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# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR GROWTH IN CHANGING TIMES

by

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SYNTHESIS\*  
MASTER OF ARTS  
CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING  
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

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Abstract: “Transformational Leadership for Growth in Changing Times” is a personal exploration into a leadership style that is both humanizing and effective. As a parent, artist, teacher, and counselor I have developed a personal form of leading without understanding what I was doing. After researching leadership styles I discovered that what I had been doing was backed by a recognized theory of leadership called Transformational Leadership.

The keys to Transformational Leadership include: *Idealized Influence*. Leaders behave as role models demonstrating high ethical standards and moral conduct. They are consistent and provide a feeling of confidence that obstacles can be overcome. The second aspect is *Inspirational Motivation*. The leader creates a vision of the future that followers find compelling. *Intellectual Stimulation* is about creating an environment which fosters creativity and original thinking in followers. The last characteristic is *Individual Consideration*. “Transformational leaders pay special attention to each individual follower’s needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor,” writes Bass (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7). Transformational Leadership (TL) is a relationship style of leading that is natural to families and small scale societies. TL is best used in situations where the situation is fluid, stress is high, and creativity is needed. TL exists in a range and as such, anyone can become more transformational if they wish.

After much thought, reflection, and research I have developed my own keys to leading:  
"1. Be the example of what you want others to be. 2. Gain a compassionate understanding of those around you. 3. Have a vision that extends beyond the managerial tasks. 4. Be a parent,

mentor, coach, teacher, and friend. 5. Lead from the emerging future (Otto Scharmer). 6. Have fun, be playful. We are all going to die soon anyway. 7. Love.

Love is not found in any of the literature on leadership but it is the bases of TL. If one starts from a position of love and is guided by the ideal of nurturing all involved to a better place than one is bound to do some good.

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\* The Synthesis can take a variety of forms, from a position paper to curriculum or professional development workshop to an original contribution in the creative arts or writing. The expectation is that students use their Synthesis to show how they have integrated knowledge, tools, experience, and support gained in the program so as to prepare themselves to be constructive, reflective agents of change in work, education, social movements, science, creative arts, or other endeavors.

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## **Transformational Leadership for Growth in Changing Times**

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.* John Quincy Adams

### **Introduction**

I have heard it said that minds are like parachutes: they only work when they are open. There is a lot of truth to that and when I reflect on my experiences as a student, teacher; child, parent; leader, follower, I see that the open mind is the path to learning, growth, and self-realization. I have never thought of myself as a leader but then again I never was a follower either. As a young person I found one or two people I admired and observed, hoping to learn something, but mostly I saw people struggling to work things out or pretending that they had things worked out, and while I knew that I was searching, I also knew that these people did not have the answers I was looking for. Others may have had some clues or some expertise that I wanted to learn, but no one had a guiding impact on my life except perhaps my father. He was the one person I admired and wanted to be like, at least in most ways. He was smart, educated (he had a PhD. in Mathematics from Brown University), compassionate, creative, and he was not afraid to stand against authority or opinion when he disagreed. He was a bit of a rebel and the things he regretted in his life were those few times when he did not rebel. He was a leader for me and he encouraged me to question authority and not just go along because it is easier. He was not some crazed radical either. He was traditional and conservative in many ways including politically.

Many years have passed now and I have grown and evolved as a person. Curiously to myself I find that I have grown into leadership roles with many of the things I am involved with. It was never a conscious decision to lead but when a leadership vacuum appeared I would often step in to help move things forward. As my leadership experience grew I found that I enjoyed the challenge and that I was actually good at it. What I never did was to analyze what I was doing or why. I never gave the subject much thought because it seemed to come naturally and develop over time without much personal notice. I have been on a long journey and part of that journey brought me to the Critical and Creative thinking program at U Mass Boston where students are asked to think about the things that make us who we are. I have explored a number of different

interests during the program but the one thing that I keep coming back to is the role that leadership plays in one's personal growth and one's ability to help others grow. In a broad sense this growth comes from education and experience. Leadership – whether directed at the self or towards others – is a key to facilitating growth and for me that means creating an environment in which minds are free to open.

*With realization of one's own potential and self-confidence in one's ability, one can build a better world.* Dalai Lama

This paper is a personal reflection on leadership and how it can be used to open minds and facilitate growth in all who are involved. The name for this style of leadership is *Transformational*. I discovered this after I began researching leadership and found that what I had been doing was not without precedent. Transformational leadership has four main aspects according to Bernard M Bass and Ronald E Riggio in their book, *Transformational Leadership* (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The first is *Idealized Influence*. Leaders behave as role models demonstrating high ethical standards and moral conduct. They are consistent and provide a feeling of confidence that obstacles can be overcome. The second aspect is *Inspirational Motivation*. The leader creates a vision of the future that followers find compelling. *Intellectual Stimulation* is about creating an environment which fosters creativity and original thinking in followers. The last characteristic is *Individual Consideration*. “Transformational leaders pay special attention to each individual follower's needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor,” writes Bass (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7). Leaders also delegate tasks as a means of education and development. These four elements establish the basic idea of transformational leadership. Ultimately the goal of transformational leadership is to help everyone involved to be transformed by the process or project.

## **My Story: Becoming a Leader**

One of my great frustrations in life has always been my inability to happily take direction, instruction, or coaching from someone who couldn't or wouldn't make a connection with me. Even if the individual was very accomplished in their field, I would become defensive, guarded, and resistant around them. A defensive, guarded student is not one with an open mind. The authority figure was never impressive to me. I would much prefer to work on my own and teach myself than to follow the ego of someone claiming to be an expert or simply in power. This tendency of mine makes working for others and going to school challenging. Since I do not recognize the authority of anyone over me I do not, cannot, simply follow directions and do what I am told. The instructions need to make sense or I become very negative. I have often thought that life would be so much easier if I could just shut up and do what was asked but that is beyond my capacity. To understand how I lead I need to understand why I have a hard time following.

In 1963 Stanley Milgram conducted a series of experiments at Yale University to examine how easy it was to have average people inflict harm on others if they were instructed to do so by an authority figure. In this study “teachers” were to inflict increasingly high electrical shocks to “students” in another room. About two thirds of the subjects administered the highest charge possible when pressured to do so. The lesson derived from the study was that it was very easy to get good people to do bad things if they were asked to do them by authority figures. A closer look at the study showed that when the subjects where confronted by superiors they complied with the greatest degree. When the authority was a social equal, fewer complied. Then came tests for proximity to authority and so forth. Then they looked at those who never complied. The question was not; why did so many follow directions; but why did some people refuse to follow directions? The research suggests that “a critical attitude towards all forms of authority accompanied by a strong sense of responsibility, the ability to read situations, and a need to maintain control over events are likely to result in disobedience. These attitudes are consistent with a high level of psychological autonomy,” (Auzoult, 2015, p. 49). Disobedience becomes an expression of autonomy. Disobedience is a form of rebellion and “rebellion is absolutely essential for growth and self-actualization...self-actualization is choosing your own path not the path someone else has chosen for you” (Schreiner, 2015, para. 4). It was as if some people were immune to the influence of authority because of a high degree of self-actualization.

I used to think something was wrong with me because I found it so hard to follow the directions of the authority but after considering the Milgram study I began to feel that maybe this behavior of mine is not a negative to overcome but a strength to nurture. I wondered if I might have been among those who did not cooperate. I will never know but I do have some of the traits found in those who resisted. It is not that I am pathological about refusing direction; it's just that it is not automatic.

Thinking about this again and reflecting on some of the new research I have been reading for this paper, I began to notice that my reluctance to follow authority was not my only act of social rebellion. I had never thought about my behavior outside of the authority/follower relationship but my pattern of behavior did emerge in other areas; most notably in my relationships with peers. In high school for example, when everyone I knew was drinking and generally being concerned with fitting in, I found myself refusing to drink or participate in like activities just because I didn't want to mindlessly follow what the majority was doing. Looking back, I consistently followed my own path preferring to go it alone and make my own mistakes than to follow the path of least resistance where life and behavior is clearly laid by someone else and the burden of choice is removed. There were times when I was willing and even eager to work with teachers, adults, and those considered leaders. But often and I had no real idea why I was open to some people and not to others. Reflection got me thinking about what kinds of leadership I do respond to.

The first thing I look for in a would-be leader is a high degree of self-awareness and a sense of wisdom. The person should convey the feeling that whatever the problem is, it can be dealt with. I need to trust them on some level. The next thing I look for is a vision of the possible. Can the person create a goal worth working for? The leader should also be able to invite and nurture creative thinking. And last, the leader should know each of the followers as individuals and be able to help them grow. Looking back at the four characteristics of transformative leaders I can see that my list is very similar. I respond to transformational leadership styles and I rebel against authoritarian leaders. Most of the people who would lead me never measured up in my eyes or just didn't seem worth following. I always knew that I didn't know everything, but I was equally sure no one else knew it all either, so I preferred to find my own answers. I also have a very strong reaction against feeling forced to do something, anything. When I feel pressure I resist, even if it is something I would enjoy otherwise. Horses are like



that; if you stand in front and pull on the reins to get them to move they refuse to cooperate. When you release the tension and coax them forward they will come.

Because of my reluctance to follow, I never had any interest in leading. For most of my early life, I had a hard time following and no interest in leading. I knew that I was not qualified as a leader. I didn't have the knowledge, experience, or desire to lead. I was perfectly comfortable making decisions for myself, but not for others. That changed when I married Kelly and we had a child. Suddenly I was an authority figure and decisions needed to be made. The great thing about being a parent is that there are no right answers. There are a lot of wrong answers but no right answers. In that ambiguity I found that I was very comfortable making decisions. Obviously I shared the decision making with my wife, but on important issues I was able to guide the process in a way that that was inclusive and effective.

Outside of the family I was still reluctant to even consider a leadership role even though I had run my own small construction business for several years. In that case I had started out by creating my own job and when the work required it I hired a couple of people to help me. Even there I thought of it as a co-op rather than an employer-employee situation. Most of my reluctance to lead kept coming back to my own insecurities about my education and experience. I was very sensitive to my shortcomings and I worked at correcting this by reading broadly, studying subjects I felt unsure about, and going in and out of schools. I liked the idea of earning a degree, but I had a hard time taking direction. I am still working on completing my degree and I have become much better at doing what needs to be done without rebelling, but it has taken many, many years and I have been to ten colleges and universities.

My first child was a boy named Anthony and as fate would have it he was born with an incurable, untreatable, terminal disorder. A great deal of work, creative, and critical thinking, and leadership was required to manage his health and give him the best life possible. Many of the most important decisions my wife and I made were to disregard the advice of the doctors when the situation called for it. The first big decision was about how to conceptualize our situation. The predominant approach was to dedicate ourselves to fixing the problem, finding the cure. But this approach had a problem and it came to me one day as I was holding Anthony for a blood test when he was two. He looked up at me and asked, "Why do that to me?" I had no answer, why were we doing this? Just to find out what awful thing was going to kill him? At that point the only difference in his prognoses was how much time he would have. And what was I teaching

him? That there was something wrong with him as a person? He had a gene that made his life short and difficult, but to hate that gene was no different than hating the gene that created the color of his hair. He was not his disorder. He was perfect. I needed to change.

*Things do not change; we change.* Henry David Thoreau

There were many decisions that followed and with each child we had there came reflections on what kind of life we would all have. Anthony had a brother named Sam, a sister named Madison, and a little later another sister named Anna. Some families dedicated their whole lives to caring for the sick child and the other children end up neglected and resentful. Other families put the affected child away in a room or an institution, pretending life is normal. We chose a middle path where Anthony was part of the family and though he might have physical needs that could take precedent, otherwise everyone was equal. We found new ways to do things that made it possible for us to be mobile. Anthony was paralyzed and could not speak but he understood everything. He enjoyed watching his siblings play and fight. A Radio Flyer Wagon served as transportation when he was too fragile to sit in a wheel chair. A small disposable mouth operated suction trap was used instead of a bulky, load compressor, and so on. Anthony was home schooled along with the other kids. He was a cub scout as his brother Sam would later become. Anthony enjoyed life as much as he could and he taught us all to be better people. His brother and sisters were called upon to help in emergencies and to be mature and selfless. They were unmatched in their behavior and love. Anthony taught me how to be a parent and how to guide and mentor children.

Anthony was only expected to live until he was, at most, four years old but as it turned out he lived until he was almost 15. His neurologist said that he was the oldest child he had ever heard about who had what he had. He said that it was the life we were able to provide that made the difference.

When he died it was important to me that we create a healing ritual for all of us. That started with the decision to have a home funeral, including a homemade casket. Seeing the raw white pine I decided we should all draw on the casket and write notes to Anthony. We held his wake in the yard surrounded by flowers. When it was time to go to the church we loaded him in the bed of my old pickup truck – what boy wouldn't want to ride in the back of an open pickup

truck? After the service we carried him out into the church cemetery and lowered him into the ground. And finally we all took turns filling the grave. When the dirt was patted down I felt that there was truly nothing more we could do: we had tucked him in for the last time. To this day, ten years later, I still have people tell me that Anthony's funeral was one of the most amazing things they have ever been a part of. I know that the process was healing for all of his family.

The lesson of Anthony's life for me was one of following my instincts, caring for everyone, and helping each child through a difficult time by understanding who they were and what they were experiencing. It was also an exercise in being comfortable with things beyond my control. I was aware of setting a tone of calm and safety even in a crisis. I wanted to show them how to stand up and do what is right while also understanding and recognizing the person next to you. The experience of caring for Anthony made me a leader even if I didn't know it at the time.

*You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'* Eleanor Roosevelt

The two most important people in my life were my father and my son Anthony, named for his grandfather. Watching the two of them deal with their individual struggles made me think about the ways in which we make progress and deal with problems. My father was a brilliant man who seemed to be in complete control of his life until he wasn't, while Anthony was deeply insightful and had absolutely no control over anything whatsoever. My father was like a motorboat that has the power to go anywhere at any time in spite of the conditions. Motorboats work well until they run out of gas or the engine cuts out and then they are helpless. A sailboat like Anthony is only able to make progress by working with the elements, reading the conditions, and changing course. Progress depends on skill, not power. Unlike motorboats, sailboats are never helpless. They can always make progress as long as they have the skills needed to work with the conditions. I wanted to be a sailboat like Anthony.

While Anthony was still with us, I had begun painting pictures and for 13 years I had made a living at it. I worked at home and my wife Kelly was home with Anthony and the kids. We had visits from Anthony's tutor, the nurse, and the physical therapist. The house was full and

happily busy. I had a great deal of time to be involved with the kids. Each morning before I started painting and they started school I gave them music lessons and ensured that they took care of the animals. That was no small task- we had 24 chickens, 6 ducks, a goose, a dog, a cat, 6 rabbits, some fish, and a bird.

With all that was going on in the house I was looking for something extra to get involved with. Anthony had gone through the cub scouts and was ready to cross over into scouting when Sam started cub scouts. He had been through the program before because he had been Anthony's helper but now it was his turn. As the troop needed leaders, I volunteered. By this point I felt very comfortable leading a group of kids and I started customizing the program to better suit the needs and interests of the boys. Later the need arose for a cub master, as no one wanted the responsibility I stepped up. I had seen how the program had been run before and I had a vision of how it could be better.

One of the problems was that none of the dens ever really got to interact or know each other. The monthly scouting meetings were supposed to help with this but they didn't. On top of that, these meetings were a painful test of endurance for the parents and siblings. I decided we needed to involve everyone in this process so I mixed up the boys into teams and created a sibling/parent team and after the awards each month at the meetings we would hold the survivor games in which all of the different teams of boys, parents, and siblings would all compete in a game, with the team winning the most games at the end of the year receiving a prize. This transformed a painful experience into one that people looked forward to coming to and it got everyone talking to each other and making friends. My thinking at the time was that the skills I had learned and was continuing to learn as a parent were directly transferable to leading groups such as the scouts. This gave me a taste for leadership that I had never experienced or anticipated. Part of transformative leadership involves modeling behavior, building relationships, understanding needs, creating a vision for what could be, and involving everyone in the experience so that they all can grow. I started doing this in the cub scouts and I found a model for what I would continue to do without fully realizing or knowing what I was doing.

Sam and Anthony crossed over into Boy Scouts at the same time; I followed as an assistant leader. Anthony died shortly after. In some ways it was a blessing; he had become so frail that everything caused him pain. It was time for him to go but it was still a shock. Life changed in so many ways: no Anthony, no tutor, no nurse, no therapists, the money got tight. I

started working outside the home as a landscaper while I tried to open a gallery, and Kelly went to work as a nurse, leaving the kids home alone for most of the day. The center of our world was gone; I had no answers other than to understand that there are no answers. For the next year we tried to make it work; I opened my gallery, Kelly found a better position and the kids home-schooled themselves mostly.

I stayed involved with the scouts because Sam loved it. He was the model scout. Because he was home schooled and now out of sports because of a knee injury, it was the one thing he had left in his life outside of the home. I helped by assisting with meetings and planning trips for the boys. During the time Sam crossed over to scouts he had to meet some requirements. One of those was to read, understand, and demonstrate the pledge of allegiance, which he did. As part of that, I discussed with him what it means to pledge one's allegiance to something. I made the points that one should not do it lightly and it must be voluntary. It is a serious matter to pledge one's allegiance to something. After thinking about it for some time, Sam decided that he did not feel comfortable reciting the pledge at each meeting. He would stand quietly at attention while all the other scouts and leaders recited the pledge. For the most part of a year this was not a problem. But then a few of the leaders made an issue of it. After much back and forth, the second-in-command of scouting wrote a new rule just for Sam requiring the recital of the pledge whenever it is asked. With this new unpublished rule in hand, the leaders of the local scouting organization demanded that Sam recite the pledge routinely, or they would throw him out. Kelly and I did everything we could to help, but in the end it was up to Sam; whatever he wanted to do was fine with us. He said that a scout is honest and that to recite a pledge he didn't believe would violate his oath of honesty. The scouts threw Sam out on the one year anniversary of his brother's death.

This was Sam's turn to show leadership. He came into scouting with the life experience of caring for his older brother. Sam was Anthony's protector and advocate; Anthony was Sam's hero. Sam knew what it meant to do the right thing; he knew it had a cost. He understood what a crisis is and what it is not. He understood loss, compassion, and courage. Within the second week of being in scouts he was nominated for leadership but didn't qualify because he hadn't been there long enough. Still, the other boys, even the older ones, looked to Sam as a leader. When Sam left the scouts, almost half of the other boys left with him. He made no fuss and expressed no regrets. He just left and packed away his uniform.

Watching Sam handle this blow inspired me to do something. I have never been one to sit by and let others dictate what I can and can't do. I decided that at its core what the boys and their dads really wanted to do was go camping together and share the experience. I also had daughters that wanted to camp and were not allowed on scouting trips. I decided to start our own scouting club. With the help of Sam, his friends, and a few of the dads from scouting we started the Wanderers.

The original goal was to get together and plan a single trip. If we could do more than two trips it would have been a success. As it turned out we met every week, on Saturday night, for seven years to plan monthly trips.

We started out with the idea of family camping based around the car. This way the kids could get used to camping and the parents could bring comforts like chairs and kitchen supplies. We planned the weekend trips to have a lot of activities for the kids but we quickly realized that the activity was the woods and their friends. We had a rule that no electronics would be used because we wanted the kids to be fully present but my focus was not limited to the kids. I wanted the adults on the trips to feel involved and as if the trip was theirs and they were not just a supervisor of kids. The trick was to create a balance and make sure that the adults had their time to visit and explore as much as they wanted to. This all worked very well give or take adjustments depending on the trip and who was present.

As the years passed, I tried to increase the freedom the kids had. At first it was car camping and the kids needed to be tenting in the same sites. Later we let them tent in a nearby site. We even did some wilderness camping during which we let them camp out of sight. After car camping became too easy, we started backpacking. Each person was required to carry all of their own equipment and we did not check their bags. We gave them a list of things to bring and let them be responsible for packing. The mothers didn't like this, but the dads overruled them. When invariably someone forgot something, the reaction was one of interest, not of great concern. The kids took responsibility for their mistake and did not complain. The forgotten item usually found its way into the pack next time.

As we all gained experience and our equipment improved we looked for bigger challenges. I tried to create a feeling in the kids that they had a great deal of freedom while still having a mental perimeter of what I considered safe. When we started backpacking the group had to stay together. Then we allowed the kids to run up ahead out of sight and meet us at pre-

arranged points. This forced them to pay attention to where they were going and not just follow the person in front of them. This did not always work; there were times when we had to go looking for the missing kids. The worst example of this was when all of the Wanderers went to North Carolina to camp and backpack on Grandfather Mountain, the highest mountain in the Blue Ridge. The hike was planned for overnight and the campsite was just below the summit. The kids were allowed to go out in front and wait at check points. The rain started to fall and before long it was a blinding thunderstorm. The trail became a creek and when the adults got to the small lean-to that was the night's camping spot the kids were not there. With me were my wife and six year old daughter and my friend Don and his autistic son who hated loud noise. Kelly panicked and needed settling down. I was concerned, but calm. I set up this plan knowing that I had prepared the kids to spend the night outside in bad weather. I knew they were together. I knew that they would understand that to get off of the mountain they needed only to walk downhill. I knew that we were only four miles from the car and 15 minutes back to the main camp. Still, it was thunder and lightning, and they were above us on an exposed mountain. I set out to find them and the trail led me to the base of the summit where a plane had crashed some years before and the wreckage was still visible. I used an air horn to signal them. At last one of the boys appeared looking down from above and said they were coming. The rock face of the mountain was so steep that wooden ladders had been spiked to the sides. Covered in moss and soaking wet these ladders became slippery and when my daughter was coming down the lightning and thunder crashed causing her to slip and only hanging on by one hand. Sam dropped his pack and climbed back up to help her. She was only 11 and he was 13. After getting them together we headed back to camp and I got them in a tent. They said they had missed the small sign for the lean-to in the rain and had gone to the top which is when the lightning really got going. At first they hid under a rock. Then Sam remembered that lightning can arc under wet rock so they were coming down. They were soaked to the skin; only Maddey had brought all of the right gear. The boys had been watching the show Survivor Man and refused to bring anything but the barest necessities and now they were miserable.

All was well. In the morning sun we went to the summit to see the sun rise; then we hiked back to the car. Except for the lightning, the danger was never as real as it felt to the kids. At any time I could have gotten us off the mountain and back to safety. But for the kids this was adventure at its most high and, even now, when they are all in college, that trip remains their

favorite. This became the model for how I wanted to run trips; create a feeling of freedom and independence, but still have a safety plan and a realistic idea of the possible dangers.

*The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.* John Muir

*Not all who wander are lost.* JRR Tolkien

The Wanderers had many other adventures. Along with the outdoor challenges I wanted them to feel comfortable in urban, social, and cultural environments too. To this end I planned yearly scavenger hunts in Boston where I would drop them at the subway and, in groups of 2-3, have the kids set off into the city to locate historical and cultural landmarks. The first team to meet up at the end point would win a prize. Now they would have to use all of their technology and know-how to find their way around. They experienced a feeling of freedom and independence while I felt some comfort; knowing where they were supposed to be. I also had their cell phone numbers. The Wanderers also went ballroom dancing and to a Broadway play.

All of the Wanderers have moved on now but before going to college, Sam and two of the other boys hiked the entire Appalachian Trail in the winter, spring, and summer of 2015. They had the time of their lives and were the youngest group on the trail that year.

The Wanderers experience taught the kids how to be self-reliant and solve problems. It taught them that in life we are handed a list of things to carry with us but in the end a lot of that stuff we carry around is not ours; it is someone else's stuff and we need to unpack our bags and separate our stuff from the stuff of others. As Sam says, "we pack for our fears" and the fewer things we are afraid of the less we must carry. The Wanderers learned that it is not about the destination but the journey. Hiking the AT was about the trip and the destination was an excuse to have a journey. Hiking is like life in that there are peaks and valleys, heat and cold, dry and wet, solitude and crowds, pain and pleasure. Hiking the trail, one finds that the fastest way is not to deviate from the path but sometimes there is something worth deviating for. Getting off of the trail, deliberately or by accident, takes you some distance in another direction. The thing to keep in mind is that the miles you travel from the path are the same ones you must travel to return. There are no "quick fixes" on the trail or in life. The essentials in life are few: a cup, sleeping bag, shelter, some food, and friends. I gave up trying to teach the kids lessons very early on and



instead I tried to put them in situations in which they would learn while I was there as a guide and mentor.

Being a leader is easy when everything is going well but what happens when nothing is working? What happens when your world starts to fall apart? In the year following Anthony's death a lot of things went wrong. I had just lost my son and the life that we had been living as a family for 8 years. Kelly and I were not at home anymore. The kids were homeschooling themselves to some extent. Sam was through with scouting. Then the global financial meltdown hit us. My gallery closed and all of the promised sales of my work were cancelled taking with it a year's income. Suddenly I had no child, no business, no career, no income, and no idea what to do next. My marriage was in trouble and my children were struggling. I received a lot of pressure to internalize my failures from some family, friends, and just society in general. People love to kick you when you're down and detail a long list of personal inadequacies. I was tempted to listen to the constant barrage of soul-sucking judgments made by those lucky enough not to have lost everything. But then I never was much good at listening or following directions. Besides: what kind of example would that be to my kids? General Eisenhower once said that "pressure exposes all the cracks in a person's personality". I certainly had cracks but the only way to fix them was to stand up, dust myself off, and keep "hiking". The trail is long and there are slips and falls, dark nights and rain. Eventually the sun comes out. I decided that the only thing I could do for my kids was to show them how to react when it all goes wrong.

I had no real direction at this point but I needed to make progress. I ran for public office, mowed lawns, painted houses, and then I became a substitute teacher at my son's charter school. Substituting was a minimum wage per-diem job but I discovered that I enjoyed working with the students and I was good at it. I used the same techniques that I used in the Wanderers which were really the same techniques that I used as a parent. Money was a constant problem and it was suggested by more than one person that I bag groceries at the local Stop and Shop, as that was all I was qualified for. Maybe that was so, but I decided to pass on the great offer.

Looking back at my multiple attempts to go to college I had only managed to earn an associate's degree which more was embarrassing to me than not having gone to school at all. Not a promising direction but I decided to try school again. This time I went to U Mass Amherst's, University Without Walls: an online degree program which I finished in two years. I did it for myself and also to show my children that you have to do what is needed to make progress. A

good leader must be engaged in self-improvement. My interest in education grew and I took the MTEL teaching licensure exams for Visual Art and I passed all three exams which earned me a provisional license. Then I continued my education at Bridgewater State by completing the education classes in a post-bac program. I did not do the teaching practicum because I could not afford to be out of work for four months. My hope was that I would get a job somewhere and that would be my practicum. That still has not happened although I have registered to do it in the fall of 2017.

While I continued to look for a teaching position I was hired as a special-needs paraprofessional at Sturgis High School where both of my older children went. As my transformational leadership skill developed I found that I was always trying to help out wherever I saw a need. When a first-year teacher was struggling or unsure I would offer help and advice. Odd as that sounds, coming from someone who wasn't actually fully qualified to teach, but that doesn't mean I didn't know what that teacher needed to hear. I became friendly with all of the staff and I even worked with the administration to help them improve. My approach with the students was to empower them and show them what they were good at. I wanted to help them find something positive and use that to grow from. Most students, especially those with special needs, hear a daily recital of what they are not good at. As if they are somehow unaware of their shortcomings. I know I heard it as a child and even as an adult when I was struggling. I never found the daily recital of personal inadequacies to be at all helpful. I took a different approach. One student I had, struggled with some of her reading skills and when it came time to take her vocabulary test she was upset that she only got 6 out 15 correct. Here was confirmation that she was no good at this, just like she was told. I looked at it differently. I acted surprised that she was upset. "Why are you upset," I asked? "You know six words today that you didn't know yesterday. That is pretty good. Keep that up all year and you will know hundreds of new words." She lit up, as if a great weight was lifted from her, and every week that went by she happily told me how many new words she knew, and it was never again as few as six.

*A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves. Lao Tzu*

While I was working at Sturgis I had an opportunity to lead a student trip to Europe. The principal asked for volunteers to lead and I proposed a nine day trip to Venice, Lucerne, and Paris with a tour company that the school works with. I picked that tour because it offered the broadest range of experience for the students. My goal was to lead a trip with as little interference as possible so that the students would feel like they were on their own and hopefully feel confident enough that they could come back one day on their own and have a good experience. It was also important to me that my chaperones had a good experience. I wanted them to see how fun, and hopefully stress free, a trip like this could be. I wanted them to feel like it was a vacation of sorts and not a job.

The first thing I needed to do was get a feel for who was coming on the trip. Making quick assessments about people is critical because I needed to know how far I could let them go. Ernest Shackleton, the great English explorer who was, as one of his men put it, “the greatest leader that ever came on God’s earth, bar none,” picked his crew for his ill-fated 1913 Antarctic expedition by very short interviews in which he was able to get a sense of the man and deem him capable of performing under extreme hardships or not, (Lansing, 1959, p. 13). After a year on the ice and an unbelievable journey, Shackleton was able to lead all his men to safety. His quick assessments of his crew all were accurate. I am no Shackleton but I do understand the need to know whom you are leading and what they are capable of. In this case I did not know all of the students well but I knew most of them and I knew who their friends were. I felt comfortable with providing them with a great deal of freedom.

My daughter Madison was on this trip and to be honest she was the reason I decided to do it in the first place. She had experienced several traumatic events in the previous year and as it turned out, more was to come in the year that filled the time between the planning and the actual trip. It was important to me that I do something for her and I thought this would be a good thing. I also knew that Madison and the other senior girls were not afraid to bend the rules. I needed to think about how far the rules could be bent before we took off. Anticipating problems helps prevent them and prepares you for your own reaction. The school naturally forbade any use of alcohol by student or staff as one might expect. But, part of the experience of Europe is tasting the wines and the beer. The issue in my mind was one of degree. Of course I made a big deal about no drinking and made them all sign a pledge “not to drink” knowing full well that this would not work, but my hope was that it would moderate it and keep it out of my sight. If I

couldn't see it, I found no evidence of it, no issues arose, and there was still drinking; then I was comfortable with it. In the end, this is what happened. The student's responsible, irresponsible, use of alcohol made the trip special for them and for the chaperones.

For the Chaperones I created a feeling that I was in control and all they needed to do was interact with the students, keep an eye out for problems, and enjoy the trip. The "no alcohol" rule for staff seemed overkill so I instigated a nightly "chaperone meeting", during which we would share some wine, have a little bread, cheese, and reflect on the day. This created a bond between the teachers and eased any anxiety that some of them had about maintaining control and getting comfortable with my approach to leadership.

Providing freedom and trusting people is a risky business. If there is a problem there will be no cover from the blame. It is always easier to insist on firm control so that one can "cover your ass". But that is no fun, and nobody grows.

I divided the students up between chaperones so that they each had only 4-5 students to keep an eye on. I wanted the students to feel independent, so when counting them I did it without much ado. Maddey said she didn't even know we were counting them until the fourth day. In the evenings I checked only that the students were in the building by 10pm. Room checks were useless with teenagers so I didn't bother trying to control something that I couldn't. I pretended that I trusted them to behave and they all did, as far as I know.

Out in the cities I again gave them as much freedom as possible. I had different rules for different cities but in general we had a tour that we all went on in the morning and then I let them roam as they wanted until an appointed time. I made it clear that being on time was important and it was never an issue. Venice was easy; it's an island. Lucerne was a city and the sights were sufficient to hold everyone in the historic district. The hotels in Italy and Switzerland were in quiet remote villages, so I had no worries. Paris was different; I needed more guidelines. In Paris we used the metro to get around and the first lesson was to see who could figure out how to get on it. We needed to get tickets, read the maps, find the correct train, and get on it going the right way. Getting off at the right stop was also a goal. One teacher kept trying to take over and show the students how to do it all because he already knew how but I had to interfere. It was true that we could save time, but it was more important that the students learn how to do this. It was like working with the Wanderers in Boston, but in French. The other issue in Paris was the prevalence of pick pockets, gypsies, and other criminal types that took advantage of the students

who had never seen this before. Maddie threw an old man to ground who tried to hassle her but the rest of them had no idea what to do. So, one rule was that no students should be riding the metro without a chaperone. The students were still in charge but not unprotected. I did allow the students to roam about on their own as long as I knew roughly where they were going and we had all agreed on a meeting place and time. As always, no one was to go off alone, anywhere, in any city, town, or village.

The only incident we had occurred when I accompanied a group of students to Montmartre. There were about 20 African immigrants selling braided bracelets on the stairs leading up to the church. They could be very aggressive and just before we left to go back and meet the others, one of the girls started crying. She explained that one of the men had grabbed her arm, tied a bracelet on her before she could say no, and then demanded money. He then grabbed her purse and took 20 euros. This had happened an hour before but she was still shaking. This girl had been so excited to come on this trip. She was the first one in her family to ever leave the US and they were all experiencing the trip through her. She said that she was so scared that she couldn't move and she felt guilty and responsible for letting it happen. First of all, I told her, she was not at fault in any way. Second, freezing is an excellent reaction to sudden attack. The goal is not to be harmed and she did that. Fight or flight, are the reactions we hear about but freezing is also common, and effective. She did all the right things. The next thing I needed was the bracelet which I took back up to the men and demanded the money back. I needed to show her that she could have a feeling of control and safety back. I had no idea what the reaction might be in response to my demand but I was ready to go as far as they wanted to take it. I tried to convey this to them through my posture and mannerisms. I think my boldness confused them for a second, and then the leader of the gang approached. He was a large man and he did not look happy. I repeated my demands and I saw in his eye that he knew I was prepared to make a big deal out of this. I also saw that he could not afford a big deal. That is when I knew they would return the money. It still took a minute, but the danger had passed. My student got her money back and I think she was able to let go of the shock and enjoy the rest of the trip. I have always had an invisible line beyond which I will not move. In most matters I am naturally accommodating but when it comes to injustice, abuse, and bullying I have no tolerance whatsoever and that is the line I defend.

The next day, our last, the same student asked if there was any way she could go to the grave of Jim Morrison, who was buried in Paris' Père LaChaise Cemetery. Jim Morrison and the Doors were very special to this girl and her family. The one thing her father asked her to do on the trip was to visit Morrison's grave. She asked me to go but no one else wanted to so she thought it wouldn't happen. I reminded her that this was her trip and if she wanted to go, I would take her. In my family it is the Beatles and Ringo that hold a special place, so I knew how important this was for her. In the end, the girl's friend came with us and we made our way across town. At the grave; she cried.

After dinner some of the students didn't want to go right back to the hotel so we split up. Those wanting to stay out went to the Quartier Latin for a couple of hour of free roaming. While the students roamed; two of the chaperones and I purchased a couple bottles of wine for our last night. As I found out later- Maddey and her friends were in the wine shop across the street buying a couple of bottles of wine to share on their last night. The teachers and I saved the wine for the hotel but Maddey led her group of eight down to the Seine, where they sipped their wine and pretended to be French. They broke the rules in a responsible way and shared one of the best moments of their trip. Secretly I was glad they did it.

On the return to Boston our flight was delayed due to weather and we were close to missing our connecting flight. The stewardess told me they would hold the flight but I've heard that before and the plane took off without me even though I was but two minutes late and the plane didn't move for fifteen more. Maybe Swiss Air waits, but why risk it. I asked a teacher to spread the word that we would need to hustle if we were to make the flight. As we waited to get off the plane I created a plan. We needed to move quickly, but I could not lose any stragglers. I saw an opportunity here. I wanted to teach the students an empowering lesson. As soon as we were off the plane, I gathered the group of 30 together and quickly reviewed the situation. We need to get from one side of Zurich Airport to the other and it was so large that there was an underground rail. We had fifteen minutes to make the flight and I needed my best people out front. I knew I could count on Madison, and I knew she needed the responsibility. I wanted to be even handed so I called for a boy who had traveled before and was incredibly mature. I told them I wanted them to lead us all through the airport, to the gate, and not lose any one. Maddey beamed and grew two inches. She called for double time and they all rushed off with me in the rear. We made the flight with no problem.

Later, when I discussed the trip with the principal, she asked why I would let the students be in charge of making the flight. I explained that it was not the risk it seemed. The two out front had friends who would act as lieutenants, both helping to find the way and keep track of the others. A dozen young eyes were better than my old ones. And I was double checking our direction as we went. The time was close. In the end, we would make the plane or not. It didn't matter if I was out front. For Madison and the young man, they would know that when it really mattered, I picked my best people to lead us, and that I trusted them to rise to the occasion; which they did. That is what I mean by transformative leadership.

Before getting into the academic background and research I have one more experience to talk about. When the academic year ended last spring I found a job as a rehabilitation counselor, educator, and shift leader on a remote island in Buzzards Bay, called Penikese. Penikese has a long and rich history which includes being the original site for the Woods Hole Marine Biological Institute, a leper colony, and a home for troubled boys that lasted for forty years. Now it was to be a residential rehab center for young men. All of the residents were coming out of jail and were dropped off on the island for a stay of 90-120 days. The island has one house which is heated by wood and illuminated by kerosene lamps. Solar panels provide enough electricity to run the refrigerator, the emergency radio, and charge a few electronics. When I first arrived, there was not a soul on the island who knew how to live out there. There was no wood chopped, no grass cut, no clean water to drink, and no structure to the day. Leadership was overwhelmed, incompetent, or just absent. I was not put in a position of authority but I knew what needed to be done. I had worked out there before and I knew about living under these conditions.

The trick was to find a way to lead without being in a leadership position. The best way to do that is by example. The first thing to do was to work on the things I could do alone. I spent a day and a half on the waist high grass and weeds that choked the island. Then I chopped the wood into the small pieces needed for the old cook stove so we could begin making meals. I inspected the water and found the cistern filled with hundreds of thousands of dead and decaying crickets. After five hours of shoveling gelatinous insect carcasses out of the water, I flushed the rest, scrubbed the floor and walls, and bleached it before refilling it from our depleted well. The house was filled with crickets also but there was no cure for that. The next thing that needed to be done was to get hold of the residents and take control back for the staff. Although I was not yet the shift leader I acted like it because someone had to. For the first two months, I spent more

time working with staff than I did working with residents. I needed to know who I was working with and how they reacted under stress, because when the boat drops you off for a six-day shift, things can happen. By demonstrating that I knew what I was doing, staff and residents began to look to me for answers and leadership. I started to focus the upper management on defining our mission and approach. In the absence of clear direction I took the initiative to try things and see what worked. In this way I established a program from the bottom up. I tried to provide calm stable leadership so that everyone on the island felt like someone was in charge and knew what they were doing. The other thing I tried to do was connect the program to the natural rhythm of the island. After all, that is why we were there instead of on the mainland.

As a transformational leader it was not enough just to work with the residents. The residents, coming directly from jail, were not eager to take direction or to trust anyone. Their trust had to be earned through example. But they were not the only ones who needed help. I needed to work with the staff as well. There is a belief that everyone who comes to the island is damaged in some way and in need of healing. I believe that. The person who I came to work with the closest was a young woman from New London. She was a city girl and in a little bit of shock from the conditions on the island. She was the Awake Overnight Staff person. She was quiet, kind, perceptive, and very guarded. Over time, I got her to relax and to trust me. I delegated tasks to her that I knew she could do and grow from. I saw the trauma in her past and worked with her like the father she never had. I watched her grow in confidence and ability. By the time the program closed this woman had become a vital member of the team, and was then a counselor and reserve shift leader. I worked with the other members of my team but none came so far or started so far behind. I like to think I was helpful to her on her journey.

The program on the island closed but I still work with the island as an unofficial Board member. My goal is to help them find a new mission for the island. As I have no authority at all, I am hoping to be helpful and influence the direction by bringing new ideas, plotting a course, and creating enthusiasm for it. Sometimes it is a matter of changing the way one looks at a problem. The board has accepted me and appreciates my thoughts and ideas. With some new ideas and a little good fortune we may be able to save the island so that it can continue to heal those in need. And everyone is damaged in some way. Some are just more damaged than others.



## **Part II: A Reflection on my Formal Education**

*Don't let schooling interfere with your education.* Mark Twain

As I have mentioned before, the path of formal education has not been smooth, but it has been important. Part of my reluctance to commit fully to the process, I think, goes back to my early years of schooling when I struggled to learn to read. For whatever reason, reading was an issue, and then there was math. The consistent focus of schools on the things I struggled with convinced me that I just wasn't very smart. If that was the case, then why would I waste time working on things that were beyond me? Combine this with my natural tendency to resist authority and social pressure, and school became a challenge for me, and my teachers.

One of the things I discovered early on was that when I was interested in a subject I did very well regardless of whether I was in school or teaching myself. When interested in a story, I would read, even if it took twenty minutes to get through a page. When motivated I did very well in math; which was not often. The feeling of not being smart enough haunted me for a long time, and I believe held me back. I remembered that, when I worked with students that were struggling.

My first attempts at college were art schools in which I did exceptionally well in subjects like drawing, figure drawing, sculpture, and the like. But I often challenged the professors and refused to follow their instructions if it interfered with my process. One example is in a sculpture class where the assignment was to do a small object out of plaster that would be interesting to hold and to look at. Every other student did an orb-like piece while I created a small planet that was crumbling as a metal cube expanded from the core. On the outer crust I carved stairs as if someone was running, out of time, on the fractured planet. Professor and students alike were united in their disdain for the piece, but they each spent a lot of time looking at it and touching it. I also painted it which was a no-no. I think I was given a D- for the piece.

Altogether I went to three art schools and took a few classes at a fourth. Then I tried music, but that didn't stick either. The result of all of this was that I actually developed a strong fundamental art and music foundation. It was not one that the schools would have liked but I made it my own, and it serves me to this day.

Later, I went back to school and earned an Associate Degree. This time I studied liberal arts. I was very self-conscious about the gaps in my education and I desperately wanted to fill them. I did have moments of conflict but I learned some valuable lessons. Mythology helped open my eyes to a world I only partially knew. Journalism, and working on the school paper, focused my writing. Theater helped me break out of my introversion and understand how to speak in public. My globe sculpture came in handy when I took Astronomy. The lecture hall engaged in a most profound discussion of what it meant. I learned a great deal that I hadn't known about it. Altogether it was a good experience and I actually did very well. Having an AA degree was something, but I was still haunted by my lack of knowledge. In some ways I was embarrassed by the fact that I didn't have a BA.

Years went by, raising a family and working as an artist painting pictures. I even wrote and illustrated a couple of published works. After the financial collapse of 2008, I began substituting at Sturgis High school and enjoyed working with the students so much that I decided to become a teacher. This meant I needed to go back to school to get the bachelor's degree I had always secretly wanted. I survived the process with limited conflict. I studied arts administration because it was offered online and because I thought it would help balance my creative art background with something more practical. The only highlight for me was a required class on public policy. At the same time I was running for my first elective office on the town Planning Board and this class made me think much more deeply about how policies are made and what role a good leader can play in creating good policies.

The next program I enrolled in was the Accelerated Post-bac Teacher Licensure course at Bridgewater State. I took the three teaching classes and found that the whole thing could have been condensed into a weekend workshop. The key part of the program is the practicum but I couldn't afford to do that at the time. This now brings me to the CCT program at U Mass Boston. I never thought I would ever be trying to earn a master's degree but I was still haunted by the little kid in me that felt like he wasn't smart enough. It is an irony to think that for so much of my life I have never felt good enough or smart enough and yet I have always been supremely confident in myself at the same time. Eric Clapton described himself as "an egomaniac with an inferiority complex". I can relate.

The CCT program has been a lot of work and not without moments of contention. The strength of the program for me was in improving my process of research and development. I

don't know that there were any moments of standout realizations but I was not expecting that. I was hoping to identify and fill gaps, which I did. For the most part I found that I had fewer gaps than I thought I would, and filling those was rewarding. The increased level of self-confidence that comes with completing a rigorous program like this is the real prize for me. A transformational leader is always working on self-improvement. When I look back at the time I have spent and the work that I have done, I am happy to have ended up focusing on transformational leadership which was suggested to me by Professor Taylor. I had not thought to examine that part of myself but it has turned out to be both interesting and helpful.

Transformational leadership is a process one grows into, I believe, and all of my experiences have helped. When thinking about formal education, there are some important classes and lessons that helped me along. I would start with all of my art and music classes because they taught me to observe, understand, and empathize with the object of my study. To really be able to draw well, one needs to be able to inhabit the subject. As an exercise I will ask art students to draw two lines. The first is one line that expresses what it is to be a metal corner in a room. Most draw a single straight line. Then I ask them to think about a relationship they have with someone and to draw a line that expresses what that relationship is. The second line is always very different from the first and it shows how two lines can tell different stories based on what we are feeling. To understand another person is a key part of transformational leadership.

Music trains you to listen and to work with others in a moving and dynamic way. Playing well with band mates involves knowing how they play and being able to read each other without even looking; and doing all of that in front of an audience is even harder.

In my class about dialogue process, I learned about the idea of the "presencing process" described in *Theory U*. and *Leading From the Emerging Future*. The process of presencing is to move beyond the self and open up to the collective energy that animates life. Once there, the leader can facilitate change that benefits the greatest number of people possible. The authors conclude that "the U process of leading from the future follows three movements: "Observe, observe; retreat and reflect, allow the inner knowing to emerge," and 'Act in the instant,'" (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013, p. 239). That is what happens on the bandstand, in art, and theatre. It is a crucial element in transformational leadership.

Theatre classes and my experience doing theatre have been an enormous help in bringing me out of myself and preparing me to be more extroverted. There is a confidence that grows

when you are prepared and on stage. Experiencing moments when you can feel that the audience is with you is a wonderful feeling, and it is directly relatable to addressing people when in a leadership role. There is a bit of theatrics to all good leaders, I think.

Journalism and newspaper editing was helpful in that it trains you to examine issues quickly and understand what is essential about the story. Journalism helps you understand and express what is going on and what is important. That ability helps a leader assess situations and clearly express it to others.

During my studies in the CCT program, I worked on an issue of personal importance to me: sexual assaults against women. I was motivated to institute a program, in the school where I was working, that could help improve the situation. As I researched the problem, I quickly realized that the area of focus needed to be on the boys and young men since they were the ones responsible for the overwhelming number of assaults. The problem could not be solved or improved by focusing on girls and women alone. The approach I settled on was one of mentoring. The most effective national program that I found was a mentoring program called Mentors in Violence Prevention or MVP. That is what I used as a model. MVP is used by major league sports teams like the Red Sox and the Patriots as well as other organizations, schools, universities and even the military. The basic premise is that violence is in large part a by-stander problem – people see things but do not get involved or even know how to intervene. MVP trains people to be part of the solution. Once the program is running in an organization the training is continued by older students and employees mentoring younger ones. This approach also fit nicely with my style of leadership. Although no one in the school asked me to do this, I took the initiative, researched and developed a plan which the school adopted. Unfortunately, I left the school shortly after and without consistent leadership on the issue there has been no meaningful follow up.

An important part of my education in the transformational style of leadership comes outside of formal education. I have described a great deal of the process by which my style has developed. One valuable lesson for me came from a student I was working with who was upset that her geometric drawing was not good enough. I looked at the drawing and saw that by any normal art class standards it was not a strong piece. It showed uncertainty, self-consciousness, hesitation, and a lack of clear vision. Standing next to the girl I realized that it was in fact a truly great piece of work; it was a self-portrait. I told her that and she was shocked. She said it felt like

I was looking into her soul. An overstatement for sure, but it was a moment of realization for both of us and it made me think of that planet I had made all those years ago. I finally understood what it was about. It was also a self-portrait. The planet of my youth with all of its insecurities was breaking away as the core of metal was growing and emerging. I believe that all of our work is in some way a self-portrait in the same way that our signature is.

Ultimately all of my experiences and education have been a value to me in ways I may not fully realize or understand. They have made me what I am. As my experiences and education increase, I gain the confidence and the ability to be a leader when the situation calls for it.

### **Part III: Reviewing the Research**

*Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.* Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

Some years ago I read Alfred Lansing's book about the Shackelton expedition to Antarctica called *Endurance*. The story of the expedition and the subsequent shipwreck is almost beyond belief and the leadership ability of Shackelton stands as one of the great examples of all time. In preparing for this paper I went back to that work and I noticed some interesting things about his style of leadership. Shackelton was born in an age of great explorers and he had the strength of body and mind to accomplish big things. He was a natural master of the technical, human, and conceptual. He could be flexible in style and approach so that each man or situation, encountered the best possible leader. He was consistent, straightforward, and dependable without a hint of neuroticism (Lansing, 1959). According to Peter Northouse, "the major leadership traits are: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity and sociability," (Northouse, 2007, p. 19). Shackelton had all of that and at the highest degree. Shackelton could be friendly with the men but his control was unquestioned. No one wanted to see him angry. His men liked him and trusted him. They saw him endure the same hardships that they did without complaint. He always seemed to have a plan and the men believed that if anyone could save them it was he, (Lansing, 1959). In a world completely out of control, he inspired confidence. The concept of transformational leadership had not been created in Shackleton's day but looking at the four key components of transformational leadership one can see that it is all there. These leaders are role models and inspire confidence that obstacles will be overcome. They create a compelling vision of the future that inspires people to follow. They create an environment that nurtures creative and original thinking and they understand each individual. They also understand how to help each individual to reach his or her potential. Shackelton lost his ship to the ice in the Antarctic but he kept every man alive until they were rescued two years later. He led his men through the worst that this planet can throw at man, and they all survived. The style of leadership that he used was, in my opinion, transformational.

Transformational leadership is a recent concept. James MacGregor Burns is credited with the development of the transformational concept with his 1978 *Leadership* book. Burns felt that

leadership fell into two basic categories: transactional or transformational. Transactional leadership involves exchange. The leader offers something in return for obedience or cooperation. Transformational leaders inspire followers to achieve great things while developing their own leadership abilities by understanding and nurturing individuals' needs and empowering them, (Bass & Riggio, 2006, Chapter 1). Burns built on the work of Max Weber who examined the appeal of charismatic leaders. These leaders are able to motivate followers through the use of personal charisma. Charisma is a part of transformational leadership but only a part. Both Weber and Burns recognized and identified the dark side of charismatic leaders who used their powers to destructive, and even, "evil" ends – Hitler, Stalin, and the like. Burns calls this exploitive and self-aggrandizing use of charisma pseudo-transformational, (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 5). "Conceptually, leadership is charismatic, and followers seek to identify with the leader and emulate him or her. The leadership inspires followers with challenge and persuasion, providing both meaning and understanding. The leadership is intellectually stimulating, expanding the followers' use of their abilities. Finally, the leadership is individually considerate, providing the follower with support, mentoring, and coaching," (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 5). According to Bass, each of these components can be measured with a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The four component areas are: Idealized Influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC). There is also a Full Range of Leadership model which includes some elements of transactional leadership and laissez-faire approaches.

Laissez-faire leadership is more accurately non-leadership, and that is something I am concerned about. Not knowing the theory behind what I had been doing, I could only compare it to the forms of leadership that I had encountered which were transactional and authoritative. In each of these styles there are clear control mechanisms: do what I tell you or else. Some have commented on my style by saying I was not involved and I let people run wild. It was even suggested that I was not sufficiently controlling and punitive to be a good parent. I don't actually "let people run wild". I actually demand a "good bit of order" but I realize that order without threatening people. I develop relationships and set up situations that create a high degree of order which seems to happen without overt effort. Besides, as I have previously established, I don't listen very well to criticism that smacks of unthinking rigidity. Still, I had to ask myself if I was too hands off. I concluded that what I was doing seemed to work for all, so I persevered. Maybe I

was just lucky. It is quite a relief to finally discover that there is a solid “theoretical” foundation to what I have been doing. Furthermore, this style can be very effective, more effective than other styles, if the current or past research is valid.

Bass emphasizes the difference between authentic and inauthentic transformational leadership because at first glance they can seem similar. Authentic transformational leadership is socialized and focused on a better future for its followers without negatively impacting anyone else. Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr are examples Bass gives for truly transformational figures. Inauthentic or pseudo-transformational leaders are personalized in their mindset and use their power to reward or punish followers in an arbitrary way to control followers. They are self-aggrandizing authoritarians who exploit their followers. “Such tyrants are narcissistic, impetuous, and impulsively aggressive,” writes Bass, (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 40). (Donald Trump seems perfectly fitted to this description).

Transformational leadership has been shown to be effective in all of the areas in which it has been studied. Yet it is not critical in all areas. Research shows that when a task is routine and without stress a transactional leader can be enough. When the situation is transient or when there is stress, however, the strong transformative leader becomes more effective and exerts more control over a situation than a transactional leader, even if the transformative leader is not the official leader. Under stress, people follow the real leader, not the official leader. It is best if they are the same person but that is not always the case, (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 66). Finding the real leader is not that difficult says John Maxwell; In a meeting, watch “for five minutes. You’ll know who the leader is. When someone asks a question, who do people watch? Who do they wait to hear? The person they look to is the real Leader,” (Maxwell, 1998, p. 47). A transformational leader has influence even in the absence of recognized power because people trust him/her and want to follow his/her lead. Transformational leaders provide a sense of safety that allows followers to relax and solve problems. Groups under stress need leaders who can make smart, decisive decisions. Transformational leaders think about possibilities and have backup plans that may not answer every situation but may come close enough to be effective in the moment of crisis.

Transformational leadership can also be used to describe organizations. Schools, business, and governments can be transformational. Presidents like Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D Roosevelt were transformative in their leadership of America during very difficult



and uncertain times. They inspired trust and provided a vision that stimulated positive action from enough citizens that the country emerged from its trials a stronger place. “In the organizational transformational culture, there is a sense of purpose and a feeling of family. Commitments are long term. Mutual interests are shared, along with a sense of shared fates and interdependence of the leaders and followers,” writes Bass (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 103). The culture of an organization comes from the leadership. If the leader is transformational then the organization will reflect that. If the leadership is pseudo-transformational, that will also be reflected in a chaotic and destructive way. Maxwell notes that a good leader is one who creates more leaders who can then lead.

Most of the books I have come across in my research are focused on leadership as it relates to business. I personally find this irritating but I suppose I am in the minority. Even Scharmer’s books, which seek to raise consciousness, use business as a justification for doing it, as though an evolved conscious has no purpose outside of business. *Transformational Leadership* also uses business as a focus but less so than most leadership books. Some of the examples in the book used to exemplify transformational leadership are suspect in my opinion. To be fair, when the book was written some of the figures extolled had yet to demonstrate how they were more pseudo-transformational than actually transformative. Maxwell’s book is aimed directly at business, and he makes no pretense about this which is fine. All of his 21 laws are adaptable to other circumstances as they are all of a transformational nature. Continuing in this vein is the Book, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* by Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal. This book is the result of a great deal of research and the lesson learned is that there are, four frames, that organizations need to look at when considering a change in structure. The four frames are: Structural, Human Resource, Political, and Symbolic. For each frame there are perspectives so that in the **Structural** frame we find the metaphor for the organization being a factory or a machine. The central concepts are roles, goals, policies, technology, and environment. The image of leadership is about social architecture and the basic leadership challenge is to attune structure to task and technology to environment. The next frame is **Human Resources**. The metaphor is family. The central concepts are needs, skills, and relationships. The image of leadership is empowering. The challenge is to align organizational and human needs. For me this is the transformational model that I aim to embody.

There are two other frames to look at because they are all used and they can all be useful. These frames help us identify what structure is predominant and helps us think of alternatives. The **Political** frame uses the jungle as its metaphor with the central concepts being power, conflict, competition, and politics. The leader image is of advocacy and political power while the challenge is to develop an agenda and a power base. The last frame is **Symbolic** and its metaphor is carnival, temple, and theater. The central concepts are culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, and heroes. The image of leadership is inspirational and the challenge is to create faith, beauty, and meaning. There is a lot about the symbolic frame that attracts me and fits with the concept of transformational leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2013).

Reframing organizations is a concept that is helpful to a transformative leader who seeks to change the culture of an organization. I used this idea when I started working with the Penikese Board after the program closed. The Board was stuck looking at the island as a program that needed someone to run. Penikese was founded on an island because the program they wanted to create demanded that kind of location. Now they have an island and no program. Conceptually they had not made the switch. I asked them to see the island as a platform upon which other programs could be placed. The key was to identify what made the island special, so special that potential programs could not imagine running the program elsewhere even though it would be cheaper and easier. The reframing caught on and now we are having creative discussions about ways to use the island that hopefully will insure its survival as a transformational environment. Though I have no formal role on the Board, I believe I have earned some influence which again is part of transformational leadership.

## **Part IV: Can it be Taught?**

*Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.* John F. Kennedy

*There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning.* Jiddu Krishnamurti

After identifying characteristics of transformational leaders and developing the questionnaire, researchers wanted to know if this approach can be developed, learned, and taught. Bass and Riggio say that it can. The authors say that to truly understand how transformational leaders are made one has to go back to childhood and the experiences that one has. After speaking to hundreds of leaders about the most important influences in their leadership development “the vast majority mentions the role of one or both parents,” (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 143). Good parents are transformational in nature and their children learn from this experience. Looking back on my life, I can say that my father was a transformational influence and his example has been an inspiration to me. High school students who rated their parents high on the MLQ questionnaire were themselves rated highly on the scale by their coaches, teachers and peers. Transformational leadership can be taught, according to Bass and Riggio, as evidenced by parents teaching their children. But how do we know that it is not the result of an inherited trait rather than a learned social behavior? I suspect it is a combination. I was adopted and yet I feel that my father’s example helped me become a transformational leader but I also feel that I am a personality type that tends in that direction.

There are others who question whether transformational leadership can be taught. Some have argued that “transformational leadership traits are a personality trait or personal predisposition rather than a behavior which can be instructed,” (Northouse, 2007, p. 176). Another criticism is that it lacks conceptual clarity and not all researchers find the MLQ to be highly reliable. In his book *Leadership, Theory, and Practice*, Peter Northouse examines a wide variety of leadership styles and the consistent criticism of all the styles is that they are hard to define, measure, and teach. There seems to be a level of discomfort with human abilities that cannot be accurately described, categorized, and explained. Northouse includes questionnaires to assess the

levels of leadership in each of the different styles he covers but he acknowledges that these are imprecise measurement tools. Leadership theory seems the weakest when it becomes too focused on the smallest defining traits. Like most human behaviors there is a spectrum in leadership styles and the broader look creates a better understanding.

Leadership is important to mankind and people have long sought to understand it and teach it to others. There are undergraduate and graduate Leadership Education programs. Yet many focus on the business related needs of managing simple, stable situations. Schools and programs are finding that this approach is not effective in dealing with a changing complex world and are now teaching and emphasizing transformational leadership. Even the military is promoting transformational leadership because at its most basic the issue is one of forming tightly bound units of committed ‘brothers’. The founder of Penikese, George Cadwalader, was an ex-marine who saw boys transformed by the experience of boot camp and thought that with some reworking the same experience could heal and build broken boys. Cadwalader also saw the skilled and instinctive way in which his drill sergeant handled recruits. The man could be ruthless but he had a sense about how far he could push a man before he broke and one young man who struggled all along was pushed just to his limit but no farther. Cadwalader said that the young man gave all he had and just before he reached the limit the sergeant stepped in to stop him. The sergeant knew that the young man had reached his limit; he had nothing left to prove to the sergeant, the other men, or to himself. Pushing him farther would not make him a better soldier and it might shatter his self-image. That example inspired Cadwalader to be a tough but loving mentor to hundreds of troubled boys over the forty-year run of the program (Cadwalader, 1988).

Cadwalader learned how to be a transformational leader from being in the Marines which may sound very odd since the goal of the military is to transform ordinary people into soldiers aka killing machines. It is not the kind of transformation that I might aspire to. In fact I find the process transformation by way of assault. Yet it is a form of transformation, albeit a brutal one at times. For those looking to be transformed, and do not wish to be in the military, there are leadership programs that focus on the “five competencies” suggested by Jay Conger, a leadership researcher. The Five are:

1. Critical evaluation and problem-solving, and self-reflection.
2. Envisioning - learning how to unlearn and see new possibilities.

3. The communication skills for conveying a vision - rhetorical principles to learn and practice.
4. Impression management - the key to transformational leadership includes exemplary behavior, appearance, body language, and verbal skills.
5. How and when to empower followers. The key to successful leadership programs is to concentrate on transformational skills over managerial ones.

Bass and Riggio say there are indicators of transformational leadership which include:

- a) Sociability and some extroversion.
- b) Ascendancy and dominance - the tendency to assume leadership roles may require some level of dominance.
- c) Self-confidence - a leader without confidence is not likely to be successful.
- d) Openness to experience and risk taking. Transformational leaders need to be open and creative which can be risky.
- e) Locus of control. Having control over one's life, or at least being comfortable with the control one has, gives a person direction and the confidence to focus on outward issues.
- f) Hardiness. Transformational leaders are resilient in body and mind.
- g) Transformational leaders are also intelligent in multiple ways: cognitively, socially, emotionally, and practically (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 174).

Enrolling in a formal leadership training program may be helpful for those wanting to become transformational leaders but I do not think it is necessary. The first thing to understand is that leadership styles exist along a wide spectrum. Everyone can become more transformational if they work towards that but it is not an either or category. When I think about explaining the process to someone I refer to my personal experience and approach.

Looking at the competencies and indicators listed above I feel that there is definitely an element of personality traits involved here. A transformational leader is open to new experiences, comfortable with a lack of total control, resilient, sociable, emotionally intelligent, and self-

aware. Transformational leaders are comfortable in the gray areas and good at seeing possible futures. People, who tend towards a black and white view of the world, who need to feel in controls, who are threatened by the success of others, and who see the world as inherently a dangerous place, will tend towards a transactional or authoritarian style of leadership.

*The role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it's to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they're valued.* Ken Robinson

### **The Self and Idealized Influence**

In becoming a transformational leader I start with myself as all of the leadership experts suggest. The first person I need to lead is myself. I need to understand what my personality is and what my strengths are. I need to be honest about my weaknesses and work to improve them. I need to become someone I want to follow and that may mean different things to different people. It is important to become the person I am capable of being. To do that I need a vision of what I might become if I were at my best. I then work at becoming well educated, staying in good physical condition, developing good health habits, behaving honestly and justly towards others, and being conscious that my attitude, behavior, and actions are being watched and are more powerful than my words. It is important to personify the ideal I wish people to aspire to even if I haven't reached that goal myself. This is a lifetime endeavor. It is a journey that is never complete but progress is always made. Leaders need to exude a sense of competence and self-assuredness so that others can feel trusting and safe. That comes from personal improvement, experience, and self-awareness.

### **Inspirational Motivation**

The key to inspirational motivation for me starts with a vision of what is possible. When a situation arises that needs leadership a picture forms about what is required. The job or task may be simple and straightforward, like crossing an airport with 30 students in a short time to make a connecting flight. What else could be done with this opportunity? Most leaders would likely think of the quickest surest way to cross the airport and give directions in an authoritative way, taking the responsibility and the lead themselves. For me, I looked at it differently. I saw

what needed to be done and what the obvious course of action would be but then I started to play with the situation. The moment had some excitement built into it, some drama. That is fun and can make the moment memorable. I knew I could guide the group myself. But was I the best person for the job? What things could we learn about ourselves if the situation was put into the hands of those who were not expecting it? Who did I have in my group that could both do the job, and needed the opportunity to shine? The task was no longer about just getting from one place to another. The task was to take a challenge and rise to the occasion as a group when it really mattered. The first person I picked was my daughter Madison because I knew she could do it and I knew that she needed a moment to prove to her friends and classmates that she was someone to be counted on in a crisis. I also needed her to know that I knew she could do it and that I would trust her with 29 other people in a foreign country. The second person I picked was a young man who had traveled extensively with his family and who consistently demonstrated good judgment and clear thinking. It was important to me that I have a boy and a girl and that I had someone other than my own daughter in charge not because she needed the help but because of the message I was sending to the others. I was also comfortable with the idea that we might not make it but that if we didn't it would not be the fault of my leaders. Madison later told me how much it meant to her that I would trust her in that moment and I felt like it was a visible moment of growth for her. For the young man the moment demonstrated that his abilities and maturity were recognized and he responded at the high level I expected of him.

Vision is about seeing the possible. What can be made of the situation beyond just completing the task? What story can we write that goes beyond the mundane task? Which people have the skills to match the needs of the moment? Who needs the chance to rise to the occasion? How can we all experience something memorable and learn something about ourselves and each other? Selling the vision is about painting a picture in the minds of the people involved that shows them a version of the future that excites them and makes them want to be a part of. An important part of painting this picture is to have the right attitude, emotion, self-confidence, posture, body language, speech, and courage to convey the vision. Being conscious of all this and working to enhance those abilities is important. A little bit of theatrics helps as well. An actor puts on the clothes to find a character. The character evokes the emotions, and soon it is not an act.

### **Intellectual Stimulation**

An intelligent person will lose interest in an endeavor that does not stimulate his or her mind. A transformational leader understands that to get the most out of people they must feel like they are being asked to do something of appropriate complexity and difficulty for their abilities. Knowing what people can handle is more of an art than a science, I think, and it goes back to the leader's level of cognitive, emotional, and social intelligence. A good leader will have a sense about what a person needs to grow and will push them as far as they can without pushing them over the edge. This is the ability that Cadwalader saw in his drill sergeant that inspired him to try to change the lives of troubled boys. When I work with someone I am always looking for opportunities to help them explore, learn, and grow. During one of my classes in the CCT program I was involved with a workshop in Woods Hole with some very accomplished professionals and students. We were all working on individual projects but I found that I was much more interested in helping others think about their projects than I was in working on my own. After reflection, I thought this tendency came from my transformational impulses. Whenever I am in a situation where I feel that I am utilizing and stretching my abilities I feel positive and energized by it. On the other hand I have been in situations where I was not encouraged to learn and grow and where I was actively opposed in my attempts to learn and evolve. This created a negative attitude in me that was hard to miss. As a leader, I am always searching for ways to help others grow.

### **Individual Consideration**

Thinking about the other people involved in a project, school, business, group, or trip is important for transformational leaders. The ultimate goal is not the task at hand, it is the enrichment of the people involved and that includes those in power above you. Some people need a leader who can push them and demand high standards; while others need someone who can understand that just getting to school today was a victory. A transformational leader responds to what a person needs and not what they think the person should do. Working on Penikese with the staff member I wrote about earlier I knew instantly that she needed attention and care. It was not my job to work with her on her issues and she certainly did not try to ask for any help but at the same time I saw a person that needed a helping hand and I cultivated that relationship so that I could be a helpful and positive influence in her life. It is one of my great



satisfactions to see how quickly she grew in response to some thoughtful kindness and empathy. Sometimes a wilting plant just needs a little water. In the end she became one of the most effective counselors on the island and I feel like I had some small part in that. I also tried to teach and support my supervisor who was being asked to do things outside of her expertise and was being held to account for things beyond her control. I was able to see where she needed help and take on those things myself which allowed her to be more effective doing the job she was meant to do.

As a leader it is important to help others become leaders and one way to do that is to find opportunities for people to take the lead on things that might seem a bit beyond their ability but still achievable in your mind. Appointing Madison and the young man to lead the school trip through the airport is an example of this. Many times on that trip I asked students to take charge in situations that were not always clear or easy, and each time I had to remind the chaperones to stand down and let the students work it out. The chaperones knew how to find their way or complete the task and it would have been more efficient to let them do it. But the goal, in my mind, was to help the students grow and learn, and not to efficiently save time. Transformational leaders look for ways to let others shine and accomplish things they thought were beyond them.

*Leadership is a privilege to better the lives of others. It is not an opportunity to satisfy personal greed. Mwai Kibaki*

As a basic mindset, a transformational leader looks for ways to make life better for all and acts as a coach, mentor, and teacher to all those in need. However, one should not be a busy body, know-it-all, or a nag. But it is good to be aware of those around you, and offer the appropriate help when needed. Transformational leadership is the opposite of “enlightened self-interest” or, narcissistic greed, as I think of it. The current political climate that extols the so-called virtues of mean-spirited selfishness is a self-loathing behavior that creates misery for billions of people and other living creatures. In its most elemental form, transformational leadership is communistic in that it is concerned with the wellbeing of others and it recognizes that we must all work together to make this world a humane place to live.

There are times when transformational leadership is not effective or perhaps not needed. I have grown up thinking that a good leader is strong, makes decisive decisions, is strict, and

authoritarian, so when I didn't follow this path I thought I would find times when it didn't work. The reality is that with the exception of working with people determined to oppose me, or suffering from behavior disorders like oppositional defiant disorder, malignant narcissism, or borderline personality disorder, transformational leadership has never failed me. There are times when it is not needed, like when the task is straight forward, requiring no creativity or adjustments, and the situation is stable for long periods of time, it is easier just to use a transactional approach such as: "here is some money, please move the rocks over there". Transformational leadership is vital in a world of constant change and challenge, requiring creativity and team work.

## Transformational Leadership and Education

*I am a teacher. It's how I define myself. A good teacher isn't someone who gives the answers out to their kids but is understanding of needs and challenges and gives tools to help other people succeed. That's the way I see myself, so whatever it is that I will do eventually after politics, it'll have to do a lot with teaching.* Justin Trudeau

When one writes about education it usually means a formal attempt to educate someone, as in a school setting. Leadership in a formal education setting is very important but it is not the only place for education to take place. Education can happen anywhere at any time and being in proximity to someone who uses a transformational approach means that teaching, coaching, and mentoring are potentially part of the interaction. Transformational leaders possess traits that lend themselves to educational processes and outcomes. Core components are: *Idealized Influence* derived from the high standards that these leaders set for themselves and which serve as an example for students; *Inspirational Motivation* which transformational leaders/educators use to excite and motivate students; *Intellectual Stimulation* that creates a safe space, challenge, and encouragement for students to think creatively and to explore ideas; and *Individual Consideration* which focuses on the special needs of each student and creates individual growth paths for all (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 7). Teachers who use this style facilitate learning and growth in the same ways that parents do with their children. In a school setting the transformational teacher would also work with other staff and administration in a mutually nurturing and supportive way. The administration would use this approach to support and nurture staff so that teachers are better supported to help their students. In a transformative dynamic, there is a reciprocal support system, which develops between student and teachers, between faculty and administration, with the goal being the uplift of all.

One of the strengths of transformational leadership/education is that it is not a competition. Competition has been extolled by many as the natural and best way for people to advance. It is based on the evolutionary theory of survival of the fittest but there are some problems with that. The first problem is that while humans as a species may have outcompeted other humanoid species there is no evidence that the hyper individualism that we applaud today was ever helpful in the small group dynamics that characterized the social organization of early

man. In fact it seems that a cooperative altruism was a major factor in the success of the species. The second problem with the education competition model is that competition demands winners and losers. In educating the youth of a country there should be no losers. If the goal is to educate everyone, then competition is not the answer. One of the issues I have with No Child Left Behind and The Race to the Top is that they are both based on competition, which guaranties that some students will lose, and be left behind. Diane Ravitch has written a great deal about this problem, and after being an early supporter of NCLB, she studied what actually happened to students and concluded that the program was having the opposite of its intended effect. She now opposes both NCLB and RTT which she calls, "Measure and punish" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 93). She is also very concerned about the efforts being made to privatize public schools. Schools in Finland used to be very much like those in America but in 1974 the government of Finland decided to change direction and improve education by becoming more transformative. Today Finland's schools are recognized as some of the best in the world (Ravitch, 2010). Minds are like parachutes: they only work when they are open. "Measure and punish" closes minds, while a transformational approach opens them.

## **Conclusion**

*The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.* Karl Marx, xi<sup>th</sup> Thesis on Feuerbach.

## **My Personal Keys to Transformational Leadership**

1. Be the example of what you want others to be.
2. Gain a compassionate understanding of those around you.
3. Have a vision that extends beyond the managerial tasks.
4. Be a parent, mentor, coach, teacher, and friend.
5. Lead from the emerging future, as Otto Scharmer advises.
6. Have fun, be playful. We are all going to die soon anyway.
7. Love.

Transformational Leadership is the process of knowing and understanding our fellow wanderers on this Life Trail, and committing to the nurture, growth, and uplift of all. Every moment is an opportunity to learn something - for the leaders and the followers. Theories are nice and they can be helpful but for me, transformational leadership/education is really just good parenting. A good parent strives to understand their child for who they are and not who they might wish they were. A good parent knows that the world can be a rough place for a child and that no matter what happens out there, when the child comes home there needs to be someone who thinks that child is the best thing in the world. A good parent should greet the appearance of the child with a smile. A good parent listens without judgment. A good parent knows that teens will speak when they are ready and the trick is to be present when they do. A good parent is a role model of behavior, emotions, temperament, consistency, and resilience. A good parent has clearly defined rules and the flexibility to bend them when needed. A good parent guides, coaches, mentors, teaches, and loves. A good parent inspires the best in their children and seeks to work through problems in a firm, mature, and non-threatening way. A good parent is patient with their child, and with themselves. A good parent is reciprocal in their relationships. A good parent is transformational for the child and for the greater society. The research shows that a

child raised by a transformational parent is very likely to become transformational themselves and that is a good thing for them, their partners, their children, and the world.

Of the elements of transformational leadership listed above, there are a couple that are not found in the academic literature. The first is, have fun. Fun is about life. Fun brings energy, joy, and meaning to life. The second, and most important, is love. Approach life with love. Have love for the people you live with and work with. If love is your starting point, you can't go too far wrong.

Fear and courage are not mentioned in the literature either but they should be. Fear holds us back and closes us off from others. We all have fears of one kind or another but if we think critically about what frightens us we will find that most of it dissipates. "We pack for our fears" said my son Sam after hiking the Appalachian Trail. We pack for our fears in so many ways that we can get weighed down by them. We even pack up our fears and slip them into our children's backpacks as they go out into the world. We all need to look inside the pack that we carry and decide what is our and what was placed there by someone else. Then we need to look at our own fears and sort through them. A lighter pack makes the trip more fun.

Courage is incredibly important but no one ever talks about it. Courage allows us to take risks, accept challenges, and stand up for what is right. To be transformational, a leader must have the courage to stand up to injustice, hatred, and bigotry.

*The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.* Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.* Robert Kennedy

A transformational Leader needs to take a stand when the situation calls for it. When someone is being bullied, abused, or assaulted, the leader must get involved in a positive way. In difficult times a transformational leader works to make the world a better place for all.

*We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

*There are people in every time and every land who want to stop history in its tracks. They fear the future, mistrust the present, and invoke the security of a comfortable past which, in fact, never existed. Robert Kennedy*

### **Steps Anyone Can Take**

*Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance. Robert Kennedy*

Pay attention to those around you and be helpful when you can.

Treat people, animals, and the planet as though they we are all connected.

Take charge of situations that call for leadership.

Be your best self and acknowledge when you fall short.

Stand up for what is right. Defend the weak and vulnerable.

*And in the end the love you take, is equal to the love you make. The Beatles*

Go forth and be good to each other.

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