Personal Philosophy Of Leadership

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Definition and Description of Leadership: Stogdill pointed out in a review of leadership research, that there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it (Northouse, 2012). For me, from my life experiences, I believe that leadership is to provide clear directions and strategy for an organization of different people to drive towards a common goal. The nature of leadership means that a leader must serve as the guiding light in the midst of chaos. In particular, a leader is someone who uses his intelligence and honesty to influence people around him and direct people towards a goal. However, a leader must accomplish this through genuine and authentic leadership, with integrity and humility towards everyone with fair and equal treatment.

Characteristics of Leadership: Leadership is such a broad subject that it is very difficult to define a top trait / quality. However, as a result of my religious background, I believe that the top most important characteristic of a leader is integrity. In addition, I believe that leadership must lead with clear vision and conviction. However, I also believe (mistakenly) that leadership is a one way influence from the leader towards his subordinates.

Contrast with Management: From the various leadership models presented in the Northouse textbook, and from the various articles in the Harvard Business Review on leadership, it appears that my earlier philosophy of leadership is more closely tied to being a manager than a leader. A leader copes with changes by developing a vision of the future with aligning people towards a common goal using motivation and inspiration methodologies, whereas a manager manage complexity by planning and budgeting with organizing and staffing using controlling and problems solving techniques (Kotter, 1990). This means that a leader must establish good communication and credibility with his team to motivate individuals through trust building and empowerment. These characteristics aligned closely with the integrity value that I stated in the previous paragraph.

Leadership Model and Change in View: Overall, the one model that resonates the most with my personal philosophy of leadership (PPL), is the authentic leadership approach. The authentic leadership approach matches the value of honesty and the behavior of leading with a vision and conviction. On the other hand, there are several refinements that I will need to make to improve my PPL. One of them is that leadership is not a one way interaction from the leader to the team members, but is a dyadic relationship in which the leaders and the team members affect one another through multiple ways of interactions. Another refinement is that I need to re-think if physical intelligence is indeed a top quality for a leader.

Overall Synopsis: When it comes to leadership, there are many flaws in my earlier years of thinking. This paper summarizes my world wide journey that helped me to shape those beliefs. However, I believe that my leadership values of intelligence, honesty, and humility ring true in a lot of situations. Yet, as stated earlier, I question whether intelligence is indeed an important leadership trait after all. This paper provides a very detail comparison of my PPL with over a dozen literatures. In particular, since I am studying in the medical informatics program, many of my research references were medically related. In addition, since I have relatively little or no experience in any leadership role, I have included some tools and techniques that I plan to use in the near future, to allow me to test out my PPL, to make additional adjustments and make my PPL even better.

Conclusion: While papers from other veteran leaders may provide good insight of what a leader should be about, my exploration and refinements towards some of my original naive way of thinking would provide an equally effective learning experience for leaders to learn and mistakes to avoid. Therefore, I believe that my paper is a very valuable and worthwhile material for others to read.
WHAT EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME ABOUT EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP
Starting from my high school days and into the early years of my career, I had a high level of self confidence, and believed that I was a natural leader. My early years notion of what a leader should be, was shaped by my personal upbringing and education. In particular, I was raised by a single parent, who was very direct and authoritative. In addition, I grew up in a culture (Hong Kong) in which you are supposed to do what you are told. A culture where having good grades is vital to your success in climbing the society ladder. Therefore, I have always thought of a leader as someone who must be intelligent. Furthermore, my philosophy in life and leadership was heavily influenced by a famous Chinese author, Jing Yung, who is the master in writing thought provoking martial arts fictions. In Mr. Yung’s novels, the leaders were usually the best in martial arts. Therefore, this shaped my belief that a leader must be the best at what he does.

Out of all the events in my life, the one that was the most significant and memorable, was when I became the student body president in my high school. When I was fourteen years old, I moved to Canada to start my high school education. Since I was the only Asian in the school, I had to endure a lot of discrimination and prejudice behaviors. However, over the course of several years, I worked hard to get to know everyone in the school. At the end, I was able to establish trust and gain the majority of the students’ votes to be elected as the student body president. In retrospect, this experience taught me, that in addition to being intelligent, one must also have a good interpersonal and social relationship to gain the support of people surrounding him. This experience also make me promise to myself, that I will always treat others without fairness and dignity.

After my high school days, I moved to Tucson, Arizona to begin my undergraduate study. It was at Tucson that I became heavily involved with Christianity. This experience placed an important leadership attribute in my mind --- the attribute of being honest with strong integrity, ethical and moral standards.

With the above mentioned personal experiences, my early years of leadership style reflected my thinking of what a leader should be: A direct, no nonsense person, who can use his intelligence and authoritative power to lead an organization with utmost honesty and integrity. In the early days of my career, I believed that my intelligence would be able to carry me to become the CEO or VP of a company. However, as a result of several job changes and job layoffs, my self confidence slowly deteriorated. The more I aged, the more humble I became to understand my limitation. In retrospect, I see my early years as an arrogant person who maybe too direct and authoritative. These last series of frequent job changes have adjusted my outlook of what how a leader should behave: I believe that a leader must also have the humility to understand that intelligence alone is not enough to be an effective leader, that he must rely on other people surrounding him to move towards a common goal.

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP
As stated in the previous section, I believe that leadership is to provide clear directions and strategy for an organization of different individuals to move towards a common goal.

Leadership Values
From my life experiences, I believe the three most important attributes / values for a leader are as follow:
1) Honesty - a leader must exhibit ethical leadership traits such as Build Community, Respects others, Serves Others, Shows Justice, and Manifest Honesty (Northouse, 2012). He will need to be honest with strong integrity to build the necessary trust with his team. This value resonates closely with my religious upbringing.
2) Intelligence - a leader must have the intelligence and competency in the particular subject matter to be effective in leading his team. He must have the intelligence to quickly grasp the current technology,
while having the insight to decipher and foresee upcoming trends to proactively lead and influence others to a common goal. Personally, I paid more respect to leaders who has the capacity to match my intelligence.

3) **Humility** - A leader must be humble and have the humility to understand his weaknesses and limitation. A leader must realize that he may not know everything and the fine details. This will allow the leader to seek help with other contributors to strive towards success. This quality served as an effective check and balance for my arrogance, to realize that a leader must rely on other people surrounding him.

**Leadership Assumptions**

In conjunction with the above stated leadership values, the following is a list of assumptions for my PPL:

1) Leadership is a talent that a person is born with. While a person can take as many classes as necessary to compensate his lack of natural leadership ability, the person can never be as good a leader as someone who has the natural leadership abilities. It is of this belief, that I considered myself to never be an effective leader because of my pessimistic introversion personality.

2) A leader’s leadership approach is not fixed or set in stone. While a leader must stand firm on his beliefs, goals, and visions, he must be flexible to change his leadership style to fit a particular problem. In addition, a leader’s leadership style can change over time based on experience encountered throughout his lifetime.

3) Finally, as a result of my childhood upbringing, I had the (incorrect) assumption that leadership is something that a leader bestowed upon his constituents --- that is, it is a one direction influence from the leader to his subordinates. This assumption was resulted from my authoritative parent and Chinese culture that I grew up with.

**Leadership Behaviors**

Finally, I believe that a leader must also exhibit the following behaviors:

1) A leader must have a clear vision, and hold steadfast to his beliefs. He should not be easily swayed by naysayers. Such a clear and direct vision will allow him to steer and influence his team towards a common goal.

2) A leader must treat his team members as equal, with no unwarranted bias towards certain group, culture, gender, and ethnicity.

3) A leader must conduct frequent self evaluation to recognize any potential mistakes, make the necessary adjustment and correct himself accordingly.

**CONTRAST WITH OTHER MODELS OF LEADERSHIP**

The Northouse textbook introduces over a dozen leadership approaches. The following is an analysis of whether or not my PPL agrees with the various approaches. A matrix view of the same information can be found in Table 1 of the Appendix.

**Trait Approach** – Agrees with my PPL. The trait approach fits with my assumption that a person’s leadership style is something that he / she is born with. Is leadership really a trait that cannot be fixed? I need to think more to answer this question for my PPL.

**Skills Approach** – Disagrees with my PPL. As stated earlier, leadership is a natural talent. My belief is that a person can try to learn as much skills as possible to be a more effective leader. However, in my opinion, the mere act of training cannot fully compensate a person who does not have the appropriate leadership traits. Similar to the trait approach, I need to think more to answer this question for my PPL.

**Style Approach** – Agrees with my PPL. I agree that a person’s leadership style --- whether he is more task oriented or relationship oriented --- is important to understand how a person will react in different situation. However, I believe that just looking at the style of a leader is not enough to determine the effectiveness of the leader. The leader must take into consideration of the employees in the situation at
hand --- which is the premise of the situational leadership approach. A person’s leadership style is effective depending on the situation he is facing. In some situations, the leader should use a more task oriented leadership style, while in other situations, the leader should use a more interpersonal leadership style (Northouse, 2012). The style approach provides an additional insight to my PPL: It is important to have different leadership to address different needs.

Situational Approach – Agrees with my PPL. Similar to the style approach, a leader must adapt his leadership approach according to different situation. While the style approach focused more on just the situation, the situation approach take into account the people who are participating in the task. Earlier in my career, I led with a direct, no-nonsense leadership style, regardless of the situation. This situational approach have altered my way of thinking to recognize that effective leadership must be able to flex and adapt accordingly

Contingency Theory – Agrees with my PPL. As mentioned earlier, I believe that some people have the necessary traits to be an effective leader. However, because of the natural traits, some people are more adept in leading in certain situations. Therefore, for example, it is intuitive to realize that leaders who have the natural talent of empathy, are more suitable to lead in situation that requires a more supportive leadership style. In a dynamic working environment, it means that a leader will face different problems over time. The ideal situation will be for an organization to assign the appropriate leader to the appropriate problem. My PPL will have to include emotional intelligence as one of the behaviors / values.

Path-Goal Theory - Agrees with my PPL. A competent leader must use an appropriate leadership style, not only to the situation at hand, but more importantly, to the team members involved in the situation. A leader knows dearly the path to which he wants to go. Therefore, he is at best to understand the needs of his subordinates, to set a clear direction as to where he wants to go, and to clear the obstacles along the way. From this, it complemented my PPL that there is never one single leadership approach that is the best for every situation and every team member. The Path-Goal Theory combines the style approach, along with the situational approach, to find the best combination among a leader behavior, his subordinates characteristics, and the situation.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory - Disagrees with my PPL. While the above leadership styles focus more on the leader himself, the leader-member exchange theory focuses on a two way dyadic relationship between the leader and his followers. However, one part of the leader-member exchange theory that I found to be very disturbing, is that it created an ‘in-group” / “out-group” concept. This is especially troubling for an introvert like myself, who rarely performs any type of relationship building activities. In other words, I am always in the “out-group”. This contradicts with my belief that a leader should treat all of his subordinates as equal. In my PPL, I thought that leadership is a one way directive from the leader to his subordinates. This theory has introduced me to a whole new way of thinking that the team members have a vital role in shaping and influencing the leader.

Transformational Leadership - Partially Agrees with my PPL. My PPL stated that a leader should treat his subordinates as equal. In addition, a leader should have a strong conviction of his beliefs to influence his followers. However, my PPL focuses primarily on the leader himself. Yet, the transformational leadership approach must take into account the needs of the followers. In addition, this leadership approach asked the leader to have strong emotional relationship with his subordinates. This is different from my incorrect notion of a direct, no-nonsense leadership style. This will influence my PPL to consider the team member’s needs as part of the leadership equation.

Servant Leadership - Partially Disagrees with my PPL. Similar to transformational leadership, the subordinates play an important role in the leadership interaction. This is different from my belief that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to the followers. In addition, A leader must have strong
emotional intelligence to understand his followers. On the other hand, this approach matches the humility value of my PPL. I may have to adjust my PPL, to include emotional intelligence as one of the leadership values

**Authentic Leadership** - Agrees with my PPL. The Authentic leadership approach asked a leader to be genuine and real. In addition, “authentic leaders exhibit genuine leadership, lead from conviction, and are originals, not copies.” (Northouse, 2012). These concepts matches my PPL leadership value of honesty, and my PPL behaviors of leading with clear vision (conviction).

**Team leadership** - Disagrees with my PPL. In team leadership approach, the model “provides the leader with a cognitive map for identifying group needs, and offers suggestions about how to take appropriate corrective actions.” (Northouse, 2012). It also involves “the sharing of influence by team members who step forward when situations warrant providing the leadership necessary and then stepping back to allow others to lead.” (Northouse, 2012). Once again, similar to the transformational and servant leadership approach, my PPL will have to be adjusted to include the behaviors of subordinates.

**Psychodynamic Approach** - Disagrees with my PPL. The underlying assumption in the Psychodynamic approach is that “the personality characteristics of individuals, being deeply ingrained, are very difficult to change in any significant way. (Northouse, 2012). Therefore, this contradicts with my PPL behaviors that an effective leader should be able to adjust his leadership style according to the situation. In addition, this approach relies heavily on the transaction between a leader and his follower. However, the psychodynamic style has merits in that instead of trying to change one’s leadership style, the leader should instead understand and accept his own personality and the personality of his followers, and mitigate the differences accordingly.

**Ethical Leadership** - Agrees with my PPL. This leadership approach strongly matches my PPL value of honesty. The combination of “respect, service, justice, honesty, and community” strikes in the heart of my PPL values.

**Managers vs Leaders Comparison** - As stated in the experience section, my experience has molded me to mistakenly believe that a person can use this intelligence and authoritative power to lead an organization. It is apparent that my idea of leadership is closer to be a manager than a leader: Managers manage complexity by planning and budgeting with organizing and staffing using controlling and problems solving techniques, while leaders cope with changes by developing a vision of the future with aligning people towards a common goal using motivation and inspiration methodologies (Kotter, 1990). Managers lead by deducting the most logical and orderly way of doing things right. Leaders, on the other hand, lead by inductive thinking to set a direction with vision and strategies. By aligning people, leaders face a "communications challenge" and a "credibility challenge", that involves talking and influencing many individuals. And lastly, managers control people by pushing them in the right direction, while leaders motivates them by satisfying basic human needs via strong networks of informal relationship. Leaders motivate people that leads to empowerment throughout an organization where lower level employees can initiate action without some degree of vulnerability (Kotter, 1990).

**Discussion** – From the above analysis, it appears that my PPL agrees with the leadership approaches of trait approach, style approach, situational approach, contingency theory, path-goal theory, authentic leadership, and ethical leadership. On the other hand, the skills approach and the psychodynamic approach are incompatible with my PPL. Furthermore, leadership theories such as the leader-member exchange theory, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and team leadership, all included the subordinates as part of the equation in leadership effectiveness, which is quite different from my notion that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to his team members.
Out of the various leadership models, the one model that resonates the most with my PPL, is the authentic leadership approach. As stated earlier, the authentic leadership approach matches the value of honesty and the behavior of leading with a vision / conviction. Not surprisingly, many other references also stated integrity as an important leadership quality. A survey of deans from various U.S. colleges of medicine and academic medical centers found that integrity is the most essential to their leadership (Souba, 2006). This finding is consistent with that of researchers who found that integrity was the trait most frequently cited by their sample of senior executives as being highly associated with ethical leadership (Souba, 2006). In addition, in regards to leaders having a steadfast vision, Strange and Mumford stated that outstanding leadership depends on the articulation and effective communication of a viable vision (Strange, 2002). Stanley wrote that a match between the clinical leaders' actions and their values and beliefs about care and nursing, may offer a more firm theoretical foundation on which clinical nurses can build an understanding of and capacity to implement clinical leadership or become clinical leaders (Stanley, 2008). Such an approach of authentic leadership can be seen when the activities, actions and deeds of the leader are matched by and driven by a leader's values and beliefs (Stanley, 2008).

In addition, from the managers and leaders comparison, it further demonstrated that an effective leader must have a great vision and direction of where his team should go. A leader should also establish credibility with his team by creating networks of informal relationship by motivating team members through authenticity and empowerment. These leadership qualities are reflected in my PPL values, behaviors and assumptions.

In my opinion, a leader who is genuine and real, will garner more support from the team, as the team members will not have to second guess the true intention of the leader. In addition, members will know very well what the leader stands on, and they can effectively determine whether their own behaviors and performance will meet the expectation of the leader. The example set by the leader will likely to cause the team members to act in similar high integrity standards. Authentic team members would be more willing to voice their concerns and opinions back, as they know that the leader and the company culture would treasure such genuine and real behaviors. Giving a voice to all people is the foundation of an organization that is willing to experiment and learn (Heifetz, 1997). This authentic behavior by the team members will allow the leader to conduct frequent self evaluation to recognize any potential mistakes, make the necessary adjustment and correct himself accordingly --- the cornerstone of one of leadership behaviors listed in my PPL.

REFINEMENTS UNDER CONSIDERATION

From the previous analysis, I will have to made several adjustments to my PPL. First of all, I believed that leadership is a trait that a person is born with. However, from various leadership approaches such as the skills approach, it appears that leadership is a skill that can be developed --- values such as integrity, trust, and teamwork can be developed in leaders (Souba, 2006). On the other hand, genetics factors do influence some important leadership traits (Avery, 2008). Therefore, my theory that leadership is a talent that a person is born with, is still partially correct: Some people have the innate ability to be an effective leader without any additional training. However, the silver lining here is that for the rest of us who are not born with those traits, we can still have the hope of becoming an effective leader because many leadership qualities can be learned and developed. While genetics influences account for a sizable portion of leadership variance, environmental factors are substantially important in determining leadership. Leadership is a function of both the environmental and genetic factors that impact individuals—not one or the other (Arvey, 2008).

Second, I believed that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to his team members. However, many researches and publications echoed a dyadic interaction in a leader-member relationship. Leadership means ‘Unlocking talent’ [by] tapping into the leadership skills and potential of all front line staff (Clark, 2008). Transformational leadership is seen as a process that changes and transforms
individuals that involves emotions, motives, ethics, long-term goals and an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than is usually expected of them (Stanley, 2008). Furthermore, physician leaders will enhance their relationships with physicians by considering each individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others; and helping others to develop their strengths (Menaker, 2008). Such a dyadic relationship building between a leader and his subordinates will not only increase the productivity and efficiency of the operation workflow, but a culture of behavior characterized by trust, confidence, recognition, and feedback can also enhance the well-being of subordinates (van Dierendonck, 2004) (Offermann, 1996). All in all, there are indications that the relationship between leaders and their subordinates is not one-directional but bidirectional, a relationship in which positive behavior and the relationship between leadership behavior and subordinate well-being is most likely a process of mutual influence (van Dierendonck, 2004).

Third, from managers vs leaders comparison and from the various LMI leadership surveys, I need more of a humanistic touch in my leadership approach. My upbringing and culture has shaped myself to believe in a direct and authoritative leadership. However, leaders who have a controlling, less supporting style, who fail to clarify responsibilities and provide supportive feedback, and who exert undue pressure may be expected to have subordinates who report lower levels of well-being (van Dierendonck, 2004). Therefore, I must refine my leadership approach to be more supportive. In fact, people with the highest levels of intelligence (IQ) outperform those with average IQs just 20% of the time, while people with average IQs outperform those with high IQs 70% of the time (Bradberry, 2009). Other leaders also reflected that knowledge is no longer the top leadership quality in their minds anymore (Stanley, 2008). The same list of Colleges Deans who rated integrity as the top leadership trait, rated innovation / intelligence at the middle of the stack (Souba, 2006). Menaker and Bahn also concluded that the transformational leadership attribute that physicians leaders were perceived as exhibiting the least was intellectual stimulation (Menaker, 2008). Therefore, for my PPL, I will have to refine the list of leadership values to remove physical intelligence and to include emotional intelligence instead.

Lastly, from the LPC survey, I came to the realization that while it is important to recognize the PPL values that reflect the primary personality of a person, it is also valuable for the PPL to take into consideration a person’s secondary motivation focus. More specifically, a person who exhibits a relatively high degree of task motivation, can get the job done even more efficiently, if he can complement his task motivation with a high degree of interpersonal skills.

APPLICATIONS, DEVELOPMENT, AND ACTION PLAN
As stated earlier, managers manage complexity by planning and budgeting with organizing and staffing using controlling and problems solving techniques, while leaders cope with changes by developing a vision of the future with aligning people towards a common goal using motivation and inspiration methodologies (Kotter, 1990). Therefore, for me to evolve from a manager to an effective leader, I will have to learn how to deal with communication and credibility challenges when working with people. As stated in my introduction, I believe that I am significantly lacking in terms of leadership qualities.

Therefore, I must work very hard to address my alarming weakness of exceptionally low emotional intelligence. I will have to adapt and change from my direct and authoritative task oriented style, to include more self emotional awareness, self emotional management, social emotional awareness, and relationship emotional management skills. While adapting my leadership style to situations will be very beneficial, I could run into situations in which my original task oriented leadership approach would be best suited to handle. Therefore, I need to be careful in adapting my style according to situations, as this may be perceived by others as a person who is a fence sitter, who is not genuine and real. This may deteriorate my level of trust and credibility.
In particular, in terms of personal emotional management, one of the first items that I would work on, is to create a knowledge card that will help me to “smile, and laugh more”, as described in one of the self emotional management strategies. For social awareness, I will need to pay special attention to the strategies of “Watch Body Language”, “Practice The Art of Listening”, “Test for Accuracy”, and “Step Into Their Shoes” (Bradberry, 2009). By watching body language and practicing the art of listening, I will be able to pick up cues on people that I interact with. This will help me to avoid speaking the wrong thing to the wrong person at the wrong time. The art of testing for accuracy and stepping into their shoes will allow me to reaffirm my understanding of the emotional state of others.

One of my long standing professional challenge is that I am extremely bad in building interpersonal relationships. The result is that I am always being left in the “out-group” of any organizations. This has caused problems in team projects and in performance evaluation. Another eye opener is the concept of transformational leadership, which taught me that a real leader engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2012). In the process, both the manager and the followers may emerge with a stronger and higher set of moral values (Northouse, 2012). Therefore, I now see that it is vitally important for me to work myself into the “in-group”. I will need to socialize more. Even though it is outside of my comfort zone to socialize with people, I will challenge myself by scheduling and inviting a different person out to lunch every month.

From LMI leadership trait questionnaire, I was being perceived as someone who is not trustworthy, as a result of my lack of self-confidence. However, building trust and establishing credibility are essential for a leader to align and influence team members. Therefore, I will need to practice several relationship management strategies, such as “Build Trust”, “Don’t Avoid the Inevitable”, “Complement the Person’s Emotions or Situation”, and “Explain your decision, Don’t Just Make Them”. The “Explain your decision, Don’t Just Make Them” strategy is of particular importance, because quite often, others may not understand the decision or request that I made. The level of trust can be improved when people understand where I came from and the reason for my action.

Furthermore, from the leadership skills questionnaire, it revealed that I need to improve upon my conceptual skills. As stated earlier an effective leader must have a strong vision to navigate his team through a mist of chaos. Therefore, for me to improve on my conceptual skill, I must get even better at my technical skills. In addition, I will also need to attend classes and training, such as Six Sigma and Blue Ocean strategies, to help me with in formulating framework through proven step by step methodologies.

In order to practice my PPL on a daily basis, one of the key action is for me to improve my self and relationship management. Therefore, I planned to get an audio copy of the Emotional Intelligence 2.0, and listen to one of the four categories during my commute to work every day. From the list of strategies presented, I will select a couple of strategies every week, create knowledge cards out of them, and use them on a daily basis. As a matter of fact, I have already been following the aforementioned improvement plan. One of the strategies that I have been using on a daily basis, is to smile to myself whenever I looked into the mirror, and to remind myself that I am capable and worthy.

**CONCLUSION**

All in all, this paper has uncovered my philosophy of leadership. However, the various references clearly demonstrated many flaws in my PPL. More importantly, they taught me what I should do to refine my PPL. At the end of the day, it is very assuring to know that through practices and training, I can overcome my lack of leadership traits, and attain the necessary skills to become an effective leader.
**APPENDIX**

**Table 1: Matrix Comparison of Various Leadership Approaches to My PPL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Approach</th>
<th>Agree / Disagree with my PPL</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>How this approach may influence my PPL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trait Approach</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>The Trait approach fits with my assumption that a person’s leadership style is something that he / she is born with.</td>
<td>Is leadership really a trait that cannot be fixed? I need to think more to answer this question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Approach</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>My assumption is that a person can try to learn as much skills as possible to be a more effective leader. The mere act of training cannot fully compensate a person who does not have the appropriate leadership traits, such as confidence, social,</td>
<td>Similar to the trait approach, reflection, I need to think more to answer this question for my PPL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style Approach</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>I agree that a person’s leadership style --- whether he is more task oriented or relationship oriented --- is important to understand how a person will react in different situation. However, I believe that just looking at the style of a leader is not enough to determine the effectiveness of the leader. The leader must take into consideration of the employees in the situation at hand --- which is the premise of the situational leadership approach. A person’s leadership style is effective depending on the situation he is facing. In some situations, the leader should use a more task oriented leadership style, while in other situations, the leader should use a more interpersonal leadership style (Northouse, 2012)</td>
<td>The style approach provides an additional insight to my PPL: It is important to have different leadership to address different needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Approach</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Similar to the style approach, a leader must adapt his leadership approach according to different situation. While the style approach focused more on just the situation, the situation approach take into account the people who are participating in the task. Earlier in my career, I led with a direct, no-nonsense leadership style, regardless of the situation</td>
<td>This situational approach have altered my way of thinking to recognize that effective leadership must be able to flex and adapt accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency Theory</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>As mentioned earlier, I believe that some people have the necessary traits to be an effective leader. However, because of the natural traits, some people are more adept in leading a certain situation than other. Therefore , it is intuitive to realize that leaders who have the natural talent of empathy, are more situation to lead in situation that requires a more supportive leadership style. In a dynamic working environment, it means that a leader will face different problems over time. The ideal situation will be for an organization to assign the appropriate leader to the appropriate problem</td>
<td>My PPL will have to include emotional intelligence as one of the behaviors / values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Path-Goal Theory</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>A competent leader must use an appropriate leadership style, not only to the situation at hand, but more importantly, to the team members involved in the situation. A leader knows dearly the path to which he wants to go. Therefore, he is at best to understand the needs of his subordinates, to set a clear direction as to where he wants to go, and to clear the obstacles along the way.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader-Member Exchange Theory</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>While the above leadership styles focus more on the leader himself, he leader-member exchange theory focuses on a 2 way dyadic relationship between the leader and his followers. However, one part of the leader-member exchange theory that I found to be very disturbing, is that it created an “in-group” / “out-group” concept. This is especially troubling for an introvert like myself, who rarely perform any type of relationship building activities. In other words, I am always in the “out-group”. This contradicts with my belief that a leader should treat all of his subordinates as equal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>Partially Agree</td>
<td>My PPL stated that a leader should treat his subordinates as equal. In addition, a leader should have a strong conviction of his beliefs to influence his followers. However, my PPL focuses primarily on the leader himself. Yet, the transformational leadership approach must take into account the needs of the followers. In addition, this leadership approach asked the leader to have strong emotional relationship with his subordinates. This is different from my incorrect notion of a direct, no-nonsense leadership style.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>Partially Disagree</td>
<td>Similar to transformational leadership, the subordinates play an important role in the leadership interaction. This is different from my belief that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to the followers. In addition, A leader must have strong emotional intelligence to understand his followers. On the other hand, this approach matches the humility value of my PPL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Leadership</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>The Authentic leadership approach asked a leader to be genuine and real. In addition, “authentic leaders exhibit genuine leadership, lead from conviction, and are originals, not copies.” (Northouse, 2012). Both of these concepts matches my PPL leadership value of honesty, and my PPL behaviors of leading with clear vision (conviction).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team leadership</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>In team leadership approach, the model “provides the leader with a cognitive map for identifying group needs, and offers suggestions about how to take appropriate corrective actions.” (Northouse, 2012). It also involves “the sharing of influence by team members who step forward when situations warrant providing the leadership necessary and then stepping back to allow others to lead.” (Northouse, 2012).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>No change to my PPL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychodynamic Approach</td>
<td>The underlying assumption in the Psychodynamic approach is that “the personality characteristics of individuals, being deeply ingrained, are very difficult to change in any significant way. (Northouse, 2012). Therefore, this contradicts with my PPL behaviors that an effective leader should be able to adjust his leadership style according to the situation. In addition, this approach relies heavily on the transaction between a leader and his follower. However, the psychodynamic style has merits in that instead of trying to change one’s leadership style, the leader should instead understand and accept his own personality and the personality of his followers, and mitigate the differences accordingly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethical Leadership</td>
<td>This leadership strongly matches my PPL value of honesty. As stated before, the combination of “respect, service, justice, honesty, and community” strikes in the heart of my PPL values.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

1. Essence: Can you capture your PPL in a single sentence definition? For example, our textbook defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group to achieve a common goal. As you know, this simple statement is packed with implications about the nature of leadership. If you cannot or will not provide a one sentence definition, please explain why. What is it about your PPL that defies the one-sentence explanation?

   This definition is covered in my PPL:
   A leader is someone who uses his intelligence and honesty to influence people around him and direct people towards a goal, however, a leader must accomplish this through genuine and authentic leadership, with integrity and humility towards everyone with fair and equal treatment.

2. Contrast to Management: How does your PPL explain the difference between leadership and management? The literature we reviewed drew a pretty sharp distinction, emphasizing how leaders make deep change and invent the future for the organization and managers work to make current practices perform as well as possible. If you agree with that distinction, how have you factored it into your PPL? If you don’t, how does your PPL offer a new distinction? Your PPL might claim there is no difference. If so please explain how the same people/role can both drive fundamental change and run the currently operation effectively.

   This topic is covered extensively in my PPL:
   From the various leadership models presented in the Northouse textbook, and from the various articles in the Harvard Business Review on leadership, it appears that my earlier philosophy of leadership is more closely tied to being a manager than a leader: A direct, no nonsense person, who can use his intelligence and authoritative power to lead an organization with utmost honesty and integrity. However, as stated in the HBR articles, a leader copes with changes by developing a vision of the future with aligning people towards a common goal using motivation and inspiration methodologies, whereas a manager manage complexity by planning and budgeting with organizing and staffing using controlling and problems solving techniques (Kotter, 1990). This means that a leader must establish good communication and credibility with his team to motivate individuals through trust building and empowerment. These characteristics aligned closely with the integrity value in my PPL. After writing this PPL, my subsequent PPL values, behaviors, and assumptions have shifted to more leader oriented than manager oriented.

3. Styles: What position do you take on leadership styles? Do styles exist and if so how are they used by the most effective leaders? Do the most effective leaders:
   a. Adapt their styles to situation and the needs of those they server
   b. Search for assignments that have the best fit with their dominate style
   c. Work in areas where their dominate style can force deep change (i.e. remake circumstances to fit their style).
   While option “a” is popular and right sounding but contingency theory rejects it and offers strong evidence for options b and c.

   A leader must learn multiple styles and adapt accordingly to the different situations because leadership is about coping with change and adapting to a dynamic environment. In addition, leaders need to match their style to the competence of the subordinates. It is essential that leaders determine where subordinates are on the developmental continuum and adapt their leadership styles to that level (Northouse, 2012).
Employees act differently when doing different tasks, and that they may act differently during different stages of the same task. Therefore, a leader must use different styles to treat each subordinate differently based on the task at hand in which commitment and competence change over the course of a project (Northouse, 2012), e.g. more directive style in the design phases, and more supportive style in the latter phases. Lastly, in team setting, leaders must adapt their styles simultaneously to the individual members and to the group as a whole.

Therefore, leaders should learn multiple styles and adapt their style to the needs and demands of the situation and those they serve. This philosophy is reflected in my PPL assumption: A leader’s leadership approach is not fixed or set in stone. While a leader must stand firm on his beliefs, goals, and visions, he must be flexible to change his leadership style to fit a particular problem. In addition, a leader’s leadership style can change over time based on experience encountered throughout his lifetime.

4. Vision: How does your PPL make sense of the nature and role of vision in leadership? Can you be an effective leader without a compelling and detailed point of view about a new and important way of doing things? If vision is essential, what exactly is it and how do you get one?

For example, in my PPL I focus on leaders as value innovators and avoid the term vision altogether and instead focused on “a seemingly simple but conceptually deep insight into a new means of value creation.”

Having a vision is one of the key behaviors in my PPL: Leadership is about setting a direction for others in midst of chaos. A leader must have a clear vision, and hold steadfast to his beliefs. He should not be easily swayed by naysayers. Such a clear and direct vision will allow him to steer and influence his team towards a common goal.

The function of leadership is to product change, therefore, setting the direction of that change is fundamental to leadership. The direction setting aspect of leadership creates vision and strategies (Kotter, 1990). Therefore, an effective leader must have a compelling and detailed point of view about a new and important way of doing things. As stated in the HBR article, developing a good business direction / vision is a tough, sometimes exhausting process of gathering and analyzing information (Kotter, 1990). Effective business visions regularly have an almost mundane quality, usually consisting of ideas that are already well known (Kotter, 1990).

5. Change and innovation: What role does change and innovation play in your PPL? How do you define these terms? Change and innovation, like leadership, can be a bit tricky to define. Distinctions between continuous and radical change and invention and innovation are often useful. This is related to question two but is asking you to go deeper into the meaning of the concepts of change and innovation whether you use them to contrast leadership and management or not.

Change and innovation in terms of technology and environment is not covered explicitly in my PPL. However, regarding the change to a leader's direction, behaviors, and goals, one of my PPL behaviors does state that a leader must conduct frequent self evaluation to recognize any potential mistakes, make the necessary adjustment and correct himself accordingly. In terms of the difference between leadership and management, management brings a degree of order and consistency (Kotter, 1990). Leadership, on the other hand, is about coping with change. As stated in the HBR article, the business world has become more competitive and more volatile. The result is that major changes [and innovation] are more and more necessary to survive and
complete effectively in the new environment (Kotter, 1990). More change and innovation demands more leadership.

In addition, innovation and learning are the products of differences: Different people within the same organization bring different experiences, assumptions, values, beliefs, and habits to their work (Heifetz, 1997). Therefore, as stated in the opening paragraph of the executive summary of my PPL, leadership is to provide clear directions and strategy for an organization of different people to drive towards a common goal. Leaders cope with changes by developing a vision of the future with aligning people towards a common goal using motivation and inspiration methodologies (Kotter, 1990). These revelations were covered in the body of my PPL.

6. Followers: How does your PPL define a follower? Do followers require special traits or skills? Are leaders ever followers? For some PPL, the notion of followership will play a central role. Is this true for your approach? If not what does it reveal?

In the beginning, my earlier PPL focuses primarily on the leader. I did not think that the follower would play a central role in leadership behaviors. I mistakenly believed that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to his team members. However, as stated in the refinement section of my PPL, upon reading various articles, it showed that the relationship between leaders and their subordinates is not one-directional but bidirectional, a relationship in which positive behavior and the relationship between leadership behavior and subordinate well-being is most likely a process of mutual influence (van Dierendonck, 2004). In my PPL, I did acknowledge that leadership theories such as the leader-member exchange theory, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and team leadership, all included the subordinates as part of the equation in leadership effectiveness, which is quite different from my notion that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to his team members.

In general, my PPL does not define a follower. The following are several characteristics of a good follower: Be part of the process, be open to ideas other than your own, disagree internally, support externally, celebrate the performances of others, carry your own weight (Brenner, n.d.). Part of being a good teammate – and a good leader – is knowing how to also be a good follower (Brenner, n.d.). Other rules of good followership includes: Your job is to support, not undermine your leader; Make the decision, then run it past the boss, use your initiative; accept responsibility whenever it is offered; Tell the truth and don't quibble; You must know your own limitations as well as your strengths; If you see a problem, fix it (Colonel Meilinger, n.d.).

The study of followership is integral to a better understanding of leadership, as the success and failure of groups, organizations, and teams is not only dependent on how well a leader can lead, but also on how well the followers can follow (Kelley, 1988).

7. Ethics: What do we mean by ethics? Do leaders have special responsibilities when it comes to ethics? For example, leaders use influence, have power and are responsible for organizational outcomes in ways that followers don’t and that entangles them ethically in very distinct and deep ways.

Ethics and integrity is the top leadership value in my PPL.

Leaders have a special responsibility: they have a greater opportunity to influence others in significant ways. Ethics is central to leadership because of the nature of the process of influence, the need to engage followers in accomplishing mutual goals, and the impact leaders have on the organization’s values. (Northouse, 2012)

Ethical leadership involves the use of authority to help followers deal with conflicting values. A
leader must be aware of and concerned about one’s own values. Being a leader demands awareness of the way our ethics defines our leadership. To be an ethical leader, we must be sensitive to the needs of others, treat others in ways that are just, and care for others. Lastly, transformational leadership involves attempts by leaders to move followers to higher standards of moral responsibility. The resulting connection raises the level of morality in both the leader and the follower to create an even better organization. (Northouse, 2012)

8. Current performance: How does your PPL map to current leadership practices and activities? How well are leaders doing from your point of view? Are most leaders today leading according to your PPL or are they failing to do so?

My PPL does not address directly how it maps to current leadership practices and activities. However, as stated in the application and development section: Another eye opener is the concept of transformational leadership, which taught me that a real leader engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Northouse, 2012). In the process, both the manager and the followers may emerge with a stronger and higher set of moral values (Northouse, 2012).

The transformational perspective describes how the leader is out front advocating change for others; this concept is consistent with society’s popular notion of what leadership means. People are attracted to transformational leadership because it makes sense to them. It is appealing that a leader will provide a vision for the future (Northouse, 2012).

In my opinion, I believe that more and more companies are moving towards transformational leadership approach. For the organization, the better well being and ethical standards of the team members will result in higher morale, motivation, and productivity. For the members, it will create better physical and emotional health.

Unfortunately, many companies are still operating in the old leadership culture of direct authoritative leadership approach, which are primarily task oriented, with little or no humanistic support. Followers are doing what they are told to do, because leaders are not accustomed to listen to opinions and suggestions from lower levels. The result is that such companies would continue to survive using their existing technology, but they will eventually be replaced because of their inability to react to change.

9. Additional approaches: You submitted a draft before we had a chance to study a number of leadership theories. Be sure to consider revisions and refinements to your PPL as we cover additional leadership approaches this quarter. More specifically, what do Transformational leadership, Servant leadership and the Psychodynamic approach have to say about your draft PPL?

This topic is covered extensively in my PPL:

The transformational leadership approach partially Agrees with my PPL. My PPL stated that a leader should treat his subordinates as equal. In addition, a leader should have a strong conviction of his beliefs to influence his followers. However, my PPL focuses primarily on the leader himself. Yet, the transformational leadership approach must take into account the needs of the followers. In addition, this leadership approach asked the leader to have strong emotional relationship with his subordinates. This is different from my incorrect notion of a direct, no-nonsense leadership style. This will influence my PPL to consider the team member’s needs as part of the leadership equation.
The servant leadership approach partially disagrees with my PPL. Similar to transformational leadership, the subordinates play an important role in the leadership interaction. This is different from my belief that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to the followers. In addition, A leader must have strong emotional intelligence to understand his followers. On the other hand, this approach matches the humility value of my PPL. I may have to adjust my PPL, to include emotional intelligence as one of the leadership values.

The authentic leadership approach agrees with my PPL. The Authentic leadership approach asked a leader to be genuine and real. In addition, “authentic leaders exhibit genuine leadership, lead from conviction, and are originals, not copies.” (Northouse, 2012). These concepts matches my PPL leadership value of honesty, and my PPL behaviors of leading with clear vision (conviction).

The psychodynamic leadership approach disagrees with my PPL. The underlying assumption in the Psychodynamic approach is that “the personality characteristics of individuals, being deeply ingrained, are very difficult to change in any significant way. (Northouse, 2012). Therefore, this contradicts with my PPL behaviors that an effective leader should be able to adjust his leadership style according to the situation. In addition, this approach relies heavily on the transaction between a leader and his follower. However, the psychodynamic style has merits in that instead of trying to change one’s leadership style, the leader should instead understand and accept his own personality and the personality of his followers, and mitigate the differences accordingly.

From the above analysis, it appears that my PPL agrees with the leadership approaches of trait approach, style approach, situational approach, contingency theory, path-goal theory, authentic leadership, and ethical leadership. On the other hand, the skills approach and the psychodynamic approach are incompatible with my PPL. Furthermore, leadership theories such as the leader-member exchange theory, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and team leadership, all included the subordinates as part of the equation in leadership effectiveness, which is quite different from my notion that leadership is a one way influence from the leader to his team members.

Out of the various leadership models, the one model that resonates the most with my PPL, is the authentic leadership approach. As stated earlier, the authentic leadership approach matches the value of honesty and the behavior of leading with a vision / conviction.

10. Explore related concepts: It would be tough to settle the issue of leadership in one quarter. Your PPL leaves us with some basic and pressing questions. For example, if you have built your PPL around the notion of courage or integrity, have you left us wondering what those are? For example, some say courage is not the absence of fear, but your ability to face it. Does this mean courage is emotional intelligence or is it more? Is leadership more about physical courage or moral courage? How does management courage differ from leadership courage?

Reframing the issue of leadership to focus on the concept of courage (or whatever your PPL advocates) has important consequences but also leaves some open issues and questions. What are they?

From my PPL values of integrity, humility, and intelligence (physical and emotional), it is apparent that the issue of integrity is the most difficult to define. For intelligence, we can measure a person's IQ and EQ to quantify a person's ability. However, for integrity, there is not a measurement or scale that we can quantify whether a leader has good integrity. As reflected in my Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (PLIS) (LMI14A) analysis, the survey is useful to identify people who are “perceived” to have low integrity. However, in some situation, the perception may not reflect the reality of a person’s true personality. For example, I was being judged by
others as “not trustworthy”, in which one of the factors that contributed to the rating was that I did not put forth a level of self-confidence. Therefore, people who are being perceived with low integrity may be a result of other physical and emotional traits.

In addition, a person's own ethical standard can be significantly different from another person's scale. In other words, what may seem to be normal or acceptable in one culture / organization, maybe considered to be unethical in another. Therefore, if I were to build my PPL around the notion of integrity, my PPL would have a moving target that cannot be consistently applied to different organizations. Even within the same organization, people from different background may also interpret a situation differently: For example, some may consider using company's time to check personal email to be completely unacceptable while others may see it as no big deal. Therefore, it became vitally important, for the leaders in the organization to define and set as examples of the ethical and integrity standards in the company.

As stated in my PPL, a leader who is genuine and real, will garner more support from the team, as the team members will not have to second guess the true intention of the leader. In addition, members will know very well what the leader stands on, and they can effectively determine whether their own behaviors and performance will meet the expectation of the leader. The example set by the leader will likely to cause the team members to act in similar high integrity standards. Authentic team members would be more willing to voice their concerns and opinions back, as they know that the leader and the company culture would treasure such genuine and real behaviors.
REFERENCES


