreciation can refer to the establishment of a positive image of the future within an organization or community. We grow to appreciate this social system by investing it with optimism. We imbue the organization or community with a sense of hope about its own future and the valuable role potentially it plays in our society. "Organization-wide affirmation of the positive future is the single most important act that a system can engage in if its real aim is to bring to fruition a new and better future." (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 119) Effective leaders, therefore, must be "not only concerned with what is but also with what might be." (Frost and Egri, 1990, p. 305)

We come to appreciate our own role and that of other people in the organization or community with regard to the contributions we make jointly in helping the organization or community realize these images, purposes and values. An appreciative perspective is always *leaning into the future*. While we appreciate that which has been successful in the past, we don't dwell with nostalgia on the past, but instead continually trace out the implications of acquired wisdom and past successes regarding our vision of the future.

Transcendent Vision: As we lean into the future it is important to acknowledge that this future can be saturated with secular values and goals. This future can also be saturated with values and goals that are in some sense transcendent. This means that they rise above our daily life and concerns. They are based on values founded on principles that have no "due date." Transcendent visions can be found at all levels—the family, the organization, the society and even the nation.

For example, we can point to a patriotic song composed during the American Revolutionary War. Called "Independence," this widely heard composition by William Billings begins with the traditional praise ("hallelujah") of the "king." However, as the song progresses, it becomes clear that this king is not the monarch of England but is instead "God." The proclamation of independence establishing that a secular vision (earthly rule) is now being replaced by a spiritual, transcendent vision (heavenly rule). Given that many of the founders of the American government were not religious in a traditional sense, we can conceive of "God" for these patriots as a transcendent principle of freedom and rule based on law rather than royal lineage.

Today, more than 200 years later, we find an American president declaring that the power and influence of America come not from its economic or military power (which are based in secular values), but in the sustained American commitment to the institutions of democracy (Richardson, 2023). This transcendent vision of American purpose and values must be protected and repeatedly reconfirmed. Spiritual leadership focuses on this identification and nurturing of a transcendent vision. It also focuses on ensuring that this vision is compelling. This vision is compelling when it serves as an "attractor" for the energy and talent of those living with and leaning toward this envisioned future. It should provide tangible guidance regarding the pathway to an attainable future and offer values-based "guard rails" to ensure that the pathway is being followed. A noted European social historian, Fred Polak has provided some sound advice about these matters.

Images of the Future: Many years ago, Polak (1972) wrote about the decline of social systems that have lost their image of the future. Polak points to a critical factor in the ongoing existence of any social system (or any living system for that matter). It must have something toward which it is moving or toward which it is growing. Without a sense of direction and future possibilities, we dry up and find no reason to face the continuing challenge of survival. Narratives in the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew bible) tells us that without a vision the people perish. There is no hope, there is no meaning. Sandstrom and Smith (2005) bring in Solomon at this point. In his old age and after a life spent away from the religious traditions of his youth, Solomon proclaimed in the opening lines of his treatise in Ecclesiastes that life is "Meaningless, meaningless, it's all meaningless!"

Solomon had everything anyone could ever want, but he was miserable because his vision was not aligned with a transcendent purpose and set of values. Without a foundation of shared and sustained values and purposes—directed toward a compelling future--we are wandering aimlessly on an alien landscape. We find little reason for producing and preparing a new generation. In the series of Australian movies called *Mad Max,* a post-nuclear holocaust world is portrayed that is coming to an end. When no viable future is in sight, then (as we see in these movies) there is no attending to children. They must fend for themselves, for we know they have no personal futures.

There is a powerful story about a post-nuclear holocaust in a novel written by Cormac McCarthy (2006), called *The Road*, in which the father continues to protect and sacrifice for his son, even though the world is coming to an end. This extraordinary protagonist somehow finds meaning and purpose – and vision—regarding his son in the midst of despair and death. Perhaps this is the type of spiritual leadership that we need in the challenging VUCA-Plus world of the mid-21st Century. This is the world ~~like that~~ portrayed in Mad Max and by McCarthy in which terrorism, nihilism and despair prevails. McCarthy offers us a portrait of spiritual leadership that blends courage (Ruby Red) with vision (Azure Blue)—and perhaps in some very deep manner even the qualities of community and caring (Rainbow)

The leader who is honored and respected for his or her capacity to convey a compelling vision of the future needs a viable vision. One of the great ironies to be faced by leaders throughout history emerges when the vision has been realized, abandoned or ignored. If there is no longer the need for a vision, then we certainly don't need a visionary leader. The visionary leader confronts irony: don't be too successful. Without an unfulfilled vision, there is no need for hope or commitment to the cause. We confiscate our future and walk away with nothing new about which to dream. The shining city on the hill can never be completely constructed. There must always be new buildings to be envisioned and new services to be provided to both old and new residents of this external city.

What about the role of vision on a smaller plane—in a group or organization? We propose that the same ironic challenge exists. The vision must remain viable. Organizations and communities are often in crisis when they achieve some success and have realized a dream. What do we do now that we have completed this five-year plan? We have obtained this grant and have initiated our new programs, but nothing has really changed. We are still hustling for more funds. It is critical that a new set of goals be established before the old ones are realized; it is equally important, however, that the achievement of the old goals is honored and celebrated.

An organization or community that simply moves from one five-year plan to a second five-year plan is just as vulnerable to exhaustion and disillusionment as an organization or community that never realizes its dreams (because they have been set too high). We must appreciate the achievement of current goals and must linger for a moment to honor the old dream and vision before moving forward to a new sense of the future.

The old visionary leader faces irony at this point—and it is easy at this point to be diverted by personal aspirations. It is tempting to "downsize" the spiritual vision into some secular version of this vision. At times, this visionary leader must embrace the irony and step aside for the new vision—given that he or she has finished the task and awaits a period of rest and reflection back on what has been achieved. At other times, old visionary leaders can move beyond the irony by becoming the new visionary leader. They find renewed energy and commitment while collaborating with others in the formulation of the new vision.

The visionary leader and their followers must decide when "enough-is-enough" and when the mantle of leadership must be passed on to the next generation. Sandstrom and Smith (2005) introduce the story of Moses during his final years of leadership. In the forty years of leading Yahweh's people, Moses had

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his good days and bad days, like any leader. He even lost his temper. This is a very natural response when you are leading an entire community of grumbling and rebellious people. It was during one of those days that he did something that kept him from going the whole distance, from entering the Promised Land. He got them to the plains of Moab, but Yahweh would not allow him to enter, to cross the Jordan River because of one moment of disobedience. That must have been heartbreaking for Moses. However, he knew Yahweh was justified, as Yahweh always is, in his guidance of the Israelites.

There is one feature about Moses that makes him the best example for this best practice—about influencing and inspiring other members of one's organization or community to also become great leaders. It is about showing them, by personal example, the path to effective leadership. It is about shaping the future leadership potential of a new generation of leaders. As Sandstrom and Smith (2005) note, Yahweh did not allow Moses to enter the land he had promised his people. Moses delivered his farewell messages to a whole new generation of Israelites born and raised up in the desert during those forty years. Millions of these new generation Jews were camped on the banks of the Jordan facing the huge and foreboding walled city of Jericho. But Moses would soon be dead. Now what? Who would lead them into the land?

The Torah tells us that Yahweh had a plan. He always did, according to both the Hebrew bible and the Christian bible. Someone had been paying close attention to Moses and how he had led his ragtag band of Israelites for the past several years. Someone caught the sacred vision. They were greatly influenced by Moses' obedience and reliance on God for his strength. Someone was mentored and discipled by Moses. Someone was ready to become the new leader of this new nation. Someone else would boldly lead the people across the Jordan River. The leader-designate was Joshua.

Here is what Sandstrom and Smith (2005) have to say about the leadership offered by Joshua:

> Joshua came out of Egypt as a young man. He had witnessed and remembered the leadership of Moses in good times and bad. The leadership model of Moses inspired and influenced Joshua for all those years. He knew of Moses' complete trust in Yahweh, not his own strength. He knew of Moses' obedience, no matter what. He knew of the victories and the defeats. He watched and grew as a leader under Moses' tutelage. And he was ready when the big show began. Moses did not get to witness the incredible entrance into the land of Canaan. But it was because of Moses' leadership, and his trust in the God of Israel first, that shaped and influenced the successful leadership of Joshua - one of Israel's greatest leaders.

This matter of succession constitutes perhaps the most important decision that an organizational leader can make. When do I move on and how do I help the next generation succeed? A little wisdom and guidance will be helpful at this decision point. It is a matter of identifying a vision that speaks to and points to a higher and greater reality. With this transcendent perspective in place, the matter of ownership for a vision or the matter of passing the vision on to the next generation is resolved.

Three Templates of the Future

While a spiritual perspective in formulating a vision of the future provides the guidance needed to formulate and sustain this vision, it also opens the door to a greater appreciation of the distinctive differences to be found in many spiritual traditions regarding the fundamental nature of a future—however it is being conceived. Essentially, there are three templates that can be applied in formulating

this vision of the future. These templates, in turn, are based on three different assumptions regarding the fundamental nature of time itself.

Linear Time: This was the template being used in the narratives of the Torah—as well as in the perspective offered by Fred Polak and most "futurists." This template assumes that time is moving forward. Ideally, societies are moving upward. There is such a thing as progress and the achievement of goals. The shining city on the hill is being built. All lines have a beginning and an end. Communities are created and progress to a more "advanced" and humane level: however, there can't be external progress. We all will eventually die, as will any community or society. A linear template inevitably requires an image of the *Eschaton* (the end of time). We find this image in the final chapter of the Christian New Testament. There, in *the Book of Revelations*, we are confronted with the horrifying narrative of death, destruction and retribution. The "End" is never pretty. As we have already noted, when everything is coming to an end (as in the Mad Max movies) there is little need for the nurturing of a child—unless (as in McCarthy's *The Road*) there is some lingering transcendent concern for human welfare.

*Cyclical Time***:** This second template assumes that time is coming back around on itself. Societies remain the same while they are changing. We might envision traveling on a Möbius strip. After moving on the strip for a short while, we find ourselves on the opposite side of the strip. Change and transformation have taken place. However, as we continue our journey, this change and progress seems to have receded into the background. Eventually, we find ourselves back to where we began on our Möbius journey. We come to realize that "progress" is just an illusion.

The cyclical template is to be found in most natural religions—for they are based on and aligned with the cyclical seasons of nature. There is a Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter that repeatedly appear throughout the life of those creatures dwelling in a European forest or on a Russian steppe. The Baalites of the fertile plain in the Mideast were worshippers of a natural religion. Their sacrifice of animals was part of their ritualized recognition that birth, life, and death are repeated over and over again among all living beings. Moses' clash with the worshippers of Baal represented confrontation between one spiritual tradition that is based on a linear template and another tradition that is based on a cyclical template.

It is fully understandable that those who worshipped Baal would fully absorb a cyclical version of time, for the rivers that they lived near (Tigris and Euphrates) flooded every year. They depended on this flooding to provide the crops and the grains for their own consumption and that of their herds. Mythically, the battle never ends between Marduk and Tiamat—this never-ending battle is represented in the yearly flooding and subsequent receding of these two rivers of the Fertile Crescent. There is an eternal struggle between order (Marduk) and chaos (Tiamat). This is a fundamental dynamic of mythic (and real) life.

Given this recurrent history, it is the responsibility of a spiritual leader to not give up hope or action. All too often, those who absorb a cyclical perspective on time grant control to the natural forces (and societal forces) that are swirling about them. Why seek to remedy the current conditions when ultimately there is no progress and the city on the hill must once again be rebuilt. Why teach when the

lessons will soon be forgotten or ignored? The spiritual answer is: KEEP TRYING. The challenge of spiritual leadership is ultimately greater for those working in a community of cyclical time than in a community of linear time. However, a state of inaction is unacceptable. History must be honored, even if it is often ignored—for as Paul Tillich declares, Grace is to be found in this history. While the solution might only hold for a short while, it does provide relief for the moment from pain and suffering. We must identify a compelling vision of the future, even if this vision will never be fully realized nor persist for a long period of time.

Timelessness: There is a third basic template. It assumes that time doesn't even exist. There is no time because there ultimately is no reality. Societies exist in our individual minds, but not in the one true reality. There is only God or some other transcendent deity or cosmic consciousness. We find this sense of timelessness in many Asian-based religions and philosophical traditions—most notably Buddhism. We also find it in Christian Science—which is a distinctively American religion that was very popular during the late 19th and early 20th century.

In contemporary times, we find that quantum physics and principles of physical uncertainty have led some people to embrace a solipsistic perspective, such as "each of us is creating their own reality". An accomplished scientist, Robert Lanza has offered a controversial "bio-centric" version of the world in which he declares that recent scientific breakthroughs (particularly related to quantum theory) propel us to a profound recognition that we are creating the universe through our perceptions and cognitive reconstructions of the world (Lanza and Berman, 2010). From the perspective of biocentrism, consciousness is found to be the creator of reality. Life precedes and supersedes the universe -- not the other way around.

The belief that there is no physical reality eliminates the problem of an omnipotent and all caring god creating a universe in which there is pain, evil and ultimately death. Furthermore, in many of these spiritual traditions, there is an escape from the pain and suffering of physical existence. We are embraced by and fully a part of a benevolent cosmic being or are fully secure in our own self-invented and self-controlled universe.

A timeless template is fully aligned with the declaration that there is no physical reality. A spiritual leader who embraces this perspective recognizes that they are only a representation of the "leadership" to be found in some overarching cosmic entity or it is to be found in one's own consciousness. While what we have to say about the five best practices might be of interest to those embracing the perspective of a cosmic but not physical reality, there is not much to retain from these practices—other than reliance on the wisdom and guidance of an omniscient "God" or cosmic consciousness. On the other hand, for those who believe that there is only our own omniscient consciousness, then what we have written is of great importance—for the world and our relationship with other people is being "constructed" on the basis of how we conceive these relationships and the world in which we live.

Work to be Done

Unless we believe that there is no reality and that we are living in a timeless vacuum, there is the matter of daily life as it relates to our collective vision of the future. Until we are ushered into the mansion

under construction in the heavenly city, we have work to do here. Even if the mansion is being repeatedly constructed (after the floods, wind or revolution has torn it down), there is daily work to be done (including reconstruction of the mansion).

We must discern the nature and demands made by a vision that is held by all members of a community. There is a unique plan for each person. Secular leaders often do not consider the greater vision or plan. However, a spiritually oriented leader cannot afford to take his or her eyes from that vision. Wherever we are placed, whatever work we must do, all of it must align with this higher, collective vision and purpose. From the street sweeper to the corporate CEO, to presidents and kings and prime ministers, the vision is to be found and engaged in establishing the collective direction for our work here on earth.

Leadership Practice Two: Collaboration and Innovation

Innovation best occurs within communities of shared values. Collaboration and innovation are most productively engaged when members of an organization or community are working together for the greater good. This is the central ingredient of de Tocqueville and Bellah's habits of the heart. Innovation is founded on the ability to remain open to thinking in new ways for us, or for our organization or community. It is remembering that while we may be limited in our understanding, or our concepts of how things should or do work, there is great wisdom to be found in collective wisdom and in often surprising wisdom that comes from a higher source--be it divine in nature or the more mundane of magic coming from collaborative dialogue (Gergen and Gergen, 2004).

Furthermore, a spiritual perspective on Best Practice Two suggests that collaboration doesn't just happen. It requires the creation of original and inventive processes by which two or more people can come together to accomplish common goals - inside or outside a family of shared commitments and beliefs. When the spiritually oriented leader has a task to accomplish, his or her first step is to discern what is right and good, based on commitments made to a specific vision of the future and specific set of moral values. This process of discernment is not easy to engage in a swirling world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, turbulence, and contradiction—however it is vitally important.

There is another important factor to keep in mind when fostering collaboration and innovation. This factor is diversity (Miller and Page, 2007). We are often told that all human beings are essentially the same (with remarkably similar genetic compositions). Many people misunderstand this to mean that we "look" like one another. It actually implies that we are made with similar attributes and nature. As Sandstrom and Smith (2005) note, we can trust that we have all been made with creative instincts—it is part of our shared genetic makeup. This does not immediately suggest that we are all artists and talented musicians, or any other "creative type" that we usually link with the use of this word. It means that we are able to use our creativity to problem solve, develop opportunities for potential and productive partnership, and generally think outside the norms, being constructively creative.

At its best, Best Practice Two is all about people being creative. It is also assumed that all people are inclined toward leading a life of care and compassion for other people. As such, all people have the ability to make opportunities for collaboration and Innovation. They create settings in which judgment is suspended, trust encouraged, and disagreement is approached in humility, with a heart to reach others.

Real innovation comes only with this shared commitment to an appreciative perspective regarding the innate talent in all people.

Establishing Respect, Discovering Strengths, Fulfilling Aspirations

We have already identified one of the major components of appreciation: leaning into the future. There are several other components. Appreciation is founded not just on a compelling image of the future but also a sustained willingness to engage with another person from an assumption of mutual respect, in a mutual search for discovery of distinctive competencies and strengths, with a view to helping them fulfill their aspirations and their potential.

Understanding Another Person: The term appreciation itself has several different meanings that tend to build on one another; however, as a foundation, we can state that appreciation refers first to a clearer understanding of another person's perspective. We come to appreciate the point of view being offered by our colleague or the challenges which the other person faces. This appreciation, in turn, comes not from some detached observation, but rather from direct engagement. One gains knowledge from an appreciative perspective by "identifying with the observed." (Harmon, 1990, p. 43)

Empathy is critical. One cares about the matter being studied and about those people one is assisting. Neutrality is inappropriate in such a setting, though compassion implies neither a loss of discipline nor a loss of boundaries between one's own problems and perspectives and those of the other person. Appreciation, in other words, is about fuller understanding, not merging, with another person's problems or identity.

Valuing Another Person: Appreciation also refers to an increase in worth or value. A painting or stock portfolio appreciates in value. Van Gogh looked at a vase of sunflowers and in appreciating (painting) these flowers, he increased their value for everyone. Van Gogh similarly appreciated and brought new value to his friends through his friendship: "Van Gogh did not merely articulate admiration for his friend: He created new values and new ways of seeing the world through the very act of valuing." (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 123)

Peter Vaill recounts a scene from the movie *Lawrence of Arabia* in which Lawrence tells a British colonel that his job at the Arab camp was to "appreciate the situation." (Vaill, 1990, p. 323) By appreciating the situation, Lawrence assessed and helped add credibility to the Arab cause, much as a knowledgeable jeweler or art appraiser can increase the value of a diamond or painting through nothing more than thoughtful appraisal. Lawrence's appreciation of the Arab situation, in turn, helped to produce a new level of courage and ambition on the part of the Arab communities with which Lawrence was associated. The spiritual leader who fully appreciates those with whom the leader works has raised this person's value by seeing them in ways that neither this person nor their associates in the organization or community might have seen before, thus opening up new vistas for this person's growth.

Recognizing the Contributions of Another Person: From yet another perspective, the process of appreciation concerns our recognition of the contributions that have been made by another person: "I appreciate the efforts you have made in getting this project off the ground." Sometimes this sense of appreciation is reflected in the

special recognition we give people for a particularly successful project or in the bouquet of flowers or thank you note we leave with an assistant. This form of appreciation, however, when it is the only kind provided, typically leads only to praise inflation, praise addiction and the tendency to keep people who report to us permanently in a needy and, therefore (ironically), one-down position (Kanter, 1977).

Appreciation can instead be exhibited in a more constructive manner through the daily interaction between an administrator and her associates. It involves mutual respect and active engagement, accompanied by a natural flow of feedback, and an exchange of ideas. More specifically, appreciation is evident in attitudes regarding the nature and purpose of work. If the leader "sees work as the means whereby a person creates oneself (that is, one's identity and personality) and creates community (that is, social relations), then the accountability structure becomes one of nurturing and mentoring." (Cummings and Anton, 1990, p. 259)

Leadership Practice Three: Inspiration and Leadership

Sandstrom and Smith (2005) observe that there doesn't seem to be much truly "inspiring" about the world we live in today. The daily newspaper and the evening news most often serve to send us into a state of depression, or at the very least, apathy. While that is the case for most of the world, it is certainly not, and should not, be the case for those holding a spiritual perspective. Inspiration can be defined as the process of instilling hope and reason for being and doing. We've already seen that without a vision, people perish. The same is true for hope. Without hope, people die inside. They no longer have reason to perform, to achieve, to succeed, or even to live sometimes. The challenge for each of us is to find and nurture a hope that sustains and keeps us alive. We know there is more than what this world offers.

Best Practice Three concerns this matter of hope. Hope, in turn, is based on the way in which relationships are formed and the way in which we influence others. Appropriate risk taking, the making of tough decisions, and the sustained accomplishment of goals occurs in sacred space – not in a secular space of self-reliance. Leaders who are engaged in this best practice understand that true Inspiration comes from and is engaged on behalf of higher purposes and transcendent goals (that are sustaining and directed toward the greater good) goals. Support for the ongoing development of others is a primary concern, and the real work of a leader who embraces a spiritual perspective.

Interpersonal Influence and Inspiration

As we consider ways in which to embrace a spiritual perspective on behalf of Best Practice Three, it is important to differentiate between the ways in which to influence that are intended for the greater good and those that are intended for personal gratification and control. There are essentially three ways in which we influence and are influenced by other people. These are coercion, identification, and internalization. (Aronson, 2018) Spiritual discernment requires that we distinguish between these three strategies as we journey toward Hope.

Coercion: One way we direct other people toward a specific spiritual pathway is with coercion. There is a long and often tragic history of many religious institutions making use of this strategy. We force the

other person to do what we want them to do. Alternatively, we provide compelling rewards (or punishments) which help to determine their course of action. In other words, we are providing the cheese at the end of the maze or are providing the shock that encourages our colleague to leap to the other side of their cage.

This first form of influence is closely aligned with traditional models of behavioral psychology—and is fully secular in nature and perspective. It is also purely an "outside job." The person we are trying to influence acts solely on the basis of forces from the external environment. Many neuroscientists would suggest that the person being influenced is steered internally from their limbic system (and even more specifically their amygdala) which operates on a very primitive, emotional level with regard to the external environment. As biological actors we ask: am I being exposed to something in the environment that is good or bad (about my personal welfare)? Is it something that is active or is it passive? Is it strong or weak? These are the questions we have all had to ask whether trying to survive on the African savanna or on the streets of New York.

Identification: The second way in which we are influenced also involves the external environment. Like coercion, it is secular—and psychological—in nature and perspective. This mode of influence involves much subtler dynamics and is often associated with imitation and behavioral modeling—derived from the later behavioral theory and research of Albert Bandura and his "social learning" colleagues (Bandura, 1976). In essence, we *observe* someone else engaging in some behavior and watch what happens to them. Is their behavior effective in getting results? Are they rewarded or punished for their behavior? What makes their behavior appropriate or inappropriate given the environment in which this observed person is being observed?

If the person or cluster of people being observed is in some manner admired (as leaders, celebrities, sports heroes…) or if we somehow can relate to them because they resemble us in some more or less important ways, then we are more likely to emulate their behavior. We are likely to do, or at least try to do, what the person or group being observed has been doing. The classic example of this identification process is the very controversial argument that children watching violence on TV are likely to act in a more violent manner themselves.

The process of identification can also influence decision-making processes –especially regarding the purchase of items that are endorsed or used by the admired person. At a spiritual level, we find likewise that the actions we take that are aligned with our vision and values will be observed by other people. These observers will often try to emulate our actions. While they might not be acting out of their own spiritually based vision and values, they are following our direction. Eventually, the actions might become spiritually internalized—the third source of influence to which we now turn.

Internalization: The third type of influence is even more complex than identification. We internalize a specific set of behaviors or set of decisions being made by another person or cluster of people (group). While internalization relates to Bandura's (1997) description of self-efficacy, this process is most closely identified with psychoanalytic theory and specifically with the object relations branch of psychoanalysis, internalization concerns the introjection of objects (people, groups, cultures) that are prized (and

perhaps also feared) in our world. While most of the internalization occurs in early life (the child introjecting many aspects of the strong parenting figures in the child's world), this internalization process can take place at any point in our life. There can be spiritual alignment (even conversion) at any point in our life, especially if we have lived what William James (1982/1900) has described as a "twice-born" life in which we are open to significant transformations in our way of seeing and being in the world.

The important point to make is that this process of internalization (as the name implies) involves an internal locus of control. The source of true, sustaining hope resides in this internal locus. When we have internalized a set of behaviors or decisions, then this set becomes our own and we operate with apparent autonomy in engaging these behaviors and decisions. The world outside may change, but we remain true to our internalizations. Our commitments become steadfast, and our vision of the future is sustained despite failings in our own life or the life of the community in which we live and work.

Examples of secular internalization abound. Most of us as adults are aligned with a particular political party or at least a specific political or socio-economic ideology. Typically, this alignment can be attributed to the alignment of our own parents or at least the social system in which we grew up. Even if we shift our alignment, the realignment is usually associated with the perspectives of one or more mentors or our immersion in a particular culture. We are attracted to a particular person or group and this attraction turns into the internalization of their values, perspectives, and behavior patterns.

According to Erik Erikson (1980) and other developmental theories, our identity is forged during our late adolescence and early adulthood and this identity formation is closely associated with the internalization of various behaviors and decisions. We strive to be independent as a young adult and to "individuate" (from our parents, community norms, etc.) – and we do so by internalizing external norms and making them our own. We live with the partial fiction that we are "our own man/woman" but can usually account for the forging of our personal identity by borrowing from and internalizing objects (people, groups) from the outside.

The Influence Sequence: A key question concerns how internalization takes place at a spiritual level and how this internalization sustains Hope. We propose that internalization often builds on the processes of coercion and identification. It is critical that we first discern the ways in which we are being influenced. We must confront the ways in which these influences can create conflict, dissonance, and inconsistencies inside ourselves—much as Saul did on his New Testament journey to Jerusalem. We must then select ways in which to move external influences toward internal guiding principles that are transcendent and spiritual in nature. We will turn briefly to a description of the influence sequence and the ways in which we can address the challenges inherent in this sequence.

There are several keys that operate this sequence of moves from coercion to identification and imitation, and then on to internalization. These keys first relate to the amount of observation and the amount of coercion. If the person being influenced observes other people acting in the desired manner and being rewarded (or at least not punished) for this action, then the influence has taken place--via identification. If the person or group of people being observed is admired, is powerful, or in some other

way is compelling, then the observed behavior (or endorsement) is even more likely to be embraced by the person whom we wish to influence. This is a secular mode of influence.

The second key is even more important if we want the desired behavior to be embedded in the person we are trying to influence--in other words, if we want the behavior, and underlying perceptions and decisions, to be internalized. We offer only a minimal about of reward or threaten only a minimal amount of punishment. When there is a minimal amount of coercion then the person being influenced must adjust their own mindset, given that there isn't a sufficient amount of external reward or punishment to justify their action. They must find or manufacture an internal source of reward or punishment. Most importantly, they must reduce the cognitive dissonance—for neuro-physiologically this dissonance operates like a physical wound to the body). Thus, the motivation to perceive, decide and act in a new way is based in the internal processes of the "heart and mind" (or more precisely the interaction between the limbic system and prefrontal lobes of the brain). This is still a secular (and physiological) source of influence.

There is another way in which to conceive of this sequence of influence --we are engaging in an important shift in the locus of control within the person we wish to influence. Coercion requires an external locus of control. The receipt of our influence is looking outside themselves for direction and their motivation to do something resides in the external world. This is the world inhabited by the secular behaviorists who contend that we as human beings are driven primarily by the pattern of rewards and punishments in our environment. It has only a nodding acquaintance with spiritual influence.

As we move to identification and imitation, then the locus of control becomes mixed. There are still the external role models that we seek to emulate (or seek to not emulate in the case of negative role models and people who have been punished or ostracized for their behavior). However, there is also an internal locus of control. The person being influenced has now decided to engage in the desired behavior despite any immediate external reward or punishment. The soldier bravely charges out of his foxhole knowing that he might be killed, having seen the courageous act of his best buddy. The child insists upon playing with a new toy because his favorite character on a Saturday morning kids' show endorses this toy. The churchgoer is inspired by a sermon delivered by someone who is admired. They make a commitment that is sustained past Sunday evening.

The internalization of the influence through not just observation but also minimal incentivization leads one to an internal locus of control. The decision is being made independent of any immediate external event or environment. I choose to be courageous because "it is the right thing to do." A child chooses a specific toy because it seems to fit with their own interests -- or they choose not to nag about getting this new toy. Better yet, they decide to set aside a small amount of their allowance so that this new toy (or food or health care) might be allocated to a child living in poverty. These are internalized processes, and they are likely to endure because the soldier or child has internalized a specific value system and is unlikely to change this value system despite shifts in the external environment. They are hovering on the edge of a domain of spirituality.

The change in behavior is likely to be sustained if it is directed toward the compelling vision of the future and if it is intended for the common good. There is one other distinction to be drawn regarding effective influence. For influence and inspiration to be sustained, internalization is required but is not sufficient. There must also be a realistic appraisal of what is doable. Hope must be something more than "wishful" thinking. As I have already noted, a mansion built in the shining city on the hill might have to be rebuilt several times—especially if a cyclical template has been engaged.

The reconstruction can take time and patience. Inspiration does not necessarily mean the motivation to climb the highest peaks and scale huge obstacles. It can be the quiet day-to-day peace and joy that one's lifework should model while we are building or rebuilding the mansion. Fortunately, this eternal city comes with a nourishing fountain to which we will inevitably be drawn for nourishment and resuscitation. This is the fountain of Living Waters that has been placed at the heart of our external city. It is intended for our thirsty world.

Generativity, Caring and Spirituality

We shift our perspective away from influence and spiritual internalization to the basic motivations that lead us to consider work in the Eternal City. Why do we travel to this city and seek to rebuild the mansion? It is more than just an influence from the outside; It is also the internal yearning from something called Generativity that was identified by Erik Erikson (1980). We are generative when we chose to care about something deeply and, in turn, do sustained acts of caring for that about which we care. Furthermore, we express and experience generativity through the enactment of several different, though interrelated, acts of deep caring (Bergquist and Quehl, 2019).

Generative One: There is the generativity that we experience as parents— even when our children are grown up and we are no longer their primary caretakers. Indeed, caring about our children does not fade away as we grow older; rather, it takes on a new form and is accompanied by the delight that comes with seeing our children succeed in their own lives and finding their own distinctive identity.

The expression of this first mode of generativity need not be limited to the care of children we have raised from birth. We all know of extraordinary men and women who have taken care of children via foster care, adoption, or serving as a nurturing uncle or grandparent. One of our dear friends joined with his gay partner to raise a boy from a broken home—a dramatic example of this first type of generativity.

Generativity Two: There is another form of generativity that comes with caring about young men and women who are not part of our immediate or extended family. This type of generativity is often engaged when we are older and in a position of some power or influence in an organization or community. We care for the next generation of leaders or the next generation of craftsmen and artisans in our field. We are often generative in this second way through our role as mentors.

We run interference for younger people or for those who look up to us. We collaborate with them on projects, such as writing a book together with a newcomer in the field. We serve as role models that new people in our company emulate through job performance, personal values, and even

lifestyle. We serve as mentors when we listen carefully to younger people talk about their problems and accomplishments. We serve as mentors when we encourage our protégés to take risks or to push beyond initial achievements. We sponsor younger people by inviting them into our world, our exclusive club or inner group.

There are innovative ways in which this second way of generativity is expressed. For example, we know several insightful leaders in American higher education who make effective use of senior level executives who are on a leave-of-absence from their corporations. They teach for a term or two in the college's business school or liberal arts program, and many of these executives are in late midlife. They thrive in educational and training settings that allow them to teach and reflect on learning they have accumulated over the years. (Bland and Bergquist, 1998) In a way, they are "saved" by the college or university by serving as counterparts to King Arthur's young boy or George's angel-in training.

Often our generative interests in collaboration and teaching are melded into a single plan. We co-teach with someone who is younger or less experienced. We invite a younger colleague to join us in consulting with another organization or community or within our own organization or community. These can be some of the most enjoyable and gratifying encounters that we will experience. It doesn't matter if it's teaching about woodwork with a younger colleague at a local community center, coaching boys and girls on a little league team, coordinating a technical training program for line supervisors in a company, or conducting weekly case conferences with new associates in a law firm. It's all about generativity.

When in a state of stagnation, we tend to isolate the younger generation, often viewing young people as rivals and potential usurpers of the throne. When in a state of generativity, we welcome the younger generation and help to prepare them for new leadership.

I am reminded of a trip I took to the French Quarter in New Orleans many years ago. I went to *Maison Bourbon* to hear Wallace Davenport, a legendary jazz musician. While Davenport was playing, "racket" (hard rock music) from across the street was invading the beautiful soulful sounds of his quartet. I went up to Davenport after his set was finished and commented negatively about the quality of music coming from across the street. Davenport cut me off and declared with considerable passion that hard rock music was the future, and he was very glad it was there, across the street. Davenport could have resented the intrusion and competition. Instead, he chose to be generative and embrace and support the new music. I was the curmudgeon—not Davenport! Much of the same attitude can be found among musicians portrayed in the remarkable post-Katrina TV series called *Treme*.

Generativity Three: There is a third way in which generativity is expressed, what George Vaillant (2012, p. 155) identifies as guardianship: "Guardians are caretakers. They take responsibility for the cultural values and riches from which we all benefit, offering their concern beyond specific individuals to their culture as a whole; they engage a social radius that extends beyond their immediate personal surroundings." Their domain of concern is no longer just their family, their organization, or even their community.

They now care about the more fundamental legacies in their life and engage this caring through their wisdom and integration of soul and spirit. While this third way to express generativity can be identified as a form of resistance to change, or as an overdose of nostalgia, it can also be seen as an expression of deep caring for that which remains valid in contemporary times and which continues as a source of wisdom regardless of its date of origin or the quaint way in which it is stated, painted, or sung.

Generativity Four: Generativity is to be found in yet another way. We witnessed this when one of us co-conducted a two-year research project on Community Sage Leadership in Western Nevada County, California. Fifty men and women (ages 25-55) were identified as emerging sage leaders and interviewed in-depth on the same set of key life questions. Another fifty men and women (ages 56-90) from the same communities (Grass Valley and Nevada City, CA) were identified as senior sage community leaders and were interviewed on these questions.

A very powerful, unifying theme emerged from the project (Quehl and Bergquist, 2012)—especially among the retired senior sage leaders. These men and women were generative in their care for the community in which they lived. Unlike many other retirees who had retreated into gated retirement communities and often stagnated there, the fifty senior sage leaders found enormous gratification in their involvement with local arts councils, environmental action groups, hospitality organizations, and many other initiatives that enhanced community development.

Generativity at any Age and in Many Forms: When we are generative at any age (though especially in late midlife) we have the opportunity to establish, support, or help to expand networking in our community. We embrace yet move beyond our own family and the organizations in which we have worked. We take on such roles as teachers, trainers, or coach to the leaders or managers of nonprofit organizations or community action forums—all of this on behalf of the greater good and our collective journey toward a compelling future.

In many cases, the role of generativity is not necessarily to start something new, but rather to support and build on that which other people have begun—and it is contagious (Quehl and Bergquist, 2012, p. 90):

> . . . as part of their generativity, many [leaders] report that their "job" in working as a volunteer is to build on the accomplishments of their predecessors. Rather than starting something new, which might bring personal recognition and ego gratification, these dedicated seniors value continuity and honoring past contributions. Their passion is contagious, as is their appreciation for work already done. This enables them to generate new energy as well as rekindled old passions. They reinterpret the existing vision of their organization so community members can see the often -unacknowledged value inherent in work already done and will continue to be done by the organization. One of our sage leaders described this way of being generative as "leading quietly."

These generative services are not just about quiet leadership; they are also about community engagement (a key ingredient in any attempt to increase "social capital" or "community capital").

These generative and spiritually guided leaders are helping to build the shining city on the hill—or at least their own local version of this coherent city. They recognize that this building is a long-term process and that they must be patient and persevere. It often helps that these spiritually oriented and generative members of a community are no longer dependent on a job in the secure world for their sustenance. In keeping with the spirit of generativity, one of our sage leaders noted, "We don't retire, we just quit working for money." George Vaillant (2012, p. 166) offered the same observation regarding his Harvard grads: "Community building is a career of its own—one of the really great ones."

Insofar as men and women are serving in generative roles that are spiritually directed when working with other people, with an organization, or with their community during senior years, they are likely to be more inclined than ever before to exert authority in a collaborative and nurturing manner. Their Hope is shared. They are teaching and mentoring on behalf of the greater good and compelling vision of the future. In these roles, they are willing to take less credit and be less visible. It is often the case that they already have acquired whatever power and recognition they are likely to get in their lives.

These generative men and women have had their "day in the sun." They now gain more gratification from watching their organizational or community or cultural "children" succeed than from succeeding themselves. They have shifted from a primary focus on their own success to a focus on significance—making a difference in the world. They often drink from the fountain of Living Waters during their journey with others toward a compelling future. These leaders care deeply and serve quietly as servants of the greater good.

Leadership Through Servanthood

While many forms of leadership focus on creating a vision, a special kind of leadership is exhibited when one furthers the vision created and embraced by other people in the organization or community—one becomes a servant to the vision of all people associated with the organization or community. This concept of "servant leadership" has been portrayed in a very compelling way by Robert Greenleaf (1970) in a series of books he has written on this topic. He writes about the servant who prepares meals, cleans pots and tends to latrines on behalf of a greater good. A variant on this theme is evident in quite a different medium—the lyric of a popular song of the 1990s about "the wind beneath my wings." This very appreciative statement offers a wonderfully poetic image of the role played by a masterful postmodern leader as a servant to the dreams, visions, and aspirations of the people with whom she works. A servant leader can provide the "wind" beneath the wings of her colleagues by first committing fully to the partnership, and then offering encouragement during difficult times.

A dedicated servant leader will neither hijack a colleague's vision nor co-opt it unquestioningly, no matter the direction of one's personal enthusiasm. While a leader may prod and provoke, she never takes over the client's vision nor inserts her own alternative vision. As a servant leader, the value we bring is to encourage ongoing reflection on the part of our colleague regarding whether or not this is the best direction to take—as guided by our shared commitment to a specific vision and set of values. We repeatedly participate with other members of our community in the process of spiritual discernment—determining if the internal and external evidence that

seems to be pointing us (collectively) in a certain direction comes from a place that is compatible with the long-term welfare and growth of other members of our community and ourselves.

There is perhaps no more important role to play as a masterful servant leader than to help one's colleague make the tough choices between the very obvious and the not so obvious, between the short-term and the long-term, and, in particular, between the expedient way of life and the way of personal integrity. Clearly, this is not the "usual" form of leadership that is written about in most contemporary textbooks—even those that focus on postmodern organizations. It is a "quiet" form of leadership. It is a form of leadership that is often associated with soulfulness. Servant leadership requires a shift from the proclivity to look upward and forward to attending *downward* and *inward*. This means a shift from visual to tactile modes of experience. We touch rather than look.

Like the protective father in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*, we embrace the people we lead and hold them safe from the storm. Soulful movement downward is a journey through embarrassment, narcissistic wounds and loneliness. This contrasts with the journey of the spirit that is filled with inspiration, uplifting motives and great public adventures. We retreat to do soul work rather than leaping up to do spiritual work. In moving to soul work, we take on latrine duty or clean pots. As servant leaders we might even engage in the corporate equivalent to Greenleaf's cleaning of pots and latrines, namely, filling in the details, cleaning up after an event or handling a messy employee problem. When we are doing soulful servant-oriented leadership our role shifts from master to servant.

Leadership Practice Four: Differences and Community

While all men and women have been created equal—as proclaimed in many spiritual texts and governmental pronouncements—they certainly have not been created the same. And that is a very good thing. A world where everyone looks, talks, and acts the same would surely be a boring place, not to mention hugely unproductive and evolutionarily unsound. Deviance in gene pools is essential to the ongoing adaptation of humankind to a shifting global environment (Bergquist, 2012). A quick glance around our world enables us to appreciate and delight in the diversity and differences among people living in different societies and cultures. We might very well find in this delight a pathway to our own spirituality.

Unfortunately, in our fallen world, man has skewed these differences into separators and distinguishers for judgment. Mankind has placed arbitrary value on looks, skills, education, wealth, position, power, body shape, size and color, sexual orientation, and perceived handicaps - to name just a few. We sadly limit our exposure and our collaboration as a whole based on these false values – whatever our spiritual or religious label.

Sandstrom and Smith (2005) offer the following challenging question: Can you imagine what could accomplish in this world if there were no dividing lines of thought? If we truly advocated for the differences to be found in each person. What if we were united together with one purpose and one passion? It is a staggering and sobering thought. To accomplish this work in this world, we are equipped with the propensity to appreciate differences. This is a critical assumption that serves as one of the foundations of any form of effective leadership. We are social animals (Aronson, 2018) who are designed to come together as a whole - one body functioning with all parts.

Sandstrom and Smith (2005) note that it is pride that separates us from each other, and from our shared values and vision of a "more perfect union." A leader is effective if they can overcome this propensity toward personally oriented pride to truly advocate for the differences that make up the whole. Human pride says: "pull away and be separate." Alternatively, we say: "pull together and be one." Human pride says: "judge this person to see if they meet your criteria of acceptance." An appreciative and collaborative leader says: "join me as we seek out the path to a better future."

Hollow Communities and Habits of the Heart

We have already spoken of the importance of advocating for differences. We must champion, cherish and constructively utilize those differences to accomplish the goals of the community. What we often fail to do, however, is to embrace the complete concept of a whole community. It is our human tendency as a social animal to group together. It is a tendency, unfortunately, that is wired in with a preference for being with others who are like us in thought, belief, practice, and physical appearance. In every city of the world, we find ethnic neighborhoods clustered together, separated from the larger community.

We find silos in every hollow organization and community. Groups, departments, and functional divisions are inclined to operate and think independently of the whole. We are all part of the bigger community, but we are separated into our own little comfortable cocoons of sameness. We talk about community, but we don't live it, embrace it, or encourage it. We haven't yet fully comprehended what community really means.

As Sandstrom and Smith (2005) observe, there are communities within communities - necessary for practical life - but we must think beyond our established boundaries to find heartfelt allegiance with all mankind. A viable concept of community is not limited to separated sameness. Our heart should bleed for the entire community of humankind. We should be working to build a community of those who cherish and work collaboratively for a better, more caring, and equitable future. It is in the "habits of the heart" that we find this sense of community.

While promoting an inclusive environment united toward common focus, leaders who engage in this best practice know that their vision and values are not to be compromised. There is no room for expedience or the hiding of one's vision and values under a basket. The Best Practice Four leader encourages collaboration rather than "silo" orientation in all areas of life. They foster communal habits of the heart on behalf of the higher, transcendent purpose and greater good. These leaders help the community to find a like-minded commitment to the greater good--and to find an opportunity to create the greater potential of becoming one family.

Relativism and Commitment

The challenge for a mid-21st-century leader—especially one with a specific and distinctive faith orientation—is to honor different spiritual traditions, yet find and retain commitment to a specific, tangible vision of the future and set of values. A psychologist and counselor at Harvard University offered some guidance in this matter several decades ago that is still relevant. William Perry (1970) offers a detailed description of the challenges we face in finding spiritual commitment in a world of relativism. He suggests that most of us move through several stages of cognitive development and epistemological sophistication as we mature.

As young men and women, we tend to view our world in a dualistic fashion: there is a reality that can be discerned and there is one right answer to the complex questions we are asked. Those in authority can be trusted to reveal the truth. There are also those people who are inherently evil or stupid, and they are not to be trusted. There are indeed people with white hats and black hats. Our job is to determine which color hat they are wearing.

Dualism: While many people spend most, if not all, their life viewing the world from this dualistic perspective, there are often events or people who disrupt this simplistic frame. We soon discover that there are multiple sources of credible information and multiple sources of potentially valid interpretation of this information. It is not clear what is true or what is real. According to Perry, the initial response to this disconfirmation is often a sense of betrayal. We were told by people we trust and respect that the world is to be seen in one way. Suddenly we see that this might not be the case.

Multiplicity: Given that there is no one right answer, then any answer will do. Perry coins a new word-- "multiplistic"—as a way to identify this stage (that is often over-looked). In many ways, multiplicity is simply another form of dualism: if there is no one truth or reality then there must be no truths and no realities. If there are multiple truths that are always shifting, then why should we ever trust anything that we experience or are told? The world is composed of nothing but expedient storytelling and fake versions of the real world: those who possess the power are allowed to define what is real and important.

Perry proposes that this multiplistic stage is common among young adults who are first exposed to a world that is expanding in size and complexity – they are seeing the multiple images on the wall of their cave. This sense of betrayal is likely to remain if the young adult is provided with minimal support and finds very little that is to be trusted in the world. We certainly see an abundance of multiplicity in our current world – along with the dualistic perspective. Perry is optimistic, however, regarding the capacity and willingness of many adults to move beyond multiplicity, especially if they are fortune enough to live in a supportive and trusting environment.

Relativism: Perry suggests that there is a transition to what he identifies as a relativistic perspective. We now see that within a specific community there are certain accepted standards regarding truth and reality. We can appreciate the fact that other communities adhere to different standards than our own. While adhering to a relativistic perspective, we are likely to avoid making any value judgments regarding competing versions of the truth. We live in the cave and sit back to witness (perhaps even savor) the multiple images on the wall and multiple interpretations of these images.

Commitment in Relativism: Unfortunately, we can't live forever in this suspended state of relativism. We must somehow engage—and even provide leadership—in this world of multiple and often contradictory perspectives. As mature and responsible adults we must make decisions and act on the basis of these decisions. Perry identifies this fourth perspective as commitment-in-relativism. We recognize that there are alternative standards operating in various communities, but also recognize the need to pick a specific standard and base our life around this standard. We might change our secular standards over time and might be able to live in a different community and embrace their standards while living there—but come back to our base of commitment.

Ken and Mary Gergen (2004, p. 93) offer a similar perspective in their exposition of social constructivism:

> If we abandon the view that some particular arrangement of words [social construction] is uniquely tailored to the world as it is [an objectivist frame], then we are freed . . . [C]onstructivism doesn't mean giving up something called truth; rather we are simply invited to see truth claims of all kinds as born out of relationships, particular cultural and historical conditions.

Perry notes that this fourth perspective will look very much like dualism to other people (who are themselves dualists or multiplists). After all, if one is making commitments, then isn't this deciding that there is a right and wrong answer and a truth that is stable and confirmable? The Gergens (Gergen and Gergen, 2004, p. 96) similarly note that the critics of constructivism "often mistake this meta-level account as the constructionist attempt to tell the real truth about the world." The ongoing challenge of those with a commitment in relativism perspective is to recognize that this misunderstanding will often occur and that a clearly articulated rationale must be offered to other people for the decisions being made and actions taken.

William Perry offers yet another insight that is particularly poignant for those who are coaching clients moving from one of these perspectives to another one. Perry suggests that this movement inevitably involves a grieving process. One is, in essence, moving from one sense of self and one sense of the world in which we live, to another self and another sense of the world. In moving from dualism to multiplicity we are losing some of our innocence, while the movement from multiplicity to relativism requires the abandonment of irresponsibility.

We must now seek to understand and appreciate other communities and recognize that there are standards with regard to truth and reality—even if there is not one absolute standard. Finally, in the movement from relativism to commitment in relativism we are grieving the loss of freedom. We must now make hard decisions, knowing that there are several (perhaps many) good choices that could be made. We must take action in a world that does not yield easy answers or offer us assurance that we are doing the right thing for the right reason.

Perry would probably suggest that spiritual leaders are in the business, at least partially, of assisting those they lead through this grieving process and helping those they serve recognize the value inherent in one of the more mature perspectives. This valuing of relativism and particularly commitment in relativism may be particularly important for those clients who are operating in a leadership position. They must make particularly difficult decisions and take particularly challenging actions in a world that is filled with multiple shifting perspectives (Bergquist, 2019).

Finally, we find a related analysis of postmodern challenges offered by Robert Kegan (1994, p. 185) who suggests that the relativistic perspective is indeed quite challenging when we are engaged in making decisions and acting on these decisions:

> When we look into this collection of expectations for success at work, we discover that each actually demands something more than particular behavior or skill. Each is a claim on our minds

for a way of knowing. Each amounts to a slightly different way of demanding or expecting a single capacity for psychological authority. This capacity . . . represents a qualitatively more complex system for organizing experience than the mental operations that create values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalty, and intrapersonal states of mind.

It is qualitatively more complex because it takes all of these as objects or elements of its system, rather than as the system itself; it does not identity with them but views them as parts of a new whole. This new whole is an ideology, an internal identity, a self-authorship that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states. It is no longer authored by them; it authors them and thereby achieves a personal authority. Despite the surface differences between the various work expectations, they require a common underlying capacity, a common order of consciousness.

Thus, when seeking spiritual commitment in the midst of relativism, we must assume a broader integrating sense of self and a broad system-based appreciation of the contributions being made by each part (each simulacrum) to the whole.

Sources of Light: Kegan (1994, p. 50) offers an optimistic perspective regarding the challenge of relativism. He presents this perspective through the use of a lovely metaphor regarding sources of light:

If five lamps are lit in a large living room, how many sources of light are there? We might say that there are five sources of light. Perhaps the maker of each lamp, genuinely committed to bringing us into the light, will be partial to his own and bid us to come to that source. Or at best, some generous spirit of eclectic relativism may obtain, and the lamp makers may concede that there is a benefit to our being exposed to each of the lamps, each separate source having little to do with the other except that, like the food groups of a well-balanced diet, each has a partial contribution to make to a well-rounded, beneficial whole.

It is at this point that Kegan offers his key insight:

But quite a different answer to the question of how many sources of light there are in the room is possible—namely, that there is only one source. All five lamps work because they are plugged into sockets drawing power from the home's electrical system. In this view, each lamp is neither a contender for the best source of light nor a mere part of a whole. And if the lamp maker's mission is not first of all to bring us to the light of his particular lamp but to bring us to the light of this single source, then he can delight equally in the way his particular lamp makes use of this source and in the way other lamps he would never think to create do also. His relationship to the other lamp makers is neither rivalrous nor laissez-faire, but co-conspiratorial: the lamp makers breathe together.

Perhaps it is in this light that we find hope and commitment amid relativism.

Frans Johansson (2004) has offered a similar and somewhat more contemporary perspective through his analysis of Florence Italy's cultural history during the Renaissance. He identifies what he calls *The Medici Effect* and offers many examples of how diverse perspectives and disciplines can productively converge to create highly innovative and valuable ideas and products. Having offered these persuasive examples, Johansson (2004, pp. 97-98) presents a couple of reasons for the power of a Medici "intersection":

> Why is the intersection of disciplines or cultures such a vibrant place for creativity? . . . It increases the chances that an idea will be good because it brings together very different concepts from very different fields. . . [T]here is another, stronger, reason for its power. When you connect two separate fields, you also set off an exponential increase of unique concept combinations, a veritable explosion of ideas. Or, to put it succinctly, if being productive is the best strategy to innovate, then the Intersection is the best place to innovate.

We propose that spirituality and spiritual leadership—guided by a compelling image of the future and a shared commitment to the greater good—provides the "glue" (Medici intersection) for diverse ideas and viewpoints to come together in an innovative manner.

In Over Our Head: While Kegan's unified source of illumination and Johannson's Medici Effect are inspiring and worth pondering as an organizational or community leader, it is also important to identify the challenges being faced while living in a world saturated with diverse, competing perspectives. These challenges exist at several different levels.

At one level, as Gergen has noted, the challenge concerns our own coherent sense of self. Carol Gilligan (1982), who is one of the leading researchers on the lifespan development of women, writes about the splitting that occurs in the lives of young women during their pre-adolescent years (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). There is one "self" that is the "good girl" who does and thinks what society expects. There is another "self" that relates to what the young woman actually thinks and feels (and would like to do).

In an interview with Charlie Rose, Gilligan speculates that this splitting may occur even earlier in the lives of young men. Is this splitting a recent phenomenon among young women and men, or is it simply becoming more evident given reduction in the pressures for young people to conform to societal expectations (at least in many parts of the world)? As Kegan suggests, the challenge is to retain some sense of coherence and discover the underlying unifying source (perhaps what exists outside the cave). How hard is it for any of us to retain this coherence? Are we in the same position as those in younger generations regarding our simultaneous embracing of a real self and one or more alternative selves?

Valuing Diversity by Recognizing Distinctive Strengths and Competencies

We can identify yet another way in which an appreciative perspective can complement and enhance a spiritual perspective. Appreciation in an organizational or community setting can be engaged in the recognition of the distinctive strengths and potential of people working within the organization or community. An appreciative culture is forged when an emphasis is placed on the realization of inherent potential and the uncovering of latent strengths rather than on the identification of weaknesses or deficits. People and organizations "do not need to be fixed. They need constant reaffirmation." (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 120)

Paradoxically, at the point that someone is fully appreciated and reaffirmed, they will tend to live up to their newly acclaimed talents and drive, just as they will live down to their depreciated sense of self if constantly criticized and undervalued. Carl Rogers suggested many years ago that people are least likely to change if they are being asked to change and are most likely to change when they have received positive regard—what we would identify as appreciation.

With this acknowledgement of distinctive strengths and competencies comes a final mode of appreciation. When leaders in an organization or community engage in efforts to build and bind a (spiritual community) then efforts will be made by all its members to form complementary relationships and recognize the mutual benefits that can be derived from the cooperation of differing constituencies.

A culture of appreciating differences provides integration (the glue that holds a social system together) while the organization or community is growing and differentiating into many distinctive units of responsibility (division of labor) and geography. (Durkheim, 1933/1893; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1969) The appreciative perspective is particularly important in the era of globalization, when there are significant differences in vision, values or culture among members or regions of an organization or community or between independent division or organizations that are seeking to work together. (Rosinski, 2010)

As many surprising cooperative endeavors have demonstrated in recent years, from open-source software development to the explosion of Wikipedia and its unexpectedly high-quality content, what lies beyond the era of information and sheer competition is an era of collaboration (Bergquist, Betwee and Meuel, 1995). Business leaders are learning to connect rather than independently create. They learn to borrow and duplicate ("the highest form of flattery"). They create alliances and networks instead of focusing on the organizational gigantism popular at the end of the last century. We might call it appreciative competition.

Leadership Practice Five: Responsibility and Accountability

Those leaders who are engaged in this fifth best practice realize that strong demands for accountability and responsibility come with their clear and consistent commitment to a specific vision and set of values. This leader is "convinced" of their need to know something about themselves--good or bad. Sandstrom and Smith (2005) suggest that there is a beacon pointing out where we have wavered from demanding expectations associated with this vision and these values.

This beacon can help us find the way back. But the beacon can only be a source of guidance if we are willing to receive feedback and reflect on the decisions we have made and our subsequent behavior. The Best Practice Five leader models the highest levels of responsibility and accountability to everyone around him or her.

Given the high-level demands for accountability and responsibility among those who embrace Best Practice Five leadership, it is also important (even critical) that they are provided with support from others in their organization or community. This support is provided freely and graciously on behalf of the compelling vision of the future and the shared commitment to the greater good.

The support is also given because the leader exhibits a deep level of care for the welfare of those with whom they work and embraces a transcendent cause to which all members of the organization or community are dedicated.

Responsibility

Responsibility implies that we have obligations and expectations for our behavior. As the dictionary defines it, being responsible means being accountable. As Sandstrom and Smith (2005) note, responsibility is the ABILITY to respond correctly and meet expectations. All humans are given certain responsibilities. We are responsible to our human authorities—and most importantly to our family, members of our community to ourselves. A person will do all they say they will do, or all that is expected of them. If this sense of responsibility is sustained and expanded to all aspects of our life, then we are said to be operating with integrity--accompanied by commitment and perseverance. These commodities are rarely found in today's world—but are sorely needed.

Sandstrom and Smith (2005) push responsibility a bit further:

> As spiritual leader we become responsible shepherds. We feed the people, care for them, serve their needs, and lead them in straight safekeeping paths. In the Torah (Old Testament) Yahweh offered to be this shepherd just as the Israelites were about to be disciplined for their disobedience and were to spend 70 years of captivity in Babylon. It was largely the fault of those who were involved as the "shepherds" of Israel. They went astray. All of the Israelites suffered as a result – not just the leaders. This is a sobering example of the responsibility that leaders often assume as *Shepards of Responsibility* regarding the welfare of the people they are leading. Yet, one of the greatest gifts and blessings one can receive is to be a responsible leader—and then, in turn, have the opportunity to teach one's followers about responsibility.

This is quite a challenging perspective on responsibility. The impact of influence (which we discussed regarding Best Practice 3) makes it even more imperative that we are guided by shared values and a compelling vision.

Expectations

When we lead others, we are responsible not only for our own behavior but also, ultimately, the behavior of others. A leader's job is to be sure that appropriate expectations are set and met. Challenging commitments are made. Peak performance is encouraged. These expectations should be accompanied by the recruitment and allocation of appropriate and adequate resources. We can't expect people to succeed if they are hampered by a lack of time, people or equipment.

In order for a leader to be clear regarding expectations, they must provide constructive (and appreciative) feedback to members of their organization or community. They must reward and provide consistent guidance. We expect others to show responsibility—however, this requires that we are responsible for providing all they need to do their job--including, perhaps most importantly, serving ourselves as an exemplary model of responsible servanthood on behalf of the compelling future and greater good.

Accountability

We can now turn to the complement of responsibility. This is Accountability—which includes the ability to truthfully answer and explain the "why" of our behavior. It is the willingness to understand that we are accountable to other people and the vision and values to which we are committed. As Sandstrom and Smith (2005) have observed, for most people, it has evolved into the art of making excuses, shifting fault, and disowning consequences. Frequently we don't even consider the consequences, since most have abandoned the idea that we are accountable for anything. Conscience is vaguely misunderstood. It is "something" that most often just burdens us and should be ignored.

When that word is used in New Testament scripture, it is the Greek word for *suneidesis* which literally means the soul's ability to distinguish between what is morally good and bad. We are prompted by *suneidesis* to do the good and shun the bad. From an appreciative perspective, it is assumed that all humans are designed with a conscience. There is a *suneidesis* that can haunt them. If we walk with and are guided by a clear sense of purpose and act on behalf of specific values and a compelling vision of the future, then we are fully aware of the decisions we should make and the directions in which we should travel. Conscience and accountability walk hand in hand.

Support

As we have noted in our previous analysis of spans, the greater the requirement of responsibility and accountability, the greater is the need for support from other people. Given the remarkable demands made on a Best Practice Five leader for accountability and responsibility—and high expectations regarding influence—this leader must receive all the support possible from other members of their organization or community. The nature of support that is needed is wide ranging—be it encouragement, empathetic listening, offering of a helping hand, or timely provision of appropriate resources. However, Best Practice Five support goes beyond these secular initiatives. There is the matter of forgiveness and Grace.

Leaders make mistakes and do not always make the best possible decision on behalf of a shared vision of the future or on behalf of the greater good. If a leader tries to avoid making mistakes in the VUCA-Plus world of the mid-21st century (Bergquist, 2019), then they are likely to remain frozen in place. They make the greatest mistake possible which is inaction while their world is burning. As we have noted previously, it is not a matter of avoiding mistakes. It is a matter of learning from these mistakes and not repeatedly making the same mistake. For this learning to occur, there must be a remarkable spiritual level of care and support from other people.

Sandstrom and Smith (2005) offer an important insight at this point: one of the greatest and most overlooked tragedies associated with accountability and responsibility is the erecting of barriers that block forgiveness and growth. It is critical that we recognize that forgiveness can't be received without awareness and accountability for our actions. The ability to be accountable is a neon sign to others clearly indicating a person's level of integrity and maturity. Personal accountability opens the door to support from others. On occasion it also means accepting and enduring hardships that may come as the consequences of our behavior. Despite the potential hardships, it is important to remember that accountability ultimately unlocks the key to personal growth.

Conclusions

We can find a powerful and compelling view of what we are offering regarding effective, collaborative leadership in the writing of Martin Buber (2000), a Jewish theologian of the 20th century. The overarching nature of this form of leadership is conveyed in Buber's vision of *I-Thou* relationship that exists among people in a nurturing community*.* For Buber, the coherence of a community begins with the coherence of interpersonal relationships. His I/Thou relationship is formed on behalf of some greater devotion or cause.

There is a third element involved in an I/Thou relationship between two people, or a gathering of people in a community. This third element can be achieving the Greater Good or building the Eternal City on the Hill. The binding, relational "glue" is to be found in that which transcends those individuals who are engaged in the relationship. In many cultures, there is a dedication of all members of this society to a specific set of values and ways of finding meaning in their world. This dedication blends the secular and the sacred.

When I/Thou is in place, a psychological covenant is forged. An I/Thou covenant points to a shared commitment that extends beyond the interests or even welfare of either party in an interpersonal relationship. A community or institution-based charter is created that helps to guide directions taken by a community and institutions operating in this community. The charter points to outcomes that go well beyond personal or institutional interests. Their signature represents a commitment on their part to a larger sacred vision of coherence. It is a vision that provides guidance regarding the future of this community and/or this institution. It is when an institution, community (or entire nation) has a clear and compelling image of its own future that this institution, community (nation) is more likely to endure on behalf of the greater good.

Ultimately, the effective engagement of the five Best Practices from a spiritual perspective is about the process of binding together on behalf of something more important than our individual needs and aspirations. At the heart of this spiritual orientation is a model of leadership that was conveyed by Wilfred Bion (1995), a British Object Relations theorist. He believed that effective, caring leaders—like effective, caring parents—help contain the anxiety (as well as unformed aspirations) held by those who look to the leader for both inspiration and protection. The leader and parent hold the anxiety (and aspirations) themselves for a short period of time, modify (metabolize) these powerful feelings so that they are not quite as powerful and then share them with the child or follower.

This holding and carrying is most effective if aligned with a greater good. There is a form of love that the Greeks call *agape*. This love exists not only between two people, but also between them and some greater power. Similarly, a spiritually oriented leader doesn't just look beyond the current operations of their followers to broader and future challenges. They don't just provide the kind of support and containment of anxiety that makes their team a safe place in which to take risks and learn. They also inspire a deep level of shared commitment, leading to sustained collaboration—and new ways of thinking and being. As Martin Buber would suggest, the I/Thou (rather than I/It) of authentic, nurturing relationships requires this shared commitment to a higher purpose. Herein resides the insights and guidance to be provided by spiritually oriented leadership.

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