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Conceptual Framework: Leadership In A Global Virtual Community

Deborah L. Wise

University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center

Introduction

As a student who has spent a career in the corporate world, I wasn't sure what I expected to gain from a doctoral class on leadership. I had been in managerial jobs since I was 19 years old, when I was given a "leadership" position in a fast-food restaurant. In that environment the parameters that determined success were all measurable: food costs, labor expense, ticket average, number of customers served, and real growth. In this role, it was my analytical nature that ensured I would always be among the best in my field. Looking back at that time in my life, I wonder-was my analytical nature a trait or was it a skill?

Once I was more established in my ability to manage tasks, I was hired for positions where I had as much responsibility for the development of others as I had for statistical results. In these positions it became more important to *lead*-influence others toward a particular end. I found this to be a much more difficult a role than what was expected of me as a manager. In my management experiences I was a statistical master, knowing what numbers had an effect on other numbers and how to correct numbers that were outliers. Numbers don't have personalities, don't have bad days, and didn't want my job. Leadership was a whole new world.

The purpose of this paper is to examine my leadership style, celebrate the areas where I excel as a leader and acknowledge where I need to improve to become more effective. My conceptual framework includes several books that I read as part of my leadership coursework, some of which included self-tests on strengths, skills and traits. The questions I hope to answer as part of this effort are: (a) what is my leadership style, (b) is my philosophy of leadership more trait-based or skills-based, and (c) is my philosophy of leadership consistent with my professional and personal goals. I also hope to continue to develop knowledge of my leadership philosophy, how I respond to others, and where I can contribute in a global virtual community.

Conceptual Framework: Leadership In A Global Virtual Community

In a world system, with economies and cultures that can be very different yet right in our own neighborhood, it becomes necessary to be able to live peacefully with everyone while at the same time not losing our own unique sense of identity.

Multicultural Focus

“Adaptive work consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values people stand for and the values they face.”

-Ronald A. Heifetz

As someone who was born and raised in the shadow of New York City, my entire life has existed as a member of a multicultural community. My family was Italian; my great-grandfather came to this country from Sicily in 1902 and was part of the Ellis Island immigration. My great-grandmother joined him after a few years and they settled in Brooklyn, where my family owned a small grocery store. Competition from a larger grocery chain forced my ancestors out of New York and into northern New Jersey, where all subsequent generations have been raised.

While my childhood was far from idyllic, what I remember most about this time period was the focus on those who might be ‘different’. My family was one of many Italian families in my neighborhood; the culture was similar in all: lots of pasta, heavily Catholic, and a zest to live life to the fullest. But this was the 1960’s; life for everyone wasn’t as blissful. The urban area where my family lived was Plainfield, New Jersey-the site of a tremendous amount of racial unrest during the Civil Rights era. By day, all of us in the local elementary school sat next to each other and tried to learn. By night, racial lines were drawn and everyone was forced to

choose sides. To this day, I can remember the sounds of gunfire outside my bedroom window at night. I was so fearful during this time, I can remember putting my doll, which was just about my height, in my bed while I slept under the bed, in the event of gunshots coming through the window. I just wanted everyone to get along. My pledge to myself during those years was to be colorblind until my last breath.

International Collaboration

Many years later I found myself in Denver, Colorado at a time when the University of Denver (DU) was piloting a program called GeM (Global eManagement) with an international consortium of business schools. DU was one of only two schools in the US to be involved in the program, largely due to the program's technology concentration. The focus of GeM was to build global eBusiness leaders and systems developers for a future on the information superhighway. The program was conducted at sites internationally, with collaborative teams that included members from each of the participating schools. As someone who had never really traveled outside the US, this was a huge leap of personal faith in my ability to compete in a global environment. Our first actual class was in Spain, where we met other program participants and learned about what it meant to collaborate as an international, multicultural team.

There were two strong impressions I was left with as a result of the first symposium: First, I had the naive idea that America was the technology hub of the world. This was simply not true-Europe had gotten much further in agreeing on standards, particularly in telecommunications. The European members on my team were all extremely comfortable with their smart phones (personal digital assistant-type devices). I had never even heard of a smart phone. Second, every person in the program, no matter what country they were from, spoke

English as well as I did-maybe better. There was no language gap, as GeM was conducted in English everywhere.

The members of my team were from Spain, Iceland, Rotterdam, Copenhagen and Mexico. Part of our initial collaboration had to do with team building, which was made more challenging because of the international focus and our lack of personal trust in each other. Lencioni (2002) talks about what dysfunctions prevent teams from becoming effective (see figure 1); we suffered from all of them.



Figure 1. The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Lencioni, 2002)

As the program progressed, we didn't deny the conflicts existed but rather embraced them as a necessary agent for change (Heifetz, 1994). These adaptive leadership principles not only helped us to assign responsibilities effectively, we were able to collaborate and produce results as one team, as opposed to separate constituents. That graduate experience shaped my global perspective so dramatically that now I specifically look for opportunities to collaborate internationally.

Who I Am

Even as a young child, my attention was turned toward interests that were more technical or mechanical. Whether it was taking apart wristwatches with my mother's eyebrow tweezers or my fascination with how cars work, my interests were always more analytical. I am introverted by nature, and the ability to manipulate numbers or understand how processes affect an end result is how I contribute to society as a whole. When I began reading about strengths and how my talents could be used to develop others (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001), I immediately assumed my technical and analytic strengths would be prominent in my StrengthsFinder Profile, the assessment that measures thirty-four themes of talent. To my complete surprise, relational strengths overshadowed anything that was analytical or technical in nature. While I am painfully introverted and the thought of actually being "social" makes my palms sweat, the more I thought about the results of my profile, the more I realized they were accurate (with possibly one

exception). These results were particularly compelling because much of my personal and professional work is conducted entirely online.

Relator

A relator wants to have a reciprocal understand with others regarding their goals, their fears and their dreams. Due to the depth of these types of relationships, relators maintain a close inner circle. In my own case, I have found this to be true due to my introverted tendencies. That may be viewed as a constraint, however it allows me to be a very effective team leader, particularly with groups undergoing change. At one point in my career, I was involved with an automotive dealership that was undergoing a restructuring of its collision repair operation. Aside from adopting an automated business system which enables customers to schedule estimating appointments via the Internet, the dealership constructed a state of the art repair center that was several times the size of the old facility and would require at least a ten-fold increase in repair business to break even. To compound my challenge, I knew nothing about the collision repair business and the majority of the people I now worked with were seasoned body-repairmen who thought a woman had no place in a body shop. Instead of coming in as a commanding presence, I went to each one of the repairmen and said, "Whatever I learn about the collision business, I am going to learn from you; what do you want me to know?" Using these cognitive and emotive traits led to a quick turnaround in their attitude toward my presence there (Strang, 2004).

Learner

A Learner needs to understand why things work the way they do and they need to be able to quickly become proficient in order to move on to the next thing. In the example above, my hope was to quickly learn the collision business from the people who provided the service-the repairmen themselves. The collision repair business has a "culture", just as a university might

(Kempner, 2003). Each repair center is unique, with its own set of personalities and processes. Once I understood the business from the perspective of these repairmen at this location, then I could turn my attention toward other aspects of the business, such as marketing and finances.

In my current position as the director of learning technology, I am immersed in the educational community of Second Life, the massive multiplayer online roleplay game (MMORPG). Second Life is less of a game in the strict sense (no points, no conquering an opponent) but is more of an independent, free-market economy, with the ability to buy and sell land, own a home and conduct business for a profit. Because it is an environment created by and for its players, Second Life has a large sub-culture of educators using the medium for teaching and learning. In my role it was necessary for me to learn Second Life quickly, in order to be able to present the benefits of the medium to our board of directors. In one weekend, I was able to be proficient enough to function; by the time I was in the game for three months, I was able to mentor others.

Maximizer

Maximizers are continually in search of excellence and they live to develop the strengths in others. This person transforms performing teams into stellar teams. When I first looked at this as one of my strengths, I didn't see this in myself. I considered myself more of a restorative problem solver than a maximizer of people who were already competent. The more I thought about it, the more I realized I am a champion for optimal business practice; I have little patience for systems that don't work (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006). This is especially challenging in education, where change can be painfully slow. Thankfully, my position with a for-profit university makes this process bearable.

Connectedness

The person with connectedness as a strength is known as a comforter and encourager. They are aware of their place in a bigger world and want to leave it better than they found it (Cashman, 1998). If there is a strength I most identify with, this is it-especially in a virtual world such as Second Life.

My childhood was less than idyllic; as a result, I am very perceptive to the feelings of others (remember the Relator characteristics). As a maximizer, my goal is to see everyone live up to his or her utmost potential; the result is a sense of connectedness. I want to be the perpetual champion-the person who celebrates the accomplishments of others and encourages them to be better than they ever thought they could. In a physical world, this is usually easy; my close inner circle knows this strength. In the virtual world however, this is more of a challenge. Roleplay games such as Second Life have an inherent anonymity that creates barriers to connectedness. Once trust is established, then connectedness usually occurs. I found this to be the foundation of change in my international work as well.

Focus

A person with focus is very goal-driven, productive and efficient. They are also good at filtering, in order to stay on task. This strength has been a double-edged sword in my life. I have the ability to remain extremely focused and work very well independently, which in turn allows me to be more productive than most of my peers. The negative effect is that I often appear aloof and distant because I am less social in the workplace. My ability to remain focused and to filter out most distractions also makes me appear more competitive, which is less desirable for a woman in educational administration (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004).

How I Interact With Others

Northouse (2004) presents a balanced view of skill vs. trait leadership, as well as how ethics and a sense of community also affect leadership theory. O'Toole (1993) has also addressed this ethics-community balance with his Executive Compass, with the four points of the decision-making compass being Liberty, Equality, Efficiency and Community. As I completed the questionnaires in the book, it became apparent that my leadership identity has become much more balanced over time (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen, 2005).

Leadership Traits

Northouse (2004) describes some central leadership traits as intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability. The trait approach to leadership focuses exclusively on the leader because these traits are supposedly inherent to the leader, not the followers or the situation. In my case, my highest scores on the Leadership Trait Questionnaire were in the areas of perception, persistency and determination. These were no surprise, particularly after completing the StrengthsFinder. It was also no surprise to see that my weakest areas were in being friendly and outgoing. My position within the university gives me oversight over several technology initiatives; it is essential I be able to communicate the vision and motivate faculty and staff (Anderson & Dexter, 2005).

Skills

A skills approach to leadership assumes leadership capabilities can be developed over time through education and experience (Northouse, 2004). These competencies include problem-solving skills, social judgement, and knowledge. Individual attributes included in skills development are cognitive ability, motivation and personality. The leadership outcomes that result from skills development are effective problem solving and performance. When I completed my own skills inventory as part of this study, my technical skills were most

prominent, followed by my conceptual skills. This is consistent with my technical background and experience in project management. In fact, these two scores were very close. Trailing far behind was my human skill score. Since human skills become more important at upper management levels, it is essential for me to develop this skill.

Leadership Style

According to Northouse, a leader's style is composed of some balance between task behaviors and relationship behaviors. This balance is illustrated on Blake and Mouton's Managerial (Leadership) Grid (see figure 2). The grid plots management styles by how prominent a task or relational style is present in the leader. A 1,1 score on the grid represents an impoverished management style, where a leader exerts the minimum work effort to get the job done. A 9,9 score on the other hand, is optimal team management, where work is accomplished through interdependent, committed people (Lencioni, 2002).

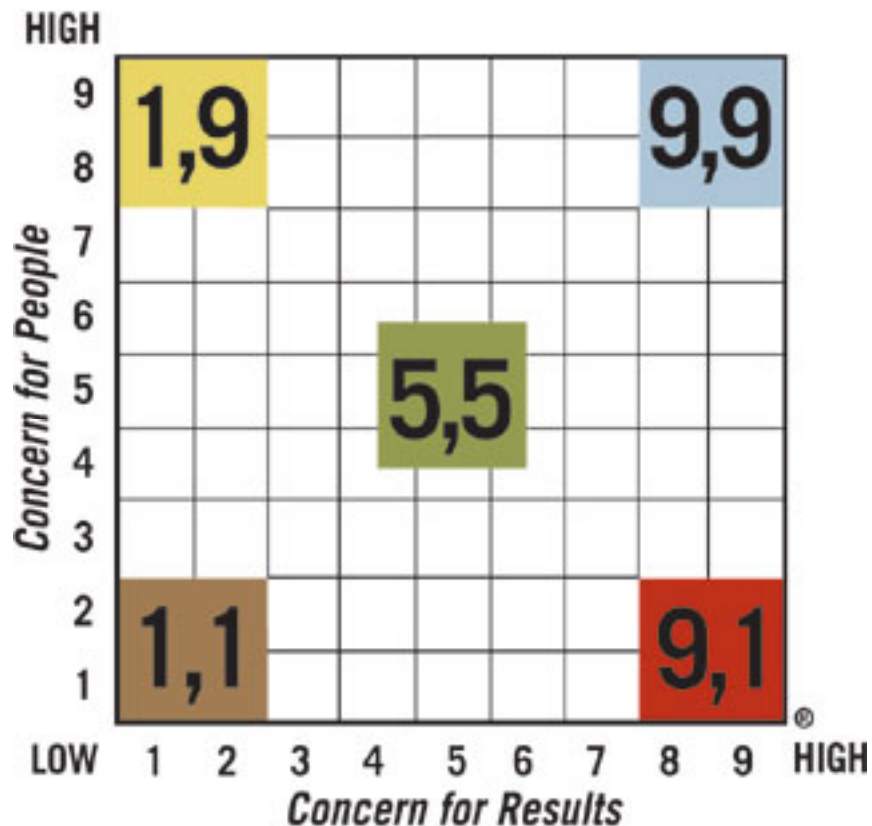


Figure 2. The Leadership Grid (Blake & Mouton, 1991)

My own score on the leadership style questionnaire was an almost equal score between task and relationship management. This would place me right in the center of the grid, described as “middle of the road” management where there is a balance between the necessity to get work done while maintaining the morale of people at a satisfactory level. This is certainly not the level of transformational leadership I would like to be at, but it does indicate that I have moved away from a purely analytic style.

Least Preferred Coworker

During my leadership class, I gave an example of a person I worked with at the university that I found impossible to work with. This person was such an irritant that I asked him not to talk

to me unless it was work-related. I was particularly bothered by this because I would like to think I can get along with just about anyone. Northouse included something called a Least Preferred Coworker (LPC) measure in the book, where I was supposed to think of relating to this person while still getting work done. To my surprise, I really couldn't say anything negative about this person, aside from my finding him one of the most irritating people I had ever worked with. My resulting high LPC score indicated that I derived major job satisfaction from interpersonal relationships and as a result, I could see positive qualities even in the person I least liked working with. A key to someone with a high LPC score (and myself particularly) is that we need to have our relationships in good order before attending to tasks.

Path-Goal Leadership

This leadership style focuses on choosing behaviors that supplement or compliment that is missing in the work setting (Northouse, 2004). Strong path-goal leaders define goals, clarify paths, remove obstacles and provide support. It is more reminiscent of adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994) in that there is a constant rebalancing that needs to be done to maintain equilibrium among behaviors. A criticism with path-goal theory is that it promotes dependency over time and fails to recognize the full abilities of subordinates. As someone who is relational and perceptive, I am constantly looking to provide what may be missing in the work setting. My scores on the path-goal questionnaire bear this out: my scores were equal across directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented styles.

Multifactor (Transformational) Leadership

If there is an area of leadership that I hope to aspire to, it is that of a transformational leader. Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms individuals (Northouse, 2004). This type of leadership is visionary and charismatic, challenging others to

accomplish past what is usually expected. This relates back to my sense of connectedness and relationship. A transformational leader engages others to such an extent that both the leader and the follow are raised to a higher level. This is what I hope to accomplish in a virtual community as well as where I work. While this approach may lack conceptual clarity, no one can deny the effect a leader such as Martin Luther King, Jr. had on those he lead. In completing the questionnaire for this section, my highest scores were in: (a) idealized influence -holding the trust, faith, respect, and dedication of my subordinates while appealing to their hopes and dreams (again, the Relator strength), and (b) individualized consideration-the degree to which I show an interest in the well-being of others and pay attention to those who seem more detached. This style translates very well to the Internet. Once trust has been established, I have found this genuine concern for others to be very helpful in removing the communication barriers inherent in a virtual world. It is my opinion that people involved socially in a roleplay environment such as Second Life are frequently looking to compensate for something missing in their “first” life. My ability to uncover the dreams and goals of some of the people I have met there has enhanced my role as an educator both in and outside of the game.

My lowest scores in this area were in Laissez-faire leadership and Contingent reward. I am a hands-on leader, always looking for ways to maximize the efforts of a group. I don't recognize achievement in others nearly often enough. I am much better at this in the virtual world than I am among members of my own team.

Psychodynamic Approach

A psychodynamic leader has insight into his or her own emotional makeup and how that influences others (Briskin, 1998). Factors in this understanding have to do with family history and culture, level of dependence, repression and the shadow self, and archetypes. In my case, a

desire to be perfect masks the shadow of a fear of failure. While this may be seen as an asset because the quality of my work usually exceeds expectations, it also prevents me from taking some risks that enhance my professional goals. As an archetype, my desire to transform the ordinary into the supernatural makes me more of a magician-someone who wants to be seen as authentic and balanced, as opposed to the warrior-leader, who wants to be seen as confident and respected. The results of my psychodynamic approach survey developed by Jung showed me to be Introverted (big surprise), equal between Sensitive and Intuitive, Feeling and Perceiving.

Gender Consciousness

As interesting as gender issues and the way meaning and evaluation of sex are viewed in the workplace, it is even more interesting in the virtual world. In the real world, I have always been considered an attractive woman and have enjoyed (or suffered) the consequences that went along with that. In the virtual world, it is possible to present gender in any number of ways. In Second Life, I have created an avatar that is an ideal vision of myself: perfect body, skin tone and eye color, flaming red hair and an extensive wardrobe. What I have been able to do, anyone playing the game can do. Yet others choose a different path. Some create avatars that are specifically unattractive. Others create characters that are genderless or animal. Then there are those that create cross-sexual identities, in order to experience Second Life from a different perspective. The point is that gender can't always be determined, and it may be less of a factor in a virtual community. The same theory is true where color is concerned. There is no color in the virtual world, unless someone adds color. As a result, most of the avatars I have seen are what would be considered Caucasian but a person can choose any color skin they desire. The fact that most are White may be an indicator of racial stereotypes that are transmitting from the real world into the virtual world. My gender consciousness score is moderate across Expectation of

privilege, Preference for similarity, and Preference for control. I had hoped this would be the case; my history and work in international communities had caused me to see everyone in an equal light.

Ethics

An ethical leader is concerned with the virtuousness of individuals and their motives (Northouse, 2004). This is also a core tenant of adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994), where the conflict among competing values is necessary as a change agent. Transformational and Servant leadership styles adopt a more altruistic ethical overtone, which may be acceptable in non-profit environments but will most likely not be effective in the for-profit world. In any event, leaders have to balance foundational principles such as respect, service, justice, honesty, and community (O'Toole, 1993). My scores in this area reveal my highly ethical nature and my strong sense of justice. I am a tireless advocate for the underdog; my nature is to seek out the disadvantaged and act as a mentor.

Organizational Considerations

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) write about educational administration as it applies to the k-12 community. While that isn't the environment I am currently in or have professional aspirations toward, they wrote about the Seven Action Imperatives of a Learning Organization, which certainly apply to the work I am doing at the university level, particularly in the for-profit space where maintaining a competitive advantage is essential.

Create Continuous Learning Opportunities

New learning opportunities can be from one of two areas: (a) experimentation with learning models, and (b) Obtaining the technology tools to help faculty gain new skills (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). My institution uses a scenario-based learning model, where

course outcomes measure competencies and projects have real-world application. Faculty members are trained in using this active-learning model and expected to use the model in their class design, as part of the educational culture of the school (Hallinger, 2003). In my position, I have oversight of several technology initiatives in addition to Second Life: Adobe Breeze as a synchronous meeting tool, Tegrity for desktop recording, and Podcasting as a way to archive classes and deliver courses to handheld devices. The university is committed to using whatever technology tools are feasible in order to help faculty deliver curriculum to students.

Promote Inquiry and Dialogue

In some school cultures, there is a fear of conflict that prevents meaningful dialogue from taking place (Lencioni, 2002). These same cultures can thwart attempts to create necessary change to policies and systems, placing experienced faculty members who want to preserve an institutions distinction against administrators who have budget responsibilities (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). In a for-profit educational institution, the ultimate responsibility of the school is to balance a quality education with the interests of shareholders. Dialogue can be open and all voices can be heard but in the end, the school is in business to make money. As funding sources for non-profit institutions shift away from the government, higher education is adopting a model more like corporations in the choice of board members, new programs and community involvement (Yielder & Codling, 2004).

Encourage Collaborative and Team Learning

Effective school leadership happens at all levels. It is an influence process and is social in nature (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). As a Maximizer, my goal is to tap the expertise that already exists and to share that experience with others who may benefit from that information. In the corporate world, I often worked in change or crisis management situations. When I was in the

restaurant business, my responsibility was to turn around poorly performing units. In a timeframe of 30-45 days, I was expected to standardize processes and quickly find people on existing staffs that were subject-matter experts and willing to share their knowledge. Once the core teams were re-trained, it was easy to get these people to influence their peers. This created something of a Highly Reliable Organization (HRO) because processes could be repeated with the same result once my role was completed (Bellamy, Crawford, Marshall, and Coulter, 2005). As someone who works in a technical environment, my experience with reliability has been with Six Sigma and the Capability Maturity Model. In education I find that this type of repeatable-process model is nonexistent (with the exception of Baldrige), most likely because of the social nature of education. With the advent of standards-based education, my hope is that some of the leadership delegation and cross-functional teamwork that is common in the business world will make it's way to education, without the fear of someone loosing intellectual property.

Create Systems to Capture and Share Learning

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) mention technology and processes for collaborative development. They suggest strategies such as Lotus notes and Microsoft Access to capture ideas. As someone in for-profit education I have to think across a wide spectrum of tools and processes to not only affect the capture and sharing of learning, but to affect the process across platforms and in geographically disburse locations. This is necessary to remain differentiated in a competitive market and to return value to shareholders (Paul, 2005). My collaboration toolbox includes many web-based tools that are platform independent and have graphical user interfaces. I am also one of the administrators for Blackboard, our primary content management system,

where I have created many program-specific communities, where chairs and faculty can access all course content and post announcements. There is also a Breeze community that any group can use to hold live chat sessions on-demand. We use these tools to not only be economically efficient; we have an entire online learning division where our faculty and students can be anywhere and still participate.

Empower People Toward a Collective Vision

As a corporation, my university a mission and vision statement as a prominent part of our culture. This collective mission is to be a university of choices, both in the programs we offer and the delivery methods we use. This vision is apparent in everything from our board of trustees (who are from a wide spectrum of industry backgrounds and have interlock with other boards) to the faculty, who are frequently industry experts as opposed to career academics (Pusser, Slaughter, and Thomas, 2006). Our collective vision is to differentiate ourselves by offering programs that are career-focused in the markets in which we operate. Each of our campuses has the option to develop and offer curriculum (with governance approval) that addresses the needs of their specific community, rather than have each of our six ground campuses become a carbon copy of each other. This enables local faculty and administration to develop a unique local culture, while still maintaining the collective university vision.

This vision is also prominent in our hiring practices. As a corporation, we are customer driven and provide high-touch service for our students. In my own interview process, more emphasis was placed on my customer service skills than my curriculum design background. Our use of the Noel Levitz annual satisfaction survey reveals our students feel that our programs are seen as academically rigorous and that students perceive there is a good cost-benefit value.

The only other company I have worked for with the same level of empowerment was Lands' End, the direct clothing merchant based in Dodgeville, Wisconsin. When I worked there, on the wall of the lobby (where every employee could see it) was a message from the company founder stenciled in large letters. It said, "I will never take action against an employee who is acting in the best interests of the customer." This created an environment where we weren't afraid to fail, and where we knew we were free to find the best balance between what was best for the company and the customer.

Connect the Organization to its Environment

My organization has two environments; one environment is the local community, the other is global. In the local communities, faculty and administrators are encouraged to be involved in the community and to volunteer (with pay) at local charities. At our flagship campus in Colorado Springs, Colorado, our environment is made up of military and defense contractors. Our degree programs in engineering, computer science and systems security reflect the needs of our community. In Pueblo, which is only an hour from our main campus, the programs are more geared toward health care and nursing, which is a reflection of the needs of that local community. Our presence in these communities makes our institution a viable alternative to non-profit educational institutions, as our programs are career oriented and are using current technology (McRel, 2005).

Our competition in the marketplace is other for-profit educators; we don't share revenue or enrollment information other than what is publicly available. What we do watch for is innovate learning techniques that would make one educator more competitive than another. In the case of my university, we are in the process of building a learning community in Second Life

and collaborating with a non-profit research institution in this process. This type of collaboration will differentiate us from our competitors and connect us to a global learning community.

Provide Strategic Leadership for Learning

Unlike public education (k-12), the majority of instructors in corporate education are adjunct teachers who work in the industries that they teach. This is beneficial for our students, as our programs focus on course outcomes that will prepare students for careers. This is also beneficial for us as an institution, as most of the professional development for these instructors is accomplished with their primary employers. As industry-experts, these instructors become program leaders and have more impact on student success than campus presidents (McRel, 2003).

Full-time instructors in corporate education may not have the same research and publication requirements as their non-profit counterparts. While there is no publication requirement for professional instructors at my institution, the nature of our programs require our instructors to be current in the technologies and standards to maintain professional accreditation. The university budget provides for the professional development of all instructors.

Conceptual Framework

One of the artifacts for this class on leadership was a personal conceptual framework of my leadership philosophy (see figure 3). I created my framework before taking many of the surveys and the StrengthFinder; it was interesting to see how the framework aligned with all the results.

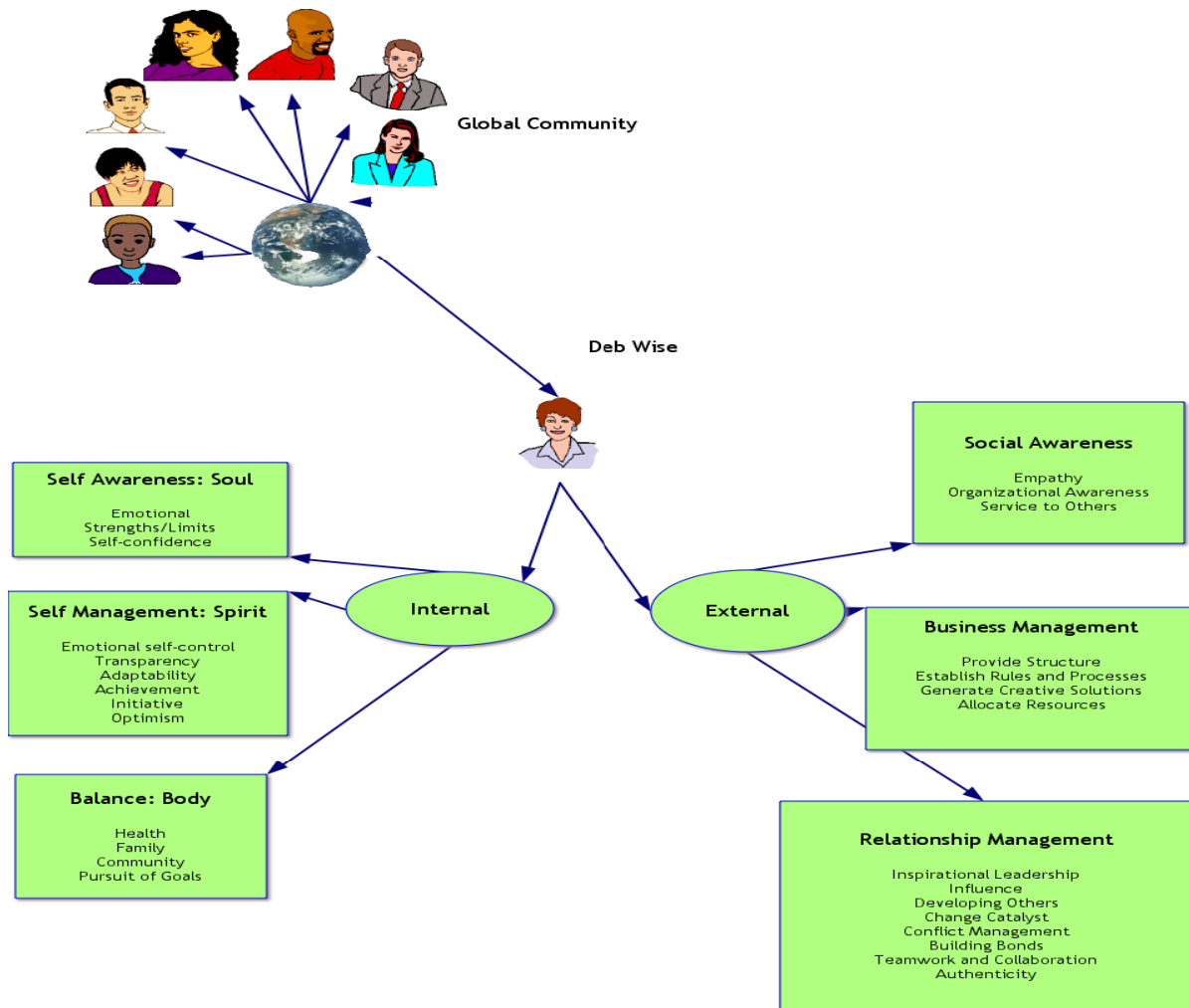


Figure 3. Deborah Wise Conceptual Framework

In the upper left of the framework is how I see myself as part of a larger global community. As mentioned earlier, this is due not only to my early childhood but also to the experiences I have had as a graduate student and collaborator in Second Life. Because of the diverse values and cultures common in a global community, Heifetz (1994) most resonates with me in this role. In his book, he related an excellent example to illustrate three situational types

(see table 1). He described a man who upon having some pain, went to see the physician who had treated him for a health problem several years previously. He already had built a trusting relationship with this physician based on his previous experience, which was an easy diagnosis and ultimately cured. This previous illness was a good representation of situation Type I. There was a clear diagnosis; a clear method of treatment and the responsibility for the execution of the treatment was with the physician, who wrote the prescription. With this new illness however, the news isn't as good; the patient has cancer, and now the physician assumes the role of keeper of the holding environment, deciding what to tell the patient and his family as they deal with the realities of their situation. Situation Type II is where there isn't a clear solution to the illness, and implementation requires learning on the part of both the physician, who balances what to tell the patient at any particular time and with the patient, who needs to make lifestyle choices to accommodate his declining situation. In Situation Type III, there is still a delicate balance between what the Physician can do and what the patient must accept but now the patient is more responsible for making the arrangements necessary to deal with the inevitable. Because of the prognosis, there is a continual reassessment of values and actions, creating an adaptive situation where no more technical work can be done.

This process is dynamic; it is not a decision that is made once, forever. It is fluid and changes constantly depending on the situation and the players. It is an active style of leadership.

Table 1

Situational Types

Situation	Problem	Solution and	Primary locus of	Kind of work
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	definition	implementation	responsibility	
Type I	Clear	Clear	Physician	Technical
Type II	Clear	Requires learning	Physician and patient	Technical and adaptive
Type III	Requires learning	Requires learning	Patient > physician	Adaptive

The next portion of the conceptual framework involves how I see myself as an individual. The volatile nature of my childhood and adolescence created an emotional “fight-or-flight” mentality that didn’t begin to dissipate until I was well into adulthood and finally dissolved with the death of my father in 2003. My adult life has been spent in the search for some sense of peace and personal balance. When I first began reading the book by Cashman (1998), my sense was that I was entering into some hippie love-fest. He began the book by describing leadership as an intimate expression of *who we are*. He then presented seven masteries:

- Personal – Leading through authentic self-expression
- Purpose – Leading by expressing our gifts to create value
- Change – Leading in the flow
- Interpersonal – Leading through synergy
- Being – Leading through being
- Balance – Leading by centering our life
- Action – Leading as a whole person

While my own personal quest for mastery has been in process for years, actually reading a systematic method toward mastery was very helpful and it pointed out areas where I am still learning. The areas of mastery also correlated to the results of my StrengthsFinder questionnaire, particularly where Connectedness strength related to Purpose Mastery.

The final piece of my conceptual framework has to do with my external leadership skills-how I relate to others. This is the outcome that my position in a global community and how I view myself should work toward. In my case, it has become more apparent that I lead based more on who I am (trait-based), than what I know (skill-based). While my earlier experience was more oriented toward business management, my later career is more oriented toward relationship management and social awareness. Northouse (2004) illustrates this as the functions of management versus leadership (see table 2):

Table 2
Functions of management versus leadership

Management	Leadership
“Produces order and consistency”	“Produces change and movement”
Planning/Budgeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish agendas • Set time tables • Allocate resources 	Establishing Direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a vision • Clarify big picture • Set strategies
Organizing/Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide structure 	Aligning people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate goals

- Make job placements
- Establish rules and procedures

Controlling/Problem solving

- Develop incentives
- Generate creative solutions
- Take corrective action

- Seek commitment
- Build teams and coalitions

Motivating and inspiring

- Inspire and energize
- Empower subordinates
- Satisfy unmet needs

My analytical strengths, developed early in my career, enable me to lead people effectively while still remaining sensitive to the needs and expectations of the corporate world. While the restaurant business wasn't an optimal career, it did enable me to understand the statistics that drive business and how to delegate and make decisions quickly. I didn't appreciate how those skills were being developed at the time but in every position I have had since then, I have drawn on the skills I learned during the 12 years I worked in that industry. Just as adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994) is a dynamic process, the restaurant industry is a high-energy profession with constant decision-making and movement. In retrospect, that is probably why I remained in that industry as long as I did. It is also what I find appealing about online learn and the environment of Second Life-the virtual world never sleeps.

Room For Improvement

Even the most accomplished of leaders have room for improvement. Cashman (1998) talks about how most of us "play the concert of life with one finger." He also quotes William James, who wrote, "Most people live, whether physically, intellectually, or morally, in a very

restricted circle of their potential being.” My hope, as a result of my leadership class, is to develop those areas of mastery where I need improvement:

Personal Mastery

My goal is to conquer the shadow beliefs that keep me from taking some risks. These beliefs usually stem from feeling I don’t measure up or “Whom am I kidding, thinking I can complete a Ph.D. program?” These beliefs have their root in childhood and while they don’t paralyze my ability to make decisions, they certainly prevent me from living up to my potential.

Purpose Mastery

Even as a child, I had an innate sense of purpose. This may have been due to my Roman Catholic upbringing, where I had a deep spiritual belief in a higher power. I never doubted I was supposed to be here; what I could never seem to understand was why. In signing my high school yearbook, one of my instructors made a comment about potential versus performance, and how apparently I had only one of those attributes.

As I matured and resolved some of my personal issues, I saw that I had the ability to become far more than I gave myself credit for, and began the quest of completing my education. My acceptance into the EDLI program has allowed me to finally live up to the potential I know I have and for the first time in my life, I feel as if I am enjoying the journey. Completing this program will be my biggest life challenge.

Change Mastery

Most people are resistant to change. They either fear the loss of life as they know it, or they are hesitant about their ability to embrace the change. As I completed the section on change mastery, I realized I was no different. I have lived my life as an influencer from the shadows.

Heifetz (2004) calls this “creative deviance”-having a tremendous amount of influence and no real accountability. In my new position at the director-level, all that has changed. I am accountable to the president of the university and have been asked to be involved in a number of initiatives as well as occupy a position on the president’s cabinet. To say I am scared to death is an understatement but at the same time I have never felt more alive.

Interpersonal Mastery

My acceptance to the EDLI program has radically changed my perspective. Prior to my acceptance, I had a graduate degree in Information Technology. As accomplished as that seemed, it still made me a business professional. Any research or writing I completed was directed at business. I have realized it is a quantum leap into a Ph.D. program, both in terms of the level of scholarly writing involved and the professional goals that have now changed to reflect research pursuits. My hope is to find my voice and distinguish myself among my peers as an academic.

Being Mastery

The ability to focus is one of my strengths; I have always been more productive and effective at work than most of my peers. Now it isn’t the ability to focus that is a challenge; it is the ability to multi-task several technology initiatives as well as the EDLI program, while maintaining a professional demeanor. This will require better time management and the ability to have an environment where distractions are limited. Thankfully, I have a liberal work from home policy that enables me to pursue several projects at the same time.

Balance Mastery

As important as personal balance is to my conceptual framework, this is the area where I seem to have actually lost ground. My professional and personal activities, in addition to my

academic pursuits, have caused my life to be less balanced than it was previously. While I am very healthy as a rule, I know that this persistent drain on my energy and vitality will eventually take a toll if I don't make changes to my diet, sleep schedule and stress level. This lack of balance has also affected my personal relationships, which are in need of my attention.

Action Mastery

All the changes in my life are causing me to continually test the limits of my potential. For possibly the first time in my life I feel energized by what I am doing professionally, fulfilled by what I am accomplishing academically and am hopeful for what the future holds. My hope is to have another 30 years of an academic career and to leave the world better than I found it. The more I do, the more I realize can be done; none of the constraints I may have placed on myself even apply anymore. While this sounds like an epiphany for me, it creates a challenge for the people in my life who now don't know how to respond to me. My hope is to be able to realize my dreams without losing the relationships that have made my pursuit possible.

Conclusion

Where I am heading

For the first time in my life, I feel that I am in the right place, at the right time, and living up to my potential, as I know it. At the moment, I am going through a period of self-discovery; determining what my hopes and dreams are for the remainder of my days. My hope is to remain healthy and contribute to the communities I am involved in until my last breath.

Long ago, I happened to see a poster at the Apple store that summarized my life philosophy so well, that I have kept the text close to my heart. It summarizes who I am, what motivates me and my hopes for the future:

To The Crazy Ones

Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them, disbelieve them, glorify them or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them.

Because they change things. They invent. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward. Maybe they have to be crazy. How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art? Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written? Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels?

We make tools for these kinds of people. While some see them as the crazy ones, we see genius.

Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.

Think Different

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