1 UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

This book is about *what it takes to lead.* Everyone, at some time in life, is asked to be a leader, whether to lead a classroom discussion, coach a children's soccer team, or direct a fundraising campaign. Many situations require leadership. Leadership, according to Rost (1991), is a mutual influence *process*, involving both leaders and followers. But, in every leadership situation, expectations and demands are placed upon one or more individuals to initiate and take responsibility for a decision, an event, or another need. A leader may have a high profile (e.g., an elected public official) or a low profile (e.g., a volunteer leader), but in every situation, leadership demands are placed on the individual who is the leader. Being a leader is challenging, exciting, and rewarding, and carries with it many responsibilities. This chapter discusses different ways of looking at leadership and their impacts on what it means to be a leader.

At the outset, it is important to address a basic question: *What is leadership?* Scholars who study leadership have struggled with this question for many decades and have written a great deal about the nature of leadership (Antonakis et al., 2004; Bass, 1990; Conger & Riggio, 2007). With the development of the social sciences during the 20th century, inquiry into leadership became prolific. Studies on leadership have emerged from a wide range of disciplines such as anthropology, business administration, educational administration, history, military science, nursing administration, organizational behavior, philosophy, political science, public administration, psychology, sociology, and theology (Rost, 1991). It's important to note that most of the scholarship on leadership has been generated from research conducted in Western, industrialized countries (such as the United States and Europe) and tends to reflect biases particular to those cultures.

WAYS OF VIEWING LEADERSHIP

As scholars have studied leadership over the years, they have developed a number of different approaches and theories. While the words are often used interchangeably, approaches and theories are different conceptually. An **approach** is a general way of thinking about a phenomenon, not necessarily based on empirical research. A **theory** usually includes a set of hypotheses, principles, or laws that explain a given phenomenon. Theories are more refined and can provide a predictive framework in analyzing the phenomenon.

Not unlike fashion, approaches to and theories of leadership have evolved, changed focus and direction, and built upon one another during the past century. For example, Rost (1991) identified more than 100 different definitions of leadership in the literature, and Curtin (2022), more recently, identified 700 definitions of leadership and ways to lead. Despite the scope and vastness of these definitions, it is important and useful to differentiate between the various common ways of viewing leadership. In the following section, six distinct ways of conceptualizing leadership are discussed, including leadership as a *trait*, an *ability*, a *skill*, a *behavior*, a *relationship*, and an *influence process*.

Leadership Is a *Trait*

First, for many people, leadership is thought of as a trait. A **trait** is a distinguishing quality of an individual, and defining leadership as a trait means that each individual brings to the table certain qualities that influence the way they lead. Some leaders are confident, some are decisive, and still others are outgoing and sociable.

Early on, the **trait approach** focused on identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by widely revered social, political, and military leaders. Also called **"Great Man" theories**, these studies of leadership traits were especially strong from 1900 to the early 1940s, enjoying a renewed emphasis in the 1970s as researchers began to examine charismatic leadership. In the 1980s, researchers linked leadership to the **"Big Five" personality factors** while interest in **emotional intelligence** as a trait gained favor in the 1990s. (For a discussion of *emotional intelligence* and leadership, see Chapter 5.)

Saying that leadership is a trait places a great deal of emphasis on the leader and on the leader's special gifts. It follows the often-expressed belief that "leaders are born, not made"—that leadership is innate rather than learned. Some argue that focusing on traits makes leadership an elitist enterprise because it implies that only a few people with special talents will lead. Although there may be some truth to this argument, it can also be argued that all of us are born with a wide array of unique traits, many of which can have a positive impact on our leadership. Because traits are relatively fixed and not easily changed, this perspective focuses more on people's attributes, giving less emphasis to how people learn and develop leadership.

Through the years, researchers have identified a multitude of traits that are associated with leadership. In Chapter 2, we will discuss some key leadership traits, and in Chapter 6, we will explain how strengths-based leadership is a variation of trait leadership. Although there are many important leadership traits, what is most important for leaders is having the required traits that a particular situation demands. For example, a chaotic emergency room at a hospital requires a leader who is insightful and decisive and can bring calm to the situation. Conversely, a high school classroom in which students are bored demands a teacher who is inspiring and creative. Successful leadership is more likely when the leader has the right traits and exhibits these traits in the right place at the right time.

Leadership Is an *Ability*

In addition to being thought of as a trait, people often conceptualize leadership as an ability. A person who has leadership **ability** is *able* to be a leader—that is, has the capacity to lead. While the

term *ability* frequently refers to a natural capacity, ability can be acquired. For example, some people are naturally good at public speaking, while others rehearse to become comfortable speaking in public. Similarly, some people have the natural physical ability to excel in a sport, while others develop their athletic capacity through exercise and practice. In the same vein, some people find that math and mathematical concepts come easy to them, while others must study and practice math concepts in order to learn and be able to use them. In leadership, some people have the natural ability to lead, while others develop their leadership abilities through hard work and practice.

An example of leadership as an ability is the legendary University of California at Los Angeles basketball coach John Wooden, whose teams won seven consecutive National Collegiate Athletic Association titles. Described first as a teacher and then as a coach, Wooden implemented four laws of learning into his coaching: explanation, demonstration, imitation, and repetition. His goal was to teach players how to do the right thing instinctively under great pressure. Less visible or well known, but also an example of leadership as an ability, is the unheralded but highly effective restaurant manager who, through years of experience and learning, is able to create a successful, award-winning restaurant. In both of these examples, it is the individuals' abilities that create outstanding leadership.

Leadership Is a *Skill*

Third, people think of leadership as a skill. Conceptualized as a **skill**, leadership is a *competency* developed to accomplish a task effectively. Skilled leaders are competent people who know the means and methods for carrying out their responsibilities. For example, a skilled leader in a fundraising campaign knows every step and procedure in the fundraising process and is able to use this knowledge to run an effective campaign. Similarly, a skilled editor of a magazine knows how to edit, how to select articles that fit the magazine's established content style, and how to adapt that content to the publication's audience. In short, skilled leaders are competent—they know what they need to do, and they know how to do it.

Describing leadership as a skill makes leadership available to everyone because skills are competencies that people can learn or develop. Even without natural leadership ability, people can improve their leadership with practice, instruction, and feedback from others. Viewed as a skill, leadership can be studied and learned. If you are capable of learning from experience, you can acquire leadership.

Leadership Is a *Behavior*

Another way of thinking about leadership is as a behavior. It is *what leaders do* when they are in a leadership role. In the late 1930s, leadership research began to focus on leader behavior—what leaders say and the way they act. Unlike traits, abilities, and skills, leadership behaviors are observable. When someone leads, we see that person's leadership behavior.

Research on leadership has shown that leaders engage primarily in two kinds of general behaviors: task behaviors and relationship behaviors, which are discussed in depth in Chapter 4. **Task behaviors** are used by leaders to get the job done (e.g., a leader prepares an agenda for a

meeting). **Relationship (process) behaviors** are used by leaders to help people feel comfortable with other group members and at ease in the situations in which they find themselves (e.g., a leader helps individuals in a group to feel included). Since leadership requires both task and relationship behaviors, the challenge for leaders is to know the best way to combine them in their efforts to reach a goal.

An aspect of viewing leadership as a behavior also arose in the development of situational theories. The premise of these theories is that different situations demand different kinds of leadership behavior. Examination of the **situational approach** to leadership began in the late 1960s by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) and Reddin (1967) and continued to be refined and revised from the 1970s through the 1990s (Vecchio, 1987). One of these approaches, **path–goal theory**, examines how leaders use employee motivation to enhance performance and satisfaction. Another situational approach, **contingency theory**, focuses on the match between the leader's style and specific situational variables.

All these theories underpin the approach that leadership is about how leaders perform and act rather than the unique qualities of the leader. Interestingly, it also provides a unique window into leaders' ethics and whether they do the right thing. For example, elected school boards have had to grapple with many thorny issues over the past few years, from COVID-19 protocols to their stance on books with LGBTQ+ themes in school libraries to how negative aspects of U.S. history are taught. The way a board's president and members respond (or behave) toward the public when dealing with these issues says a great deal about their leadership. Do they bend to the will of the loudest constituents, or do they make decisions with the education of all students firmly in mind? Similarly, the leadership of a junior high basketball coach can be described by how the coach treats their team's players in practice and in games. The coach's leadership is about what they do and how they affect the players in their coaching role.

Leadership Is a *Relationship*

Another, and a somewhat unusual, way to think about leadership is as a relationship, centering on the communication between leaders and followers.

In traditional leadership, authority is often a top-down, linear one-way event, but when thought of as a relationship, leadership becomes an interactive activity, a process of collaboration that occurs between leaders and followers (Rost, 1991). A leader affects and is affected by followers, and both leader and followers are affected in turn by the situation that surrounds them. This premise is expressed in recognized **relational approaches** such as **leader–member exchange (LMX) theory** (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which focuses on the quality of leader–follower relationships, and Lipman-Blumen's (2000) **connective leadership**, which focuses on how leaders can work with followers in ways that affirm followers' distinct identity and embrace their diversity.

When leadership is defined as a relationship, it becomes available to everyone. Authority and influence are shared, and leadership is not restricted to the formally designated leader in a group. For example, a team marketing project may involve a designated team leader, but all the idea generation, planning, problem solving, and decision making might be made with active input from all members. When the final proposal is presented to the client, everyone's contribution is reflected.

In addition, the relationship approach has an ethical overtone because it stresses the need for leaders to work with followers to achieve their mutual purposes. Stressing mutuality lessens the possibility that leaders might act toward followers in ways that are forced or unethical. It also increases the possibility that leaders and followers will work together toward a common good (Rost, 1991).

The premise of working toward a common good is embodied in the work of Susan R. Komives and her colleagues (Komives et al., 2013; Komives et al., 2016), particularly in the area of civic engagement. She and her coauthors envision leadership as a relationship among multiple partners, but with the additional goal of attempting to accomplish positive change in an ethical manner.

According to Komives and colleagues (2013), civic engagement entails "the sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations, as part of any community" (p. 24). This can include watching out for older or vulnerable neighbors, creating a positive climate in the workplace, cleaning up roadsides with a group of friends, confronting unjust treatment of others when you observe it, and just generally contributing to the public good.

Leadership Is an *Influence Process*

Another way of thinking about leadership is as an influence process. This is the perspective that will be emphasized in this book.

> **Leadership** *is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.*

Defining leadership as an influence process means that it is not a trait or an ability that resides in the leader, but rather an interactive event that occurs between the leader and the followers. Influence is central to the process of leadership because leaders *affect* followers. Leaders direct their energies toward influencing individuals to achieve something together. Stressing common goals gives leadership an ethical dimension because it lessens the possibility that leaders might act toward followers in ways that use coercion or are unethical.

The Urban Farming Guys (2023) in Kansas City took this approach when moving into and revitalizing a run-down neighborhood in their city. They began with urban gardening, converting overgrown yards to food production; started aquaponics in their limited space; invited neighbors into the process; taught gardening and construction skills to people; and created community. No single individual is responsible; it is a collective effort and is making a difference.

New and Evolving Approaches to Leadership

Since the 1980s, a number of new leadership approaches have emerged that comprise many of the different views of leadership identified earlier. Beginning with the work of Bass (1985, 1990), leadership studies generated **charismatic leadership** theories. From these approaches developed **transformational leadership theory**, which describes leadership as a process that

changes people and organizations. In that same vein, **adaptive leadership** examines how leaders help people address problems, face challenges, and adapt to change. Adaptive leadership stresses that the leaders don't solve the problems but, rather, encourage others to do the problem solving and adapt to change.

Other emerging approaches include the following:

- **Authentic leadership** looks at the authenticity of leaders and their leadership.

- **Spiritual leadership** considers how leaders use values, a sense of "calling," and membership to motivate followers.

- **Servant leadership** emphasizes the "caring principle" with leaders as "servants" who focus on their followers' needs in order to help these followers become more autonomous, knowledgeable, and like servants themselves.

- **Gender-based studies**, which view how one's gender affects and differentiates one's leadership, have gained momentum as women continue to become more dominant in the workforce, especially on a global level.

- **Ethical leadership**, examining a leader's character, duties, decision making, and decision outcomes, has recently come to center stage out of concern about dishonest or unethical behavior occurring within organizations and professions.

The historical timeline in Figure 1.1 is not intended to represent the development of leadership theories and approaches as separate and distinct eras only to disappear from the picture when a new theory appears. Instead, many of these theories and approaches occur concurrently, building upon one another. Even when a certain approach's period of popularity has waned, the theory continues to influence further study and the development of new leadership approaches.

FIGURE 1.1 ■ Development of Leadership Theories Through History
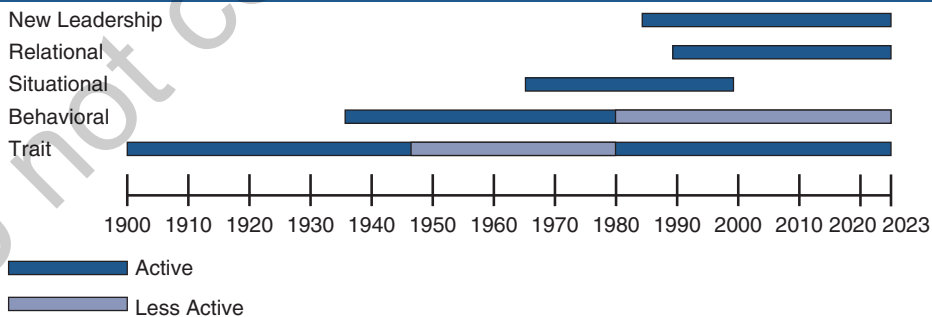
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

In any explanation of what leadership is, it is important to make a distinction between leadership and management. Leadership and management are not the same. Management emerged out of the industrialization of work in the early 20th century, and its purpose is to structure and coordinate various functions within organizations (Northouse, 2019). In contrast, leadership has been studied for thousands of years, across multiple contexts—politics, the military, religion, and more.

Frederick Taylor was a key figure in the development of management theory. At the turn of the 20th century, Taylor pioneered the concept of the scientific management of labor. This involved measuring every detail of a worker's tasks to make work more efficient, consistent, and predictable. According to Taylor, the responsibility of workers was to provide the labor, and the responsibilities of managers were to design the "one best way" for each task to be done and then train, monitor, and evaluate each worker. This approach was applied to many U.S. industries in the first half of the 20th century and is still in use today in assembly lines, fast-food restaurants, and other industries (Modaff et al., 2017).

Management theory was further developed by Chester Barnard, whose work in the areas of cooperation and authority helps us understand how management and leadership can sometimes overlap. Barnard (1938) conceptualized two types of authority: authority of position and authority of leadership. Authority of position is the power to direct the work of an individual, by someone in a higher position in an organization's structure. Authority of leadership is not based on position, but ascribed to those in the organization who have the knowledge and ability needed for a task. Barnard argued that both types were necessary for organizations to function well (Modaff et al., 2017).

Both leadership and management involve influence, but leadership is about seeking constructive change, and management is about establishing order. For example, it is often said that "managers are people who do things right, and leaders are people who do the right thing." Since both leaders and managers are engaged in influencing people toward goal accomplishment, our discussion in this book will treat the roles of managers and leaders similarly and not emphasize the differences between them.

LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

While there are many different approaches to leadership throughout the world, the definition and concepts of leadership outlined in this chapter are from an American perspective. If you were to travel to nations across the world, you would no doubt encounter different views of leadership specific to those ethnic and political cultures.

In 2004, Robert J. House led a group of 160 researchers in an ambitious study to increase our understanding of the impact culture has on leadership effectiveness. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) studies drew on the input of 17,000 people in 62 countries in determining how leadership varies across the world. Among the many findings generated by the GLOBE studies was the identification of positive and negative leadership characteristics that are universally accepted worldwide (see Table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1 ■ Universal Leadership Attributes		
Positive Leader Attributes		
Trustworthy	Just	Honest
Foresighted	Plans ahead	Encouraging
Positive	Dynamic	Motivator
Builds confidence	Motivational	Dependable
Intelligent	Decisive	Effective bargainer
Win-win problem solver	Communicative	Informed
Administratively skilled	Coordinator	Team builder
Excellence oriented		
Negative Leader Attributes		
Loner	Asocial	Noncooperative
Irritable	Nonexplicit	Egocentric
Ruthless	Dictatorial	

Source: Adapted from House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies.* Sage, pp. 677–678. Reprinted with permission.

LEADERSHIP'S "DARK SIDE"

Finally, it is important to note that the same characteristics and behaviors that distinguish leadership can also be used by leaders in nonpositive ways (Conger, 1990). The **dark side of leadership** is the destructive side of leadership where a leader uses their influence or power for personal ends. Lipman-Blumen (2005) suggests that such leaders are "toxic," where their leadership leaves their followers worse off than they found them, often violating the basic human rights of others and playing to their followers' basest fears. While many cite Adolf Hitler as the prime example of the dark side of leadership, there are many current examples in the world today, from religious extremist groups such as the Taliban, which has banned education for women in Afghanistan, to corporate leaders who engage in unethical behavior such as sexual misconduct, fraud, bribery, and insider trading. In fact, Bobby Allyn (2019) found that scandals caused by bad behavior rather than a company's poor financial performance were the leading cause of leadership dismissals among the world's 2,500 largest public companies.

In Chapter 12, "Exploring Destructive Leadership," we discuss more fully the complexities that allow the dark side of leadership to exist, including examining how and why it occurs, the characteristics of destructive leadership, and how to deal with it.

UNDERSTANDING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The meaning of leadership is complex and includes many dimensions. For some people, leadership is a *trait* or an *ability*, for others it is a *skill* or a *behavior*, and for still others it is a *relationship* or an *influence process.* In reality, leadership probably includes components of all of these dimensions. Each dimension explains only a facet of leadership.

LEADERSHIP SNAPSHOT

Michelle Obama, Former U.S. First Lady

When Michelle Obama became the U.S. First Lady after her husband, Barack Obama, was elected U.S. president in 2008, she began to embody the words she spoke earlier that year at the Democratic National Convention: "We have an obligation to fight for the world as it should be" (White House Historical Association, 2018).

Before she was Barack Obama's wife, Michelle Robinson grew up on the South Side of Chicago, the daughter of a pump operator for a Chicago water treatment plant and a stay-at-home mother. In her neighborhood, the "feeling of failure" predominated (Obama, 2018, p. 44), but her parents refused to buy in and continually emphasized hard work and education to her and her brother, Craig. As a result, Robinson was driven in her studies, ultimately testing into one of Chicago's top public high schools. Even though she excelled at school, she was continuously plagued by thoughts of "Am I good enough?" But when a high school counselor told Robinson she "wasn't Princeton material," Robinson refused to believe her, applying and being accepted to the Ivy League school.

Photo by Fotonoticias/WireImage

Robinson ultimately earned a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and went on to earn a Juris Doctor degree from Harvard Law School. She returned to Chicago to work as a lawyer for a large firm, but found her energies becoming more and more devoted to wanting to make a difference for the people of Chicago and those in her neighborhood, especially youth. Even though she took a 50% pay cut, she accepted a job working as an assistant to Chicago's mayor, Richard Daley, and as a liaison to several departments including Health and Human Services. She left City Hall to become the founding executive director of the Chicago chapter of Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program that prepares young people to work in nonprofits and public service, a job where she "felt I was doing something immediately meaningful, directly impacting the lives of others while also staying connected to both my city and my culture" (Obama, 2018, p. 180).

Three years later, Michelle Obama took a job working at the University of Chicago to develop its first community service program. Despite the fact that the university was located in Obama's former neighborhood, most South Side residents felt that it had its back turned to the neighborhood. Obama was hired to lower those walls and get students more involved in the neighborhood and residents with the university. During this time, Obama also became a mother of two daughters, Malia and Sasha, having to balance the competing responsibilities of motherhood and career. She worked part-time in her position for several years, but shortly after Sasha was born, she began a new job at the University of Chicago Medical Center, as the executive director of community affairs working to improve the university's community outreach. She brought along her three-month-old daughter to her interview for the job, which sent the message that she was going to be both: a mother and a professional.

She was promoted to vice president of community and external affairs at the university, where among her accomplishments was establishing a program connecting South Side residents with regular health care providers, regardless of the residents' ability to pay.

During this time, Obama's husband, who had been involved in politics on the local and state level, was elected to the U.S. Senate. Because she was invested in her career and her children were settled, Obama opted not to uproot the family to move to Washington, DC, continuing to be a full-time working mother with a spouse who was often away from home.

Just three years later, Barack Obama threw his hat into the ring to run for president of the United States, and Michelle Obama was thrust into an additional new role—that of the wife of a presidential candidate. She found herself on the campaign trail, speaking to crowds of people in support of her husband's candidacy. The public scrutiny on her was intense, but Obama was determined "to be myself, to speak as myself" (Obama, 2018, p. 236). When Barack Obama won the 2008 presidential election, Michelle Obama would assume yet another role: First Lady of the United States.

While Obama made it clear from the start that her first priority was as "mom-in-chief" to her daughters, her position as First Lady thrust her into the national spotlight and offered her an opportunity to make an impact on a larger scale. As First Lady, Obama exhibited charisma, compassion, and passion.

"A First Lady's power is a curious thing—as soft and undefined as the role itself. . . . Tradition called for me to provide a kind of gentle light, flattering the president with my devotion, flattering the nation primarily by not challenging it. I was beginning to see though, that wielded carefully, the light was more powerful than that," she wrote. "I had influence in the form of being something of a curiosity—a black First Lady, a professional woman, a mother of young kids. . . . With my soft power I was finding I could be strong" (Obama, 2018, p. 372).

Initially, Obama used that "soft power" to promote efforts to support military families, help women balance career and family, and end childhood obesity. She initiated the Let's Move! program, which brought together elected officials, business leaders, educators, parents, and faith leaders to work to provide more nutritious food in schools, bring healthy and affordable food into underserved communities, plant vegetable gardens across the United States, and provide new opportunities for kids to be more active.

When her husband was elected to his second term as president, Obama directed her energies toward education, on both a national and international level. She spearheaded the Reach Higher Initiative to help U.S. students understand job opportunities and the education and skills they need for those jobs. Telling them to "Never view your challenges as obstacles," she encouraged youth to continue their educations beyond high school at technical schools, colleges, and universities (White House Historical Association, 2018). Worldwide, she championed the education of girls and women, launching the Let Girls Learn initiative that funded education projects tackling everything from leadership to poverty to combating the challenges girls encounter in their communities.

Through all this, Obama was authentic, talking openly about her personal life, including her experiences as a Black woman at an elite school and her fight against stereotypes to help spread a message of encouragement to youth. On January 6, 2017, in her final speech as First Lady, she took the opportunity to tell American youth to continue to fight for their futures:

> I want our young people to know that they matter, that they belong. So don't be afraid. You hear me, young people? Don't be afraid. Be focused. Be determined. Be hopeful. Be empowered. Empower yourself with a good education. Then get out there and use that education to build a country worthy of your boundless promise. Lead by example with hope; never fear. (Obama, 2017)

Since leaving the White House, Michelle Obama has continued to be an enormously popular public figure. Her autobiographical memoir, *Becoming*, was the best-selling book of 2018, and was published in 33 languages. She published a second book, *The Light We Carry*, in 2022 in which she details some of her leadership practices like "starting kind," "going high," and assembling a "kitchen table" of trusted friends and mentors. She has also continued her promotion of education for girls, launching the Girls Opportunity Alliance to support more than 1,500 grassroots organizations that help empower girls worldwide through education.

"I'm an ordinary person who found herself on an extraordinary journey," she wrote in *Becoming*. "For every door that's been opened to me, I've tried to open my door to others . . . There's power in allowing yourself to be known and heard, in owning your unique story, in using your authentic voice. And there's grace in being willing to know and hear others" (Obama, 2018, pp. 420–421).

In considering these various definitions of leadership and based on the results of your Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire, which dimension seems closest to how you think of leadership? How would you define leadership? Answers to these questions are important because *how you think* about leadership will strongly influence *how you practice* leadership.

There is a strong demand for effective leadership in society today. This demand exists at the local and community levels, as well as at the national level, in this country and abroad. People feel the need for leadership in all aspects of their lives. They want leaders in their personal lives, at school, in the work setting, and even in their spiritual lives. Everywhere you turn, people are expressing a need for strong leadership.

When people ask for leadership in a particular situation, it is not always clear exactly what they want. For the most part, however, they want effective leadership. Effective leadership is intended influence that creates change for the greater good. Leadership uses positive means to achieve positive outcomes. Furthermore, people want leaders who listen to and understand their needs and who can relate to their circumstances. The challenge for each of us is to be prepared to lead when we are asked to do so.

SUMMARY

All of us at some time in our lives will be asked to show leadership. When you are asked to be the leader, it will be both demanding and rewarding. How you approach leadership is strongly influenced by your definitions of and beliefs about leadership. Through the years, writers have defined leadership in a multitude of ways. It is a complex, multidimensional process that is often conceptualized in a variety of ways by different people. Some of the most common ways of looking at leadership are as a trait, as an ability, as a skill, as a behavior, as a relationship, and as an influence process. The way you think about leadership will influence the way you practice leadership.

Despite being studied for nearly a century, new ways of theorizing about leadership are constantly being developed. Technology has allowed society to become more globally connected and aware, and while early studies by House et al. (2004) explored the leadership attributes

recognized in other cultures, how ethnic and political cultures impact one's views on leadership is gaining more attention. At the same time, technology has amplified the visibility of instances of destructive leadership, and researchers are giving more attention to why it occurs and how to deal with it.

KEY TERMS

ability

adaptive leadership

approach

authentic leadership

"Big Five" personality factors

charismatic leadership

connective leadership

contingency theory

dark side of leadership

emotional intelligence

ethical leadership

gender-based studies

"Great Man" theories

leader–member exchange (LMX) theory

leadership

path–goal theory

relational approach

relationship (process) behaviors

servant leadership

situational approach

skill

spiritual leadership

task behaviors

theory

trait

trait approach

transformational leadership theory

Application

1.1 Case Study—King of the Hill

Denny Hill's career as a high school swimming coach didn't start out well. The seniors on his team quit in the first season because he required them to come to all the workouts. The team only won three meets the whole season. That was 40 years ago. Since that time, the high school chemistry teacher's success as a swimming coach has been extraordinary; his winnings include more than 900 boys' and girls' dual meets and a phenomenal 31 state titles.

Denny is noted for creating a team effort out of what is usually considered an individual sport. He begins every season with a team sleepover, followed by "Hell Week," a two-week grueling regimen in which team members swim at least 5 miles a workout and 10 miles a day. He acknowledges this is a bonding experience for the swimmers, regardless of their skill, because they are "all in the same boat."

Denny passes the mantle of leadership onto his team members. Seniors are expected to be mature leaders who inform the freshmen of the team goals and expectations. Juniors are to be role models, while sophomores serve as quiet leaders who are still learning but have a foundation in the team culture. Even the freshman members have a job: They are required to pay attention to the coaches and other team members as they learn the team's culture and what's expected.

Denny holds a 20-minute team meeting each Monday where every member has the opportunity to present a rose or a complaint to anyone on the team including the coaches. He is tough on swimmers and makes them work, but when they need support, he is always there to put an arm around them. Denny also uses humor, often making jokes that help take the edge off long, hard workouts.

And despite his teams' successes, Denny isn't about winning; he's more about preparing to win—telling his swimmers that by preparing to win, everything takes care of itself. When you do win, he says, you've done it the right way.

Questions

1. What leadership *traits* account for Denny Hill's success?

2. How would you describe Denny's leadership *abilities*?

3. Leadership includes administrative skills, interpersonal skills, and conceptual skills. How does Denny stack up on these *skills*?

4. How does Denny integrate task and relationship *behaviors* in his leadership?

5. From a *relational* perspective, how would you describe Denny's leadership?

6. In what way does Denny's coaching exemplify leadership as an *influence process*?

Application

1.2 Case Study—Charity: Water

When Scott Harrison created Charity: Water in 2006, he wanted not only to bring clean drinking water to millions around the world but also to redefine philanthropy by converting thousands of formerly skeptical "non-givers" to join and fund his cause.

When Scott was young, his devoutly religious family relocated to New Jersey for his father's job—a move that proved extremely detrimental to Scott's mother's health. Their new home had a carbon monoxide leak that permanently damaged her immune system. At a young age, Scott became a caregiver for her as she essentially lived in isolation, spending her time in a "clean room" and wearing a charcoal mask on her face to protect her from ingesting toxins from the air.

As a teen, however, Scott rebelled, joining a rock band and, after barely graduating from high school, leaving for New York to pursue music and attend New York University. He became a nightclub promoter, working for 40 different clubs over 10 years to attract the "beautiful people"—the wealthy and powerful who would easily pay $10,000 for a night of partying and the opportunity to be seen in the hippest, most trendy places.

Scott became an influencer; a few phone calls made by him to the right people could put a nightclub on the map. In return, Scott received a percentage of a club's sales, making $3,000 to $5,000 on a good night (Clifford, 2018), as well as endorsement deals, being paid well just to be seen drinking a particular brand of alcohol.

By outside appearances, Scott had an enviable life, but he had become disillusioned with his lifestyle, believing he was "polluting" himself with drugs, alcohol, and pornography, and feeling disconnected from the spirituality and morality of his childhood (Fields, 2018). He began seeking the opposite of what he was doing, applying to work with humanitarian efforts. With only his experience as a club promoter to offer, he received numerous rejections until Mercy Ships, a nonprofit hospital ship that delivers medical care to places where such care is not available, responded. The organization was looking for a photojournalist to document its efforts in Liberia. For this opportunity, Scott would pay Mercy Ships $500 per month. For him, it was perfect: the opposite of his current life, working in an impoverished country ravaged by civil war and paying for the pleasure to do so.

Scott's first Mercy Ships tour was on a 525-foot hospital ship, equipped with 42 beds, a few operating rooms, and an MRI machine. The ship traveled to Liberia, which had no operating hospitals and only two surgeons in the entire country. He documented the work on the ship and photographed every patient both before and after medical intervention, and his images and stories were used to raise awareness and inspire donors to contribute to the organization's work.

Scott realized that the wealthy and powerful people who had followed him when he was a club promoter could prove helpful in assisting Mercy Ships with its mission and that the skills he had developed to lure people to nightclubs could also be effective at rallying people in support of a good cause. He compiled a list of 15,000 potential donors who could make significant financial contributions and began blasting them with emails filled with images

and stories of Mercy Ships patients. While he received dismissal from some, he found many more were moved by the stories and wanted to help.

On Scott's second Mercy Ships tour, he ventured into the Liberian countryside and the villages that were home to the organization's patients. He was struck by the morbid conditions of these villages' water sources—learning that 50% of the country was drinking unsafe, dirty contaminated water, which contributed directly to many of the illnesses and suffering of Mercy Ships patients. Scott had gone from witnessing wealthy club patrons buying $10 bottles of designer water, which they didn't open, to seeing people die from a lack of clean drinking water. The contrast was not lost on him, and he had found a cause that deeply resonated with him.

He had no money, was $30,000 in debt, and had no experience in building an organization, but when he returned to New York, he jumped in, making 8–10 presentations a day to interest others in his mission of providing clean drinking water for the 1 billion people in the world without it. His presentations met with little success in the way of donations; instead, he learned that there was a profound distrust of and cynicism toward charities. To be successful, he would have to "reimagine" the giving process.

Scott created Charity: Water and a four-pronged plan to reinvent the charity model. The first element is to guarantee that 100% of donations directly finance clean water projects. Following the model of multibillionaire Paul Tudor Jones of the Robin Hood Foundation, he established two separate accounts. Every public donation goes into the first account to be used exclusively to fund the water projects. A second account, called The Well, funded by a small group of private donors dedicated specifically to financing operating expenses, pays the salaries and overhead of the organization.

The second prong is "proof," visibly showing donors the impact of their contributions using technology. The organization's partners in foreign countries use GPS devices, take photos, and upload and post the GPS coordinates and pictures for each project on Google Earth and Google Maps.

Third, Scott replaced the "poverty mentality" most charities use in their marketing with the idea that giving should be an opportunity and a blessing, not an obligation or a debt. Through stories focused on hope, opportunity, and fun, Charity: Water offers a "grand invitation" to join the effort in creating a world where every person has clean drinking water.

The last prong is to use local partners in the countries where Charity: Water has its projects. For the work to be sustainable and culturally appropriate, it has to be led by local people. Charity: Water raises awareness of the issue and the money to solve it, while the locals are "the heroes," who use that money to bring clean water to their communities.

Charity: Water began at the start of a major world financial crisis, but still managed to raise $1.7 million in its first year. Donations grew 490% in the first three years of operations, while net giving in the United States dropped by 8% during the same period. Charity: Water now has raised more than $689 million and provided more than 15 million people around the world with access to clean water through more than 111,000 projects in 29 different countries (Charity: Water, 2023).

At the same time, Scott has stuck to his vision to radically change the charitable giving landscape by tapping into people's desire to make a difference, and provide complete transparency, thus raising the standards for an entire industry.

Questions

1. What leadership *traits* account for Scott Harrison's success?

2. How would you describe Scott's leadership *abilities*?

3. Leadership includes administrative skills, interpersonal skills, and conceptual skills. In what ways does Scott exhibit these *skills*?

4. Based on the definition of leadership as an *influence process*, how would you describe Scott's leadership?

5. Though Scott was a well-paid, successful club promoter with a long list of "followers," would you characterize that element of his career path as "leadership"? Why or why not?

Application

1.3 Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire

Purpose

1. To identify how you view leadership
2. To explore your perceptions of different aspects of leadership

Directions

1. Consider for a moment your own impressions of the word *leadership.* Based on your experiences with leaders in your lifetime, what is leadership?
2. Using the scale provided, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about leadership.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. When I think of leadership, I think of a person with special personality traits.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Much like playing the piano or tennis, leadership is a learned ability.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Leadership requires knowledge and know-how.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Leadership is about what people do rather than who they are.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Followers can influence the leadership process as much as leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Leadership is about the process of influencing others.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Some people are born to be leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Some people have the natural ability to be leaders.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
9. The key to successful leadership is having the right skills.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Leadership is best described by what leaders do.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Leaders and followers share in the leadership process.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Leadership is a series of actions directed toward positive ends.	1	2	3	4	5
13. A person needs to have certain traits to be an effective leader.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Everyone has the capacity to be a leader.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Effective leaders are competent in their roles.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The essence of leadership is performing tasks and dealing with people.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Leadership is about the common purposes of leaders and followers.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Leadership does not rely on the leader alone but is a process involving the leader, followers, and the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
19. People become great leaders because of their traits.	1	2	3	4	5
20. People can develop the ability to lead.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Effective leaders have competence and knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
22. Leadership is about how leaders work with people to accomplish goals.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Effective leadership is best explained by the leader–follower relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Leaders influence and are influenced by followers.	1	2	3	4	5

Scoring

1. Sum scores on items 1, 7, 13, and 19 (trait emphasis)
2. Sum scores on items 2, 8, 14, and 20 (ability emphasis)
3. Sum scores on items 3, 9, 15, and 21 (skill emphasis)
4. Sum scores on items 4, 10, 16, and 22 (behavior emphasis)
5. Sum scores on items 5, 11, 17, and 23 (relationship emphasis)
6. Sum scores on items 6, 12, 18, and 24 (influence process emphasis)

Total Scores

1. Trait emphasis: _____
2. Ability emphasis: _____
3. Skill emphasis: _____
4. Behavior emphasis: _____
5. Relationship emphasis: _____
6. Influence process emphasis: _____

Scoring Interpretation

The scores you receive on this questionnaire provide information about how you define and view leadership. The emphasis you give to the various dimensions of leadership has implications for how you approach the leadership process. For example, if your highest score is for *trait emphasis*, it suggests that you emphasize the role of the leader and the leader's special gifts in the leadership process. However, if your highest score is for *relationship emphasis*, it indicates that you think leadership is centered on the communication between leaders and followers, rather than on the unique qualities of the leader. By comparing your scores, you can gain an understanding of the aspects of leadership that you find most important and least important. The way you think about leadership will influence how you practice leadership.

Application

1.4 Observational Exercise—Defining Leadership

Purpose

1. To develop an understanding of the complexity of leadership
2. To become aware of the different ways people think about leadership

Directions

1. In this exercise, select five people you know and interview them about leadership.
2. Ask each person to give you their definition of leadership, and to describe how they conceptualize it. Have them elaborate on the question: What is leadership?
3. Record each person's response on a separate sheet of paper.

   Person #1 (name) _____

   Person #2 (name) _____

   Person #3 (name) _____

   Person #4 (name) _____

   Person #5 (name) _____

Questions

1. What differences did you observe in how these people define leadership?

2. What seems to be the most common view of leadership?

   a. In the beginning of this chapter, we discussed six ways of viewing leadership. Which of these ways was highlighted most frequently by your interviewees? And which was highlighted least?

   b. Of the people interviewed, whose descriptions come closest to your own? Why?

Application

1.5 Reflection and Action Worksheet—Understanding Leadership

Reflection

1. Each of us has our own unique way of thinking about leadership. What leaders or people have influenced you in your thinking about leadership? Discuss what leadership means to you and give your definition of leadership.

2. What do the scores you received on the Conceptualizing Leadership Questionnaire suggest about your perspective on leadership? Of the six dimensions on the questionnaire (trait, ability, skill, behavior, relationship, and influence process), which one is the most similar to your own perspective? Which one is least like your own perspective?

3. Do you think leadership is something everyone can learn to do, or do you think it is a natural ability reserved for a few? Explain your answer.

Action

1. Based on the interviews you conducted with others about leadership, how could you incorporate others' ideas about leadership into your own leadership?

2. Treating leadership as a relationship has ethical implications. How could adding the *relationship* approach to your leadership make you a better leader? Discuss.

3. Think about your own leadership. Identify one trait, ability, skill, or behavior that you could develop more fully to become a better leader.