What I Envision as Transformational Leadership Development

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(A re-cap of the audio/workbook program based upon the book "Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge" by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus)

This program is an exciting journey of discovery about the principles of effective leadership. In this final section, we discuss the ultimate result of inspiring leadership and the highest goals you could hope to attain. Before we do, let's review some key points.

You learn to understand certain myths about leadership that may have been keeping you and other potential leaders from reaching your full potential. One of the most important myths was that leaders are born, and that leadership is a rare, God-given talent. We said that studies of successful leaders have shown the contrary, that leadership is made up of many skills and abilities that can be learned and developed.

We have introduced you to the 10 dominant characteristics of a leader. They were very real, very practical qualities that we all share to some degree. Then we developed a strategy for leadership that consisted of four master keys to power: vision, communication, positioning and sales management.

> #1. Strong, clear vision of the future can attract followers and ignite them in a spirit of commitment and enthusiasm. Create a vision that could serve your leadership efforts.

> #2. You then learn how to communicate that vision to others in ways that would elicit their trust and understanding. Discover that the most important quality of communication is not the method, however, but the clarity and force it carries.

> #3. In the session on positioning, we discuss actions that the leader must take to create a niche for the vision or dream. There were ways to prepare the organization and the outer environment so that your dream could be realized. And we stress the importance of constancy and consistency in all that you do.

> #4. Throughout all these steps we say it is important to manage yourself while leading others. Learn to view failure as an opportunity to recognize your own self worth and the worth of others, and to pay close attention to the needs of your followers. The key in this session is that the mastery of others must first be preceded by the mastery of self. We also talked about learning as an effective leadership and as a requirement of leadership. You were shown how a learning environment could contribute to the success of your vision and the fulfillment of the individual. You learned that leaders themselves are perpetual learners and that their propensity to learn can become contagious throughout an organization. You discovered how a leader can help promote learning, help restructure the organization, so that greater learning can take place. Finally, we talk about change, the desirable and inevitable result of effective leadership.

But before you start on your way, I would like to introduce you to one final principle. It is the principle that separates the good leader from the great leader, the ordinary work from the extraordinary work.

We have concentrated basically on the leader as a master of change. In fact, we have said that change is inherit in true leadership work because leaders operate with a vision of the future, not a vision of the present. But the truly exceptional leaders, the ones that are long remembered and well loved, are not the leaders who manifest change. They are the leaders that manifest transformation.

We want to explore the meaning of transformation, the differences between change and transformation, and the reasons why transformation could be your ultimate goal and the ultimate result of your leadership efforts.

If you chose to, you could have a very complete and rewarding experience in leadership by following just the principles mentioned up to this session. You could still have all the necessary knowledge to pursue an effective and successful career in leadership.

But if you truly are a leader, then, like most leaders, you want to reach for the most you can achieve. Leaders are strivers. They are dreamers. They will aim for the highest goals, even goals that

others say are incredible, impossible. And the highest goal a leader can achieve is transformation.

Transformation of self, of others, of organizations, and in some cases, entire cultures or countries. This ability to transform is again what separates the leader from the manager or director. The manager may be able to affect change. He or she can alter daily tasks and procedures, can modify rules and practices, and even change people's behavior and attitudes for better or for worse. But transformation can only be achieved through the power and strength held in a position of leadership.

What then are the differences between change and transformation? To begin with, change is more superficial, less enduring. Change is worked on externals, on superficialities, and on surface characteristics. It can go back and forth, like changes in the weather. And it can be quick, abrupt, like a change of mind.

Transformation, on the other hand, is seldom achieved quickly and easily. It usually involves a process, sometimes a long, slow and gradual process. So it requires more determination, more patience than change. Transformation is also more substantial than change. It works on the very form or nature of a being. In a sense, it goes to the heart and soul. Transform is to alter the energy form of. To alter energy is to deal with one of the deepest, most basic forces of life. And transformation is deeper than change. It is more internal, more complete, more significant. Transformation, unlike change, can seldom be completed without the help and involvement of others.

But transformation almost always occurs through direct exchanges and interplay with others. It is helpful to consider that change can, however, be a part of the transformation process. A series of changes will eventually result in transformation. Therefore, the changes that might otherwise seem small and insignificant, may really be contributing to an eventual transformation that will deem the changes more significant in retrospect.

There are many ways that an individual can be transformed via the service of effective leadership and in particular by the leader's vision. First of all, individuals are given the opportunity for a shift in focus. Instead of focusing on daily, independent tasks, some of them very mundane, they can now focus on a larger, broader goal.

Simply put, the focus shifts from the small picture to the big picture. This frees people from the frustration and boredom associated with trivial tasks. It allows them to be more tolerant of such tasks because they can now see how it all contributes to a larger, more important end. People become transformed in their very attitude toward work. Now the work is seen as part of some noble mission, some beneficial plan that serves many others.

The followers of an effective leader put renewed energy and effort into their work. They have a sense of how each part contributes to a greater whole. Transformation also occurs when followers learn to put others needs in front of their own personal wants. The vision may demand that they give up certain plans and projects, that they work especially hard in some areas, even areas in which they have never worked before. They may find that some of their ideas aren't appropriate for the new direction, or that they are working with unfamiliar people in unfamiliar environments. But when the vision is strong and compelling, followers do this willingly and with enthusiasm. If the leader has successfully communicated the need for group effort, individuals will discover within themselves a new potential for selflessness and sacrifice. Still more self-discovery awaits them. Followers of transformative leaders often speak of their new ability to work cooperatively with others. The awareness of how much more can be achieved when people pool their talents is an awareness that is transforming in itself.

One of the most rewarding transformations that can take place under an effective leader with a strong vision, is that the individual experiences fun and joy in work again. As the leader calls for them to stretch their limits, followers are faced with new challenges that make it all seem like an adventure. They feel themselves learning and growing and can once again take pleasure in work that may have seemed futile and uninspiring before.

Along with a renewed sense of fun also comes a more positive self-regard. This happens in two ways. First, because the vision allows them a way to see themselves as part of something important. Second, as they become aware of new capabilities and skills as they work to fulfill the vision. This leads to a heightened self respect, a firmer belief in one's abilities.

Perhaps the biggest bonus of these transformations is that most people are able to carry the benefits into other realms of their lives. The truly transformative leader, without even consciously trying, can therefore have an extended effect on a much larger circle than just the immediate followers. Leaders can indirectly affect cultural values and behavior, and through the use of media they can even do so directly.

The organization lucky enough to have a transformative leader at its helm will experience all the changes

its members experience. Its values and behavior patterns will be different. There will be an overall sense of unity, a new flow of vibrant energy, an atmosphere of adventure and fun. Those who work in a transformed organization often refer to the sense of "family within," of a feeling of almost divine mission that enables people to feel like brothers and sisters in a united cause. The employees were willing to take a chance because they felt a part of something magic, and they wanted to work that extra hour or make that extra call or stay that extra Saturday. There is this place in people where they are aligned, where they don't need to be told what to do. They more or less sort out for themselves what needs to be done and ways they can work in harmony with other people, not as a function of a bunch of agreements or contracts, but out of a sense of harmony. It is something akin to what you see on a sailboat crew working together when one of the lines breaks. Very few if any orders are given and nobody waits for the other guy. There is something about sailors in which there is an alignment, a coming together in a whole and nobody needs to give orders.

Differences between Transactional and Transformational Leaders

Transactional leadership	Transformational Leadership
❖Leadership is responsive	❖Leadership is proactive
❖Works within the organizational culture	❖Work to change the organizational culture by implementing new ideas
❖Transactional leaders make employees achieve organizational objectives through rewards and punishment	❖Transformational leaders motivate and empower employees to achieve company's objectives by appealing to higher ideals and moral values
❖Motivates followers by appealing to their own self-interest	❖Motivates followers by encouraging them to transcend their own interests for those of the group or unit

What these two leaders referred to as magic or alignment, illustrates the greatest achievement of leadership: its ability to catalyze people, to commit them to greater risk and intimacy and achievement, all for the purpose of transmitting a compelling vision into reality. This is transformative leadership, the province of those leaders we've been discussing throughout our program, leaders who can shape and elevate the motives and roles of followers. Transformative leadership achieves significant change, that reflects a community of interests. It both frees up and pools the collective energies in pursuit of a common goal. There are some broad characteristics of transformative leadership that apply to all the great leaders throughout history.

First, transformative leadership is collective. There is a symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers. Each one benefits from the other's involvement. The leader has the capacity to understand and follow the needs of followers and the needs of the group, then supply a vision that satisfies both.

Transformative leadership is also active. It creates the environment and circumstances necessary to affect change. It is moral and elevating. In other words, its actions are based on key values within the work force and the society.

Finally, as we have shown, transformative leadership can move followers to higher degrees of achievement and personal growth. Ideally, the leader does such a good job of transforming others that they and the group are not dependent on the leader. The leader who creates a one-man or one-woman institution, unable to proceed without the leader's presence and guidance, has failed to produce an organization for future changes.

The goal of leadership is never to create dependency or reliance but rather to encourage self-reliance and flexibility. Otherwise the organization is doomed to eventual failure. It is to arouse a sense of excitement about the organization's contribution to society. It is to provide a new organizational culture

that helps employees generate meaning in their work and in their lives.

Then they will continue to seek challenges and new opportunities for learning. The followers must become hooked, not on the leader but on their own personal growth. This opportunity to help transform individuals, groups, and even your own culture is at once the greatest challenge and the greatest reward of leadership.

Without the kind of leadership you have learned in this program, it is difficult to see how we can shape a more desirable future for the world and its inhabitants.