

Andrews University
School of Education

MY BELIEFS ABOUT LEADERSHIP
LEADERSHIP REFLECTION PAPER

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Pamela C. Forbes
October 2011

Contents

Introduction.....	3
I. My Beliefs about Leadership.....	4
A. Overview	4
Table 1: My Beliefs about Leadership, the Experts, and My Competencies	6
II. Plasticity Leadership: A New Paradigm	7
Figure 1: Plasticity Leadership.....	8
A. Servant First.....	8
B. Management.....	9
C. Visionship	9
D. Transformational.....	10
E. Spiritual Leadership.....	10
III. Public Relations	11
Table 2: Pamela’s Problem-Solving Formula	12
IV. Effective Communication	13
Table 3: Pamela’s Communication Steps.....	14
V. Skills in Interpreting Laws, Regulations, and Policies	14
Table 4: Nine Principles of Interpretation.....	15
VI. My Personal Style	16
Figure 2: Life Style Inventory 1 results	17
VII. How Plasticity Leadership Worked in Developing Study Group Models.....	17
VIII. Summary	19
References.....	21

Introduction

This reflection paper demonstrates how my with the knowledge of the following six competencies along with my experiences have influenced my beliefs about leadership. Listed below are those competencies this reflection paper presents.

Competency 6: A competent scholar with . . .

- b. Working knowledge of leadership foundations
- d. Working knowledge of leadership and management

Competency 4: A collaborative consultant with . . .

- a. Skills in effective communication
- c. Skill in problem-solving and decision-making

Competency 3: An effective organizer with . . .

- b. Skills in interpreting laws, regulations, and policies.

Competency 2: A dynamic change agent with . . .

- c. Skills in public relations

Section I of this paper provides a table listing my beliefs about leadership, what the experts say, some applications for facilitating leadership, and my corresponding Leadership Competencies. In Section II, I share my Plasticity Leadership paradigm with a diagram for illustration. Brief discussions for each of the five basic components follow the illustration. Section III lists and explains my skills in public relations including my process for problem solving. In Section IV, I list the steps I have used for effective communication. Section V includes some discussion on interpreting laws, regulations, and policies. In Section VI, I share my personal leadership style based on the Life Style Inventory from Human Synergistics (Human Synergistics International, 2007). For Section VI, I discuss my leadership experiences as I developed the Virtual Study Group Model in the Carolina Conference highlighting the leadership issues. In the last section, I provide a brief summary of this leadership reflection paper.

I. My Beliefs about Leadership

A. Overview

Leadership theories are fascinating, not because they are so wonderful but because they each hold some validity to the actual experience of leadership. They are like various coins in a collection where each coin adds something to the whole compilation but where none can stand as the collection alone. Each theory adds a new dimension of thought and idea, thus enriching the entire world of leadership theory and ever broadening our understanding and perspective.

There are many theories on leadership. There is the Situational Leadership Theory of Hersey and Blanchard (Wren, 1995). Situational Leadership Theory looks at two basic variables, leadership style and follower maturity. It is based on appropriate relationships between the Leader's behavior and a particular aspect of a situation. Behavioral theories of leadership which, over time, have evolved from believing that tasks initiating structure and relationship consideration were either/or styles of leader behavior to becoming a four-quadrant design where the task and relationship styles of a leader can be plotted on two separate axes.

Research done by Blake and Mouton (1964) might suggest there is a "best" style of leadership. However, in spite of the seemingly "best" leadership style, there is no evidence from studies indicating there is single "best" style of leadership that is universally successful. In fact, Korman found that "relationships and tasks had no significant predicative value in terms of effectiveness as situations changed" (Wren, 1995, p. 148). Therefore, the conclusion is that since situations differ, so must leadership styles differ to be effective.

Transformational Leadership is another very interesting theory. There are three basic elements that affect the transformational leader. The character and personality of the leader him/herself, the level at which the followers identify with the leader's ideas, and the actual circumstance or situation in which the leader and followers are immersed.

Burns says leadership can take on one of two forms. One is *transactional leadership*, which occurs when leaders and followers are in a type of exchange in order to get specific needs met. The second is *transformational leadership*, where the status quo is challenged by appealing to the followers' values and sense of a greater purpose, thus creating a compelling vision for something better. Burns also takes the stand that all transformational leaders are charismatic, but not all charismatic leaders are transformational (Burns, 1978; Hughes, 2007). Burn's "transforming leadership" moves people from one stage of development to a higher stage of functioning. It requires a relationship of mutual stimulation where followers become leaders and leaders become moral agents through engagement with each other in a way that raises each to higher levels of motivation and morality through interaction. The crucial element to this leadership is that it brings about social change.

The heart of leadership appears to be grounded in what Robert Greenleaf (1991) coined as Servant-leadership. Servant-leadership implies that one who leads must first be a servant to others – their employees, customers and the community. Important characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, persuasion, awareness, foresight, conceptualization, and commitment to other's growth and development . Greenleaf was born in 1904 and died in 1990. Today, his writings have influenced not only leadership studies but also influence areas ranging from corporate philosophies to trusteeship, and service-learning programs to religious communities (Frick, 2004). Ken Blanchard(2003), Stephen Covey (2004b), Scott Peck (2003), Peter Senge (2006), and Margaret Wheatley (2002) are contemporaries who espouse Greenleaf's servant-leadership concept. **Table 1**, outlines my beliefs about leadership, listing what some experts say, and coordinating my competencies that apply. The competencies in bold represent the core competencies presented in this paper. The competencies in parenthesis are inferred and will receive more attention in another paper.

My Beliefs About Leadership Chart

My Belief about Leadership	Theorists / Authorities	Applications	Competencies
Servant First – Spiritual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening & Understanding • Acceptance & Empathy • Healing & Serving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ethical ○ Builds trust ○ Is Collaborative 	Greenleaf – The servant as leader. Covey – First understand, then be understood. Blanchard – Lead and serve. Jesus – Do unto others . . .” Quinn – “Traveling Naked into the unknown”, personal change. Maxwell – Balancing care and candor Weatley – Listening to each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mediate ▪ Reframe ▪ Value each person ▪ Follow through ▪ Listen carefully ▪ Work for Win/Win ▪ Connect personally ▪ Build relationships ▪ Balance care and candor 	4a, 4c (4b, 6a,)
VISIONSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foresight • A sense of the unknowable • Invents the future 	Hamel – Inventing the future. Blaine Lee – Heart-centered, visionary leadership. Kotter – Economic & social forces driving need for change. Jones (Michael) – Artful, creative leadership. Senge – Mental models Collins – The Hedgehog Concept: passion, be the best, what drives your economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brainstorming ▪ StrengthsTest ▪ Think “What if . . .?” ▪ Collaborate ▪ Empower Others <p><i>*See “Modified - Carolina Council of Teachers” 3a</i></p>	6b, 6d (6a, 6e) <i>See Reflection Paper from LEAD636 - “World View paper” – 6b</i>
Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness & Perception • Can “foresee” by looking at things past, present and future at the same time • Withdrawal 	Hamel – Capturing the wisdom of everyone. Blanchard – Situational Leadership. Collins – The Fly Wheel Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brainstorming ▪ StrengthsTest ▪ Think “What if . . .?” ▪ Collaborate ▪ Empower Others ▪ Balanced withdrawal 	4a, 4c, 3b (2b, 4b, 6a, 6c, 6e)
Transformational: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptualizing • Persuasive • Has Plasticity 	Quinn – Building a bridge from the known to the unknown, confronting problems. Burns – Conflict, change, and people. Black & Greberson – Brain Barriers, mind maps. Kouzes & Posner – Is everyone’s business Senge – Learning organizations Jones (Michael) – Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4MAT ▪ Cooperative Learning ▪ Creativity ▪ Emotions/feelings ▪ Adaptability ▪ 	2c, 4a, 4c, 6d (1c, 6c, 6e) <i>*See “My Approach to Leadership” 6d</i>

** Items in italics can be located in the online portfolio.*

Table 1: My Beliefs about Leadership, the Experts, and My Competencies

II. Plasticity Leadership: A New Paradigm

In the process of studying and reflecting about various leadership theories, I have begun to formulate my own personal theory of leadership. I call it Plasticity Leadership. Remember the metaphor of the coin collection and the display box mentioned at the beginning of this paper? The coins were the collection of leadership styles and the organizing, storing, and displaying of the coins were like management in the sense of the overall driving purpose for the collection. In Plasticity Leadership the coins represent all the different kinds of elements and ideas that can be laid out on the leadership table for use. The display box or the framework that holds it all together represents the Spiritual part of leadership.

According to Dictionary.com, the term plasticity is a noun which means the capability of being molded, receiving shape, or being made to assume a desired form: like the plasticity of social institutions; or the great plasticity of clay. In psychology, plasticity implies an intelligence factor that determines the ease of changing one's perception of a situation for finding a new solution to a problem. Lack of plasticity is termed rigidity.

By the term Plasticity Leadership, I mean embracing a flexible approach to leadership that allows the leader to continually invent as things change. It means accepting that what worked well today may not work tomorrow. It is accepting the fact that in today's fast-paced society there are no hard and fast rules that apply to everything, so timeless principles of leadership that provide plasticity for adaptability is needed. In short, Plasticity Leadership is a principled and people-centered leadership that molds and adapts to meet the demands and needs of the 21st century.

Figure 1 shows the outline and relationships of the principles involved in Plasticity Leadership. The very center is the attitude of service which is the applied principle that touches every situation and setting regardless of what the leadership purpose may be at the time. I have

divided leadership into three basic categories of function; Management, Visionship, and Transformation with Spiritual Leadership being the framework which pulls them all together completing the model. Let me briefly discuss each.

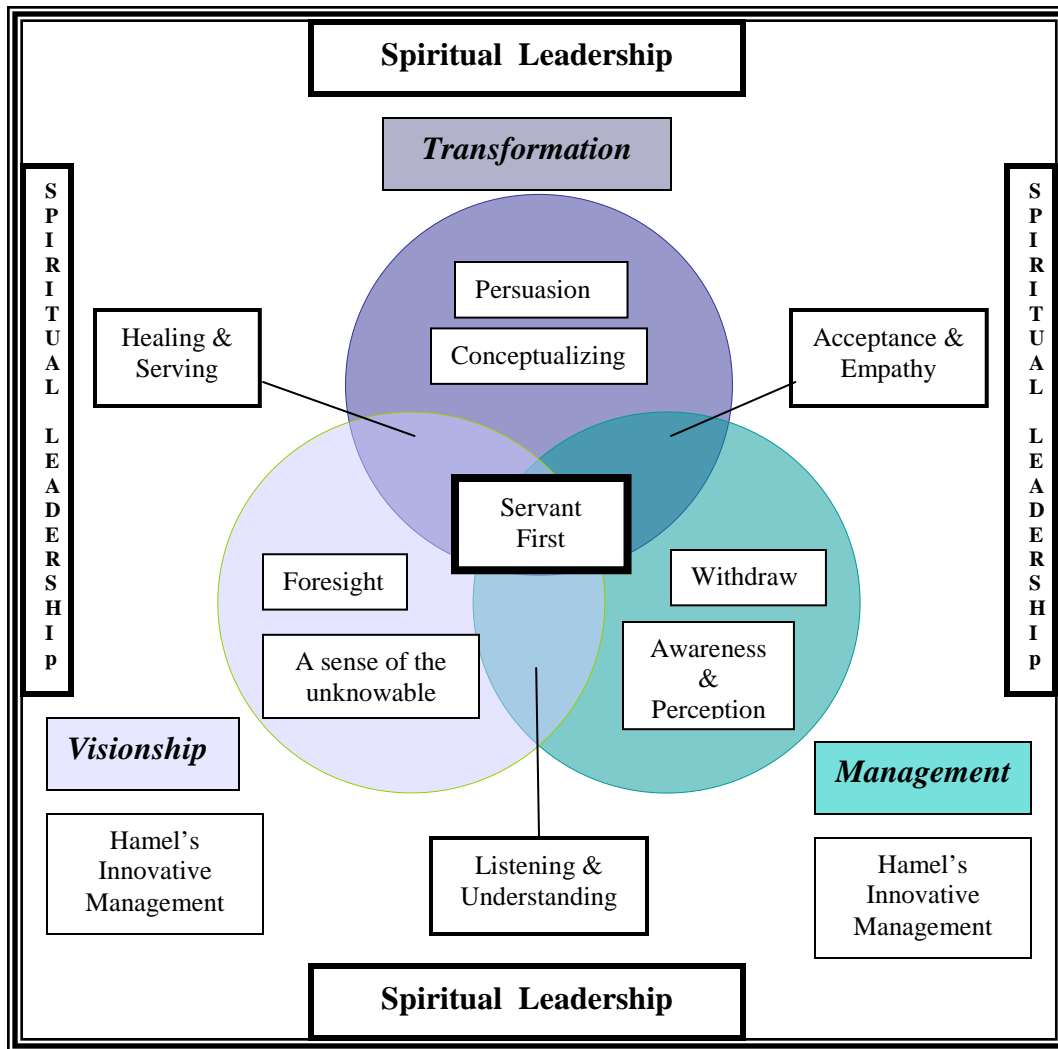


Figure 1: Plasticity Leadership – Forbes’ Theory of leadership © 2008.
Based on Greenleaf’s Servant Leadership (1991)

A. Servant First

At the heart and center of this theory, like Greenleaf’s Servant-leadership, is being a servant first. Perhaps this is the most difficult piece of the theory because it not only goes against the role of how we have thought of leadership in the traditional sense, but it also goes against the

very nature of a human being. Choosing to be a servant first in all circumstances can be very challenging and even hard to determine. I like Greenleaf's "Best Test: Do those, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 7)? I think that this "Best Test" provides a framework of application from which a leader can determine his or her attitude and action in **every circumstance**.

B. Management

Management leadership involves Listening and Understanding on one end of the spectrum with Acceptance and Empathy on the other. The leader works to balance the awareness and perception of a situation by the ability to withdraw and reorient oneself, if only for a moment, in order to sort out the most important from the least important in order to make optimal choices of action. This would include "pacing oneself by appropriate withdrawal" (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 12) to make optimal use of one's resources and constantly asking how can I use myself to serve best.

Hamel's (2007) innovative management ideas outlined in his book *The Future of Management* is a critical part to effective management in this model and is applied to find better and more efficient ways to accomplish the tasks required. As new challenges arise, flexibility and innovation such as looking at "fringe" organizations for unconventional ideas become the norm for high level functioning.

C. Visionship

A term I will call Visionship helps one to formulate a plan of what a company could become as the future moves upon us. Again, Listening and Understanding is a critical component with Healing and Serving being added to complete the ability to have a sense of the unknowable. Foresight about the future can be critical in developing a vision that ultimately provides success.

Greenleaf (1991, p. 17) powerfully describes the leader with foresight as a person that has a sort of “moving average” mentality in which past, present, and future are one, bracketed together and moving along as the clock ticks. The process is continuous. The leader must be able to form a sense of the unknowable and move to an effective vision that moves from active listening and understanding to healing and serving. Again, the innovative processes from Hamel’s *The Future of Management* can help provide the balance between plasticity and stability that visionaries need in the 21st century.

D. Transformational

Transformation refers to the leader’s ability to bring about change in the organization. In order to effect change in an organization, he/she must have the ability to conceptualize ideas and persuade others to the ideas. When a leader can accept and empathize with the followers and move them to a place where they are served and healed, the person’s power of persuasion with subjects is greatly enhanced. Coupling persuasion and clear conceptualizing with articulating the new idea through acceptance and empathy for the purpose of serving and healing will build support and buy-in from those involved.

E. Spiritual Leadership

Finally, **Spiritual Leadership** is the glue that holds all the other components in place. It is the framework that forms the complete picture, and the framework from which all components are executed. It is the soul of true leadership. The spiritual component is also an important aspect of servant leadership (Blanchard, 2003; Greenleaf, 1991; Lee, 1998). This involves influencing people’s hearts rather than controlling actions. It is a commitment on the part of the leader to the care of the whole person. Covey (2004b, p. 358) says being a spiritual leader requires the leader’s knowledge of the organizational culture, customs, values, and traditions. In Plasticity

Leadership, I include the idea of personal application and practice to be critical for spiritual leadership. This is a general idea of my Plasticity Leadership theory.

In summary, management, visionship, and transformation cannot be whole without being enveloped in a framework of spiritual leadership. In isolation, each works at best to bring about limited benefits to the organization. Leadership without a spiritual framework is like the coins without a place to belong or a song without soul. The absence of the spiritual turns leadership into a meaningless process that eventually falls by the wayside when things get tough. In reality, I believe that there is no leadership without spirituality. My concept of Plasticity Leadership is based on timeless principles rather than on processes or procedures for leadership.

III. Public Relations

As a leader, an educator, and a change agent I have had to develop highly refined public relations skills. I have grown in verbal and non-verbal communication during this program. My verbal communication has focused on three areas: communicating a vision, much like advertising; providing non-threatening support for those who need change; and resolving conflict for a Win/Win solution. My skills in understanding mind styles and how the brain learns has helped me better connect to the public or individuals because I can meet them on their terms, help them understand, and more easily move them to a point of change.

Authorities who have influenced my growth in public relations include Wheatley (2002), Covey (2004b), Goleman (1997), Scott (2002), and Tannen (1990). My public relation skills overlap with my problem-solving process outlined in **Table 2** on the next page. Good communication skills, a caring spirit, and a problem-solving approach with others are my core components in my public relation skills. Below is a list of seven public relation skills I learned in this program that helps me be successful in the 21st century.

1. Walk the talk: establishes credibility and requires ethical behavior

2. People skills: requires soft skills of connecting through understanding and caring
3. Sales skills: moves people to action
4. Communication skills: needed for good people and sales skills
5. Ability to synthesize: creates a paradigm of understanding
6. Creative ability: enables inventive and resourceful behavior
7. Initiative: moves with appropriate action without waiting for others

Here is an example for item 1 above, walking the talk that includes ethical behavior.

Recently, I was asked to make a presentation to a group of delegates representing the Carolina Conference constituency from North and South Carolina. They were asking me to do a presentation on two of the items set as goals for the next five years. I easily agreed to one of the items, however, I stated I was not comfortable presenting the other explaining that because there was no indication that action would ever be put in place to make this happen, I was not willing to promote it. The counter response stated that they had thought it was included with another item and the people would not really know. My response was, “But I know and because of my reputation with the people, they expect what I share will be correct. I cannot present that item at this time.” Walking the walk was part of my reputation and I needed to be true to myself. I was happy for the choice and the presentation turned out great without the second item.

STEPS	Problem-Solving & Decision Making Process
1. Categorize	Does the problem have to do with objects, people, or systems?
2. Prioritize	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine importance of problem. 2. What will happen if this problem is not addressed? 3. When is my available time for dealing with the problem?
3. Define Problem	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the specific problem? 2. What should be the focus of attention? 3. Do I need outside help?
4. Resolve	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brainstorm solutions 2. Evaluate the effectiveness of possible solutions – long and short-ranged benefits. 3. Determine the best solution. 4. Take action.

Table 2: Pamela’s Problem-Solving Formula (Mnemonic: **C**an **P**am **D**o **R**ight?)

IV. Effective Communication

Closely related to and intertwined with public relations are communication skills. A successful leader must be able to communicate effectively in nonverbal and verbal language. I have become an effective communicator in this program because of increased skills in understanding how the brain functions and learns, in presenting and speaking, and in written form. My teaching skills have helped me to understand the importance of making a connection to individuals. I have worked to design my three reflection papers and synthesis paper so any reader, regardless of mind style, can easily connect to my ideas. At the same time I endeavored to retain the “flavor” of these papers to represent my uniqueness and how I view the integration of my competencies. My portfolio artifacts contain examples of presentations and seminars. My dissertation is an example of written communication.

Experts who have greatly influenced my communication skills are Bernice McCarthy (2009), Stephen Covey (2004a), Susan Scott (2002), and Stephen King (2000). McCarthy, designer of the 4MAT model provides me with a hands-on approach to understanding the basic mind styles. Covey’s Win/Win idea helps guide me in the conversation process written or spoken. Scott’s approach to fierce conversations offers some helpful direction, especially when communication is shallow or threatens to disintegrate. Although I am not interested in his genres, King, the well-known novelist and screenwriter’s book on writing has an extremely practical approach to writing that appeals to me. I have found his advice helpful as I continue to develop my writing skills. My personal communication steps, listed in **Table 3** below, considers McCarthy’s 4MAT model, based on Kolb’s natural cycle of learning.

1. Begin where the person is a. Listen/Observe to Understand
2. Create a vision a. What I want for the outcome
3. Share your information a. Share, present, write your information
4. Discuss /Observe reactions

a.	Positive responses = moving to step 5.
b.	Negative response = returning to steps 1- 4 one until you get a positive response
c.	Cannot get a positive response = no deal – agree to disagree.
5.	Adjust the vision
a.	Reach an understanding or agreement
6.	Call to action
a.	Moves the person/ people to understand or perform some action

Table 3: Pamela’s Communication Steps

V. Skills in Interpreting Laws, Regulations, and Policies

Being a leader requires an ability to be an effective organizer with skills in understanding the laws, regulations, and policies. My experiences with interpreting laws, regulations, and policies are in two specific categories. One area involves the states laws of North and South Carolina regarding private school state requirements for K- 12 schools and early childhood programs. The other area is policies and regulations of the Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Education Office and the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, which generally falls under the Southern Union policies.

John Maxwell said, "Policies are many, Principles are few, Policies will change, Principles never do" (Maxwell, n.d.). Robert's Rules (Jennings, 2011; Robert, 1915, 1996) lists nine *principles of interpretation* (see **Table 4**). These nine principles have helped me determine how to interpret regulations and policies. There are times when these policies are subject to interpretation or become ambiguous. Some items become outdated, needing revision or deletion. While serving as the Associate Superintendent of Education in the Carolina Conference, I have helped to revise and clarify policies. I also developed a Resolution /Appeals Process for teachers and parents.

While state requirements for private schools in North and South Carolina have remained constant for years, it is not the case with the early childhood programs. The states change their requirements with no notification to private institutions of the change. Therefore, it is critical to

monitor not only the state regulations where each program is located, but the local counties as well.

All K-12 schools can follow the Southern Union K-12 Code Book to ensure they have met both the state and the Southern Union requirements for operation. All early childhood programs with four-year olds or younger must have state licensure to meet the Southern Union requirements for operation.

Nine Principles of Interpretation as listed in Robert’s Rules
1. Bylaws are subject to interpretation only when ambiguity arises.
2. When bylaws are subject to interpretation, no interpretation can be made that creates a conflict with another bylaw.
3. If a provision of the bylaws has two reasonable interpretations, you go with the interpretation that does not have a negative effect on existing bylaws.
4. When you have a conflict between a specific rule and a more general rule, you follow the more specific rule.
5. When bylaws authorize specific things in the same class, other things of the same class are not permitted.
6. When a bylaw authorizes a specific privilege, no privilege greater than the one that's authorized is permitted.
7. If a bylaw prohibits something, then everything beyond that which is prohibited (or limited) is also prohibited. However, other things not expressly prohibited or not as far-reaching as the prohibition are still permitted.
8. If a bylaw prescribes a specific penalty, the penalty can't be increased or decreased except by amending the bylaws.
9. If a bylaw uses a general term and then establishes specific terms that are completely included in the general term, then a rule that is applicable to the general term applies to all the specific terms.

Table 4: Nine Principles of Interpretation (Jennings, 2011)

Over the years, there has been occasion to clarify, update, or delete some policy in the Southern Union K-12 Code Book. I have been a part of the board that votes these changes. However, even in an effort to keep things current, policies can still be lacking when applied to the local level. One of the issues I discovered shortly after beginning work in the office of

education was the lack of clarity regarding the process for a resolution to a problem. I felt the need for clarity was critical and so I developed a protocol called *The Resolution/Appeals Process* (Forbes, 2004).

VI. My Personal Style

When you throw into a leadership theory the special mix of a person's own personality, a new and unique "flavor" of leadership emerges. Based on my personal results from the Life Styles Inventory 1, my natural style for leadership falls in the category of Constructive Styles (11, 12, 1, and 2 o'clock positions). This means that my self-talk reflects on self-enhancing thinking and behavior that contributes to my high level of satisfaction, adds to my ability to develop healthy relationships and work effectively with people, and helps me with proficiency at accomplishing tasks. **Figure 4** reflects the results of my personal inventory.

First impressions are easy for me and people tend to like me from the beginning. Generally, things are positive and upbeat because I believe there is always an opportunity to be improved even in the challenges of work. Finding creative alternatives to solutions is a challenge that I enjoy. Getting everyone to participate in the discussion of problem solving ideas is my preferred way to approach a challenge.

Position	Style	Score	Percentile
1	Humanistic-Encouraging	36	85
2	Affiliative	37	90
3	Approval	6	10
4	Conventional	10	20
5	Dependent	7	9
6	Avoidance	1	10
7	Oppositional	0	0
8	Power	1	6
9	Competitive	5	9
10	Perfectionistic	10	6
11	Achievement	40	99
12	Self-Actualizing	37	93

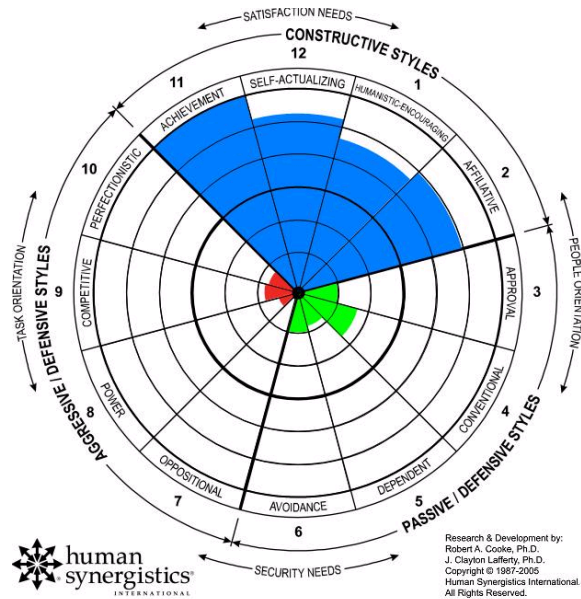


Figure 2: Life Style Inventory 1 results

When things are going well, I begin to think about how they could go even better. This is distressing to some and I have adopted the philosophy of baby-steps for change in most everything. This helps the overwhelming feeling that some experience when change occurs. Most of the time, after a conversation about baby-steps with someone who is distressed regarding change that needs to take place, they say, “Well, I could do that. That isn’t so bad!” I believe that everyone can do great things, if only they believed they could, and I work to help them believe they can.

VII. How Plasticity Leadership Worked in Developing Study Group Models

I believe the reason why I have been able to lead the Carolina teachers to develop a new model for teacher study groups is foremost because of my personal credibility with them (Lee, 1998). This involves spirituality which is a critical aspect of servant leadership (Blanchard, 2003; Greenleaf, 1991; Lee, 1998). It is the soul of true leadership. This involves influencing people’s souls rather than controlling actions. Because the teachers know I have personal integrity, practice what I preach, and follow through on what I say I will do, they are willing to talk with

me and have the trust to try challenging ideas. They know I will be there to help them and make sure things get worked out. If I did not have this credibility with them, I question that I would have ever been able to lead them through the uncharted path of developing a study group model successfully. True *Spiritual Leadership* is the framework for effective *Management*, *Visionship*, and *Transformation* in my **Plasticity Leadership Model**. By plasticity I am referring to the leader's ability to be adaptable, much like in neuroplasticity, a term referring to the ability of the brain to change structurally and functionally as a result of input from the environment (Doidge, 2007).

In developing the virtual study group model with the Carolina Conference teachers, I believe that my Plasticity Leadership theory worked well. Beginning as servant first (Greenleaf, 1991), I listened to concerns and needs from teachers to gain an understanding of what they needed in the study group model (Blanchard, 2003; Covey, 2004b; Greenleaf, 1991). As my understanding grew, I was able to empathize with their challenges and accept that something needed to be changed. This allowed me to connect with the teachers on a personal level as I worked to help resolve the challenge. I talked with key teachers to receive their insight. We came up with the idea of study groups over the Internet. When these key teachers and I talked with the whole group of teachers, we were able to discuss the pros and cons openly. Everyone voted to pilot the idea. This action activated the *Transformation* part of my Plasticity Leadership model was now in motion.

With the *Transformation* beginning to form, I turned my attention simultaneously to management and communicating the vision. *Management* at this point was critical. It required creative management (Hamel, 2007) with close attention to every key individual who was helping me lead the new innovation. "Baby Steps" became my motto with everyone as we began the challenging journey into the unknown. Although the *Vision* of what the new study group

model might look like in the end (Covey, 2004b) had been communicated to the teachers, I now had to use my *Visionship* skills (Jones, 2006; Kotter, 1996; Senge, 2006) as I continually enhanced the vision communicating it ever more clearly to the teachers. Key teachers, who were leading the different groups, were becoming better at facilitating the study group meetings in the navigation of specific software programs over the Internet. In order to make optimal use of each teacher's leadership capacity and to optimize my time, I needed to balance how much to help with and how much to depend on each leader's problem-solving skills. This process, called "withdraw and reorient" (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 12) allowed me to increasingly relinquish responsibility to the emerging leaders. Determining just how much to stay involved and how much to withdraw and reorient my relationship with each particular group required careful monitoring. I was pleased and surprised at the speed with which the leaders and the teachers became effective problem solvers, contacting me less and less for help.

After the first pilot year, the teachers voted each year for the continuance of developing the study group model into the Carolina Virtual Study Groups that we have today. Now teachers are taking turns leading out in their study groups. The more teachers have the skills needed for this type of leadership, the more likely this study group model will be perpetuated and shared with others. I think the Virtual Study Group concept is passing Greenleaf's "Best Test" (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 7) because the teachers are becoming wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants through their work in the study groups.

VIII. Summary

In Summary, working with developing the virtual study group model and applying the skills of a competent scholar in knowing and understanding the interrelationships between people, systems, and technology; being a collaborative consultant; and using my skills as an

effective teacher and mentor, I have been able to provide leadership to facilitate dynamic change through the study group model through effective communication, collaboration, organization, and problem-solving skills. Money, time, and human resources are more optimized with less financial expense, less travel time, and new teacher-leaders. Teachers now can attend their meetings from home working collaboratively for the improvement of their classrooms saving hundreds of hours of travel and thousands of dollars in expenses every year. The teachers are more automated and comfortable in whom they are as they develop their own leadership skills increasing the changes of sustaining the new study group model. The principles outlined in my Plasticity Leadership theory appear to have been successful. I believe my concept of Plasticity Leadership has timeless principles that allow for adaptation and change, even in areas not traditionally adapted or changed in the past, and because of this plasticity, these principles can be successfully used in many different situations.

References

- Blake, R., & Mouton, J. (1964). *The managerial grid*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing.
- Blanchard, K. (2003). *Servant leader*. Nashville: J. Countryman.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Covey, S. (2004a). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York: Free Press.
- Covey, S. (2004b). *The 8th habit from effectiveness to greatness*. New York: Free Press: A division of Simon & Schumster, Inc.
- Doidge, N. (2007). *The brain that changes itself*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Frick, D. Robert R. Greenleaf Biography. from <http://www.donfrick.com/rkgbio.htm>
- Frick, D. (2004). *Robert k. greenleaf: A life of servant leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Goleman, D. (1997). *Emotional intelligence: Why It can matter more than IQ*. New York: Batman Books.
- Greenleaf. (1991). The servant as leader *The Robert K. Greenleaf Center*. Indianapolis.
- Greenleaf, R. R. (1991). *The Servant As Leader*. Indianapolis: The Robert R. Greenleaf Center.
- Hamel, G. (2007). *The future of management*. Boston: Harvard Business School.
- Hughes, R. L. (2007). *Leadership enhancing the lessons of experience*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Human Synergistics International. (2007). Introducing the circumplex. Retrieved October 4, 2011, from <http://www.humansyn.com/system/default.aspx>
- Jones, M. (2006). *Artful leadership: Awakening the commons of the imagination*: Trafford Publishing.
- King, S. (2000). *On writing: A memoir of the craft*. New York: pocket Books.
- Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Lee, B. (1998). *The power principle: Influence with honor*. New York: Simond & Schuster.
- McCarthy, B. (2009). *4MAT Basic Training*. Wauconda, Illinois: About Learning.
- Peck, S. M. (2003). *The road less traveled* (First Touchstone ed.). New York: Touchstone.
- Scott, S. (2002). *Fierce conversations: Achieving success at work and in life, one conversation at a time*. New York: Berkley

Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline: .* New York: Doubleday, A Division of Random House, Inc.

Tannen, D. (1990). *You just don't understand: Women and men in conversation* New York: Ballantine Books.

Wheatley, M. (2002). *Turning to one another: Simple conversation to restore hope to the future.* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Wren, J. T. (1995). *The leader's companion insights on leadership through the ages.* New York: The Free Press.