

Following-Leading in Risk

A Humanising Dynamic



Dr Robert Long and Craig Ashhurst



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Foreword

Professor Michael Gaffney, University of Canberra

Professor Michael Gaffney, Convener of the Doctor of Education Program at the University of Canberra. Mike has specialist expertise in educational policy and management and holds a chair in educational leadership.

Leaders are people who make a positive and meaningful difference to the lives, work and learning of others. They do this by exercising influence and persuading people to follow them. True leaders are different from bureaucrats who exercise authority and expect obedience, and from tyrants or sociopaths who exercise coercion and force others to capitulate. In other words leaders develop and sustain relationships with their followers. Leadership is a relational and reciprocal process. Without leaders there can be no followers, and without followers there can be no leaders. This connection between followers and leaders is a central premise of *Following-Leading in Risk* by Rob Long and Craig Ashhurst. Throughout the book, they highlight the dynamics of follower-leader relationships in handling organisational risk and hazard management.

The book is timely in light of the broader social, economic, political, cultural and environmental trends that are affecting how governments, business, industry and community organisations understand, appreciate, anticipate and respond to risk. The authors explain that ‘all risk involves a degree of uncertainty and subjective attribution’ (p25).

Different people worry about different things. For example some worry about leaving the house to go shopping, or driving cars, or riding bikes, or going swimming at ocean beaches. Others worry about investing, or flying, or losing their luggage at airports – as Monty Python once recounted in their ode highlighting concerns about the baggage retrieval system they’ve got at Heathrow. Some mitigate the risk by lessening their engagement or exposure to these activities and/or taking out some form of insurance whether this be a commercial insurance contract or a spiritual plenary indulgence. Others decide to live with the risk – and take their chances. While others don’t see any risk whatsoever. It is the individual that decides.

Considering risk at an organisational, community or societal level is more complex. The decisions made in these settings tend to involve more people, be subject to a wider range of (social, economic, political, cultural and environmental) factors beyond ‘the control’ of managers and policymakers and have broader consequences.

These are decisions about risk that different people view differently in terms of significance, that have a range of interacting causes and effects, and that have no ready or lasting solution. Examples include ‘big ticket’ international policy issues associated with climate change and terrorism; as well as ‘sector specific’ problems relating to the sources and consequences of educational disadvantage, child protection and institutionalised sexual abuse, and the use of drugs in sport. The challenge – not only for policy makers and managers but also for everyone involved, staff and other stakeholders – is to figure out the risk, how it can be mitigated, and perhaps used to advantage taking the view that, as Long and Ashhurst suggest, ‘one person’s risk is another person’s opportunity’ (p25).

In these circumstances, consultation, listening and dialogue are foundational concepts, and this is where the need for wise decision-making is most apparent. Such decision-making is evident where leaders and followers come together, discuss and understand the shared nature of risk, and discern their most appropriate course of action. The 'wisdom' in this type of decision-making comes not from hierarchical authority or managerial coercion, but rather from the capacity and willingness of individuals to relate to one another ethically on the basis of their expertise and evidence to influence others' thinking and actions. This means that individuals can and should exercise leadership and practise followership regardless of their position on the organisational chart.

In fact, the dynamic contexts in which we find ourselves as members of contemporary organisations confronting 'wicked problems' of the types listed above call for such adaptability, flexibility and cultural innovation. The old ways of 'command and control' simply no longer cut it. The dangers with persisting with 'top down' approaches to working with risk, that focus attention solely on the role and responsibilities of those in authority or the personality of the 'hero leader', and neglect the wisdom, expertise, and the humanity of others with a stake in the situation, are too readily apparent. Nowadays the actions of executive government and the priorities of the 24 hour news cycle too often reflect the desire 'to do something' or worse 'appear to do something' about risk without opportunity for consultation, listening or dialogue with those who have something to offer.

In this book, Rob Long and Craig Ashhurst offer a reasoned alternative perspective for leading and following in risk. They highlight the shortcomings of traditional bureaucratic and 'hero-leader' approaches to risk and hazard management (Section 1), explain the value of leadership and followership as a cultural dynamic that needs to be fostered in organisations (Section 2), and offer a range of ideas and strategies for making wiser decisions in discerning risk (Section 3). The value of their approach is that it offers a constructive way of countering our tendencies toward 'easier' solutions characterised by authoritarian personalities, objectives-focussed assessments, and the creeping bureaucracy of the 'nanny state'. Instead they call for leadership in understanding risk and motivation, and influencing others and creating followership based on a solid, moral and ethical code of practice.

Having known both authors, Rob and Craig for over twenty years, I have a high regard for their professional expertise and integrity, and a deep appreciation of the perspectives they bring to leadership, learning, and the values, ethics and practices for living a good life. Their contributions in this book on the dynamics of leadership and followership associated with risk are consistent with their worthy personal outlook and professional platforms, and are reflective of their significant experiences as successful teachers, researchers, company directors, and consultants across a range of educational, business, industry and community contexts. I commend their book to you.



Introduction

Welcome to the fourth book in a growing series on risk. This time, Dr Rob Long has teamed up with long-time friend and colleague Craig Ashhurst, to explore following-leading in risk.

Field Guide Postponed

In the previous book, *Real Risk: Human Discerning and Risk*, it was suggested that the fourth book in the series would be a field guide, but this has been put on hold. It became clear from the Post Graduate Program that the important subject of ‘following-leading’ needed examining, prior to development of a field guide to influencing, tackling and leading in risk in the workplace. It is proposed that the field guide will be a curriculum and learning tool for all the concepts presented in books 1-4.

Acknowledgements (Craig)

In Rob’s first three books I had the pleasure of discussing the ideas and stories as he developed each book’s outline. This time I have the privilege of co-authoring the book, making a contribution at all the stages of its development. This has given me an appreciation of the work Rob has put into writing and has also made me realise the work done by others, mostly in the background. It is two of these people that I particularly acknowledge here.

Justin Huehn is a long time friend of Rob’s and has continually translated his ideas into understandable and beautiful graphics. In this book I have enjoyed working with Justin, knowing that my treasured ideas and sketchy diagrams would be turned into something that better conveyed the meaning I was trying to get across.

The other person I want to mention is my wife and life partner Pip Ashhurst. She has worked as an editor on the previous books but this time I was able to work closely with her, which gave me a new appreciation of her skill, acute insights and patience. Both Rob and I are full of ideas and passion and this can sometimes be hard to reduce to prose in a book. Pip refined and improved our drafts, bringing life to our text as Justin does to our diagrams. She is a joy to work with and worthy of respect.

Any faults or mistakes that remain are the fault of myself and Rob and demonstrate that we are still learning, growing and improving.

Links to Previous Books

As with the previous three books, many of the concepts here introduced will have strong links to previous ideas and will often require a brief review of previously covered material. This creates a small dilemma, as the reader who has read all the books only needs a brief reminder, whereas a new reader may require a more in-depth introduction to these foundational ideas. To help guide the reader I have decided to use a grey box, like the one around this section, to denote material that has been previously discussed. Each box will provide a summary of the concept and a link to where in a previous book the idea was first introduced. I hope this will allow readers to skip the grey boxes if they feel they are already familiar with the term being summarised.

About the Book Logo

The cover of this book is in keeping with the previous three books, each positioning characters across or around a cliff and crevasse. The foundation of following and leading in risk is consultation, listening and dialogue. This is what is happening on the cover: people conversing, listening and seeking dialogue in order to help in decision-making. The three logos at the base of alternate pages indicate respectively: community, reflection and discourse. In a social psychology of leading in risk there is no such thing as an individual; we maintain human identity in relation to others. Similarly, the concept of the leader as the individualistic hero doesn't make sense for a social psychology of risk. All risk is shared, because the consequence of risk is social, just as the influences on decision-making and thinking are social. So the idea of leading cannot be separated from the community that follows. Effective leading is always accompanied by effective following.

Just as all risk-taking should involve a 'catching community' (as was depicted in book three, *Real Risk: Human Discerning and Risk*), so too there should always be a 'dialogical community' in all leading in risk.

The second icon for the book signifies the importance of reflection as fundamental to thinking and decision-making. When one knows that 'everything matters', then reflecting and thinking on conscious and unconscious influence become critical. In our busyness of life and the quest for quick and easy 'fixes', we forget that many human challenges are 'wicked problems'.

The third icon signifies the importance of understanding language and discourse. Discourse is about the way power is embedded in all social arrangements and language. Sensitivity to discourse is essential in a social psychology of leading in risk.

A Special Note on Collaboration

The idea of collaboration appears throughout this book and it is more than just a theoretical concept for the two of us. We have worked collaboratively for over twenty years and our very different personalities function together to broaden what we each might be able to offer individually. Consequently, in this book almost every line has been adjusted by both of us.



Therefore, we will generally use the first person plural ('we'), but where a story is told which relates uniquely to one of us, we will indicate who the 'I' is in that context by adding the speaker's name in brackets.

A Special Note on the term 'Collective Coherence' (Craig)

I invented the term 'collective coherence' to act as a container word within which could be put a lot of technical words used in many different disciplines. Since we will use this term frequently throughout this book it is worth providing a brief definition and description here at the start.

My underlying assumption is that humans cohere into groups around a collection of common elements that form a shared pattern in one or more domains, creating their own conceptual world. Many disciplines and professions have identified something akin to this description in their own field of expertise, using labels such as 'worldview', 'paradigm', 'habitus', 'frames', 'mental model', 'schema', 'culture', 'knowledge culture' etc. To unpack this a little further, even in everyday language we hear comments such as 'What world are you from?' or 'You could never do that in the real world!' These phrases imply that the person being spoken to is functioning in some form of alternate reality that makes no sense to the speaker. Hiebert (2008 p.15) captures this nicely:

"below the surface of speech and behaviour are beliefs and values that generate what is said and done. We become aware of still deeper levels of culture that shape how beliefs are formed – the assumptions that people make about the nature of things, the categories in which they think, and the logic that organises these categories into a coherent understanding of reality. It becomes increasingly clear that people live not in the same world with different labels attached to it but in radically different conceptual worlds."

It is in this sense that we are using 'collective coherence'. 'Collective' simply means a collection of people. 'Coherence' is used to denote the patterns held in common around which a group coheres. It also refers to the internal consistency or congruence of those patterns. These collective coherences may create incommensurable differences, boundaries or divisions between social groups. The significance of this concept will become clearer as it is applied to the developing argument of this book.

What This Book Is About

The drive for writing this book emerges from studies conducted at the Australian Catholic University and the Post Graduate Program in the Psychology of Risk. The Post Graduate Program brings together a unique focus of social psychology and related disciplines, and the challenges of risk. (An outline of the program is attached at the end of this book.) While one purpose of this book is to support studies in the Post Graduate Program, it also seeks to add to the foundation laid down in the previous books in this series on risk:

Risk Makes Sense: Human Judgement and Risk

For the Love of Zero: Human Fallibility and Risk

Real Risk: Human Discerning and Risk

This fourth book seeks to bring together many of the ideas in the previous works with a direct application to ‘following-leading’ in risk. Both the follower and the leader in risk know that ‘risk makes sense’ and that risk aversion is the enemy of risk intelligence. The dumbing down of risk and human discerning in risk simply makes human communities more fragile and less resilient in major and unexpected events.

Why the joined words in the title of the book, ‘Following-Leading’ in risk? This is most important, just as the colour and layout of the book itself has semiotic significance. Following-Leading is a joined word, as each component is the flip side of the other. Roles in following and leading change with the social psychological environment. We are all followers and leaders. There is no understanding of leading without an understanding of relationship and following. Likewise, following is more effective when one understands and has some insight into the challenges of leading. So in this book, both are joined together in a mutual, synergistic and wedded relationship. We can’t really speak or think of one without the other.

Effective leading also knows of the dangers of binary opposition, fundamentalist black-and-white thinking. Binary oppositions don’t account for relationship, complexity or synergy. The ideology of absolutes should not be the driving idea for leading. Rather, the following-leading dynamic requires understanding, tolerance and mutuality. For this reason it is critical that followers and leaders are aware of the reciprocity and mutuality in ‘The Zone of Reciprocal Relationship’, that is, the space between following and leading where decision-making takes place (we will explore this concept further in Chapter 3). To help illustrate this point, a recurring thread relating to a real-life story about ‘The secret...’ will appear in each chapter.

Discerning is the key to effective decision-making. How can leader-followers know what is ‘acceptable risk’ without effective mutual judgement? How can we discern risk without mutual risk intelligence? How can we develop risk intelligence by risk aversion? How can we understand high reliability or ‘sense-able’ discerning without respectful and mutual dialogue?

Leadership, while defined as the capability and actuality of social influence, has for years been about the discourse of individual attributes and traits of leaders, what some call the ‘hero myth’ (Neville). Since the evolution of managerialist ideologies in the 1970s and 1980s, leadership schools of thought, publications, MBAs, Six Sigma tools, CEO discourse and leadership/management ‘centres’ have exploded. The rise of management and leadership theory is marked by such publications as Charles Handy’s *Understanding Organisations* (1979), Peters and Waterman’s *In Search of Excellence* (1982) and Covey’s (2013) *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (first published in 1989 and selling 25 million copies). In this book we much prefer to speak of following-leading than the focus on the leader as an isolated distribute of power and influence.

Primarily, the focus of management and leadership ‘schools’ and leadership ‘experts’ has been individualistic and corporate in focus. However, since 2004 changes associated with social



media and ‘people movements’ (e.g. the Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Snowden, GetUp and Wikileaks) have seen a shifting of focus from the leader-as-CEO as demigod-hero, to a focus on following. Neville’s (2013) work *The Life of Things* has an excellent analysis of the myth of the hero that we will discuss later in this book. Negri (2005) in the *Politics of Subversion* chronicles the history of ‘people movement’ forms of leadership-power, showing how new technologies have generated new dynamics in following and new challenges to the ‘hero-leader myth’. One of the purposes of this book is to deconstruct the hero myth, overturning the focus that approaches ‘leading’ from an individualistic CEO starting point, to an approach that understands ‘leading’ through a social psychological focus on ‘following’. The social psychological perspective is much more interested in what happens between the follower and leader than what happens in the head or what comes out of the mouth of a leader.

In the new millenium post-2000, there is now a greater distrust than ever for forms of authority that were previously unquestioned. Indeed, the trend throughout social media is that people would prefer to trust the opinion of an amateur than that of an expert or CEO (Keen, 2007, 2012; Carr, 2012). The new challenge for following and leading is what to do about this phenomenon. In this book we look at the nature of following from a social psychological perspective and interrogate the process of leading in the context of following-leading in risk. Our focus is on the processes of following-leading in judgement and decision-making under uncertainty.

Most of us can tick off the accepted and common attributions of what makes an effective leader, and some of us may have studied the nature of ‘charismatic’ or ‘transformational’ leadership. However, most are less aware that the discourse in orthodox leadership and management theory is that of the ‘hero myth’. Every time there is an election in Australia or the USA the focus of advertising is the ‘hero myth’. The message is ‘elect this person and he will save you’. More recently the media and parties in Australia have sought to ‘Americanise’ the nature of politics in the hero myth tradition; for example, by bringing in advisors and experts from the Obama campaign to an Australian election campaign. The emphasis is on the individual leader, not the collective or social arrangements. It seems there is now a direct correlation between the election of a leader and the amount of money spent on the campaign to sell the ‘hero’. However, when followers challenge the power of leaders, they then take the lead. This is how social arrangements (social psychology) affect leading, and this will emerge as one focus of this book.

Whilst the media emphasizes the decisiveness of leaders, the followers will later dump that leader at the polls because of poor decisions. Yet, those who challenge leadership decisions are often viewed as ‘mavericks’ and troublemakers, not ‘mavens’ or change agents (Gladwell). Riggio (2008, p. xxv) in *The Art of Followership* states:

Too often, followers are expected to be agreeable and acquiescent and are rewarded for being so, when in fact followers who practice knee-jerk obedience are of little value and are often dangerous. If I had to reduce the responsibilities of a good follower to a single rule, it would be to speak the truth to power. We know that toxic followers can put even good leaders on a disastrous path – Shakespeare’s Iago comes immediately

to mind. But heroic followers can also save leaders from their worst follies, especially leaders so isolated that the only voice they hear is their own.

What Riggio emphasizes here is the social relationship or ‘contract’ between the leader and the followers. This social contract between leading and following is a feature behind the discussion of this book. Populist leadership discourse is most often about the traits of the leader. Somewhere along the way, managerialism discourse (power-transference) has lost sight of the follower, social contract and followership context (social arrangements). Leadership has most often become a study of the ‘man and the moment’ rather than a partnership with people or indeed about feminine traits in leading. This is where social psychology enters the discussion and asks the question: ‘What are the social arrangements that complement effective following-leading?’

The use of language is critical for the discussion of this book and the intentional use of the participle form rather than the noun form is important. The focus of this book is on ‘acting’ and ‘enacting’ the following-leading dynamic. So the use of the participles ‘following’, ‘leading’ and ‘organising’ are preferred where possible in the text. This emphasis shifts the focus away from the object of leading, and the objectification of leaders, onto the action of following-leading. Rather than focus on the categorisation of leadership, social psychology is much more interested in the relationship between following, organising and leading.

Under the individualistic ‘hero’ discourse of leadership, mostly projected by orthodox historians and leadership schools, the key to leadership is the acquisition of power by any means possible and the exercising of that power by an individual. This is not the case with the History of Mentalities or the ‘Annales’ school of history (social psychological history). Chopra (2010, p. 11) comments:

... the leadership I’m talking about is not the leadership as we’ve traditionally defined it. According to that old definition, leadership belongs to the few. In a group the person selected to lead may stand out as the most popular, confident, or ruthless. By these measures, not everyone can lead. When the strong and ruthless rise on the world stage, we find ourselves led by kings and generals, autocrats and dictators, power-hungry premiers and presidents. History traffics in myth-making, which is based on personal charisma and uses spin to evoke an aura of destiny. But the measures of leadership are flawed. None of the qualities mentioned here indicate that a leader will actually improve the lives of those who follow him. Chances are equally good that such leadership will bring misery, conflict and oppression. The old definitions of leadership exalt power, and the use of power has always been directly linked to its abuse.

One of the great tests of following-leading dynamic is time. It is easy to develop a following quickly with the false promises of ‘spin’ and ‘quackery’ made attractive to those who lack discernment and desperate for hope. It is easy to con a following with shallow three-word slogans about simplistic solutions. It seems relatively easy for the sociopath to attract a following by promises and the manipulation of seductions. It is easy to obtain many ‘followers’ on Facebook and Twitter; indeed, followers can be purchased by the thousands through ‘click farms’. This is not how social psychology defines ‘following’. Followership is much more than just pressing ‘like’ on someone’s Facebook status.



One of the themes in this book is that leading and following need to be understood interchangeably and reciprocally as social activities. If these are social activities then the fundamental ethic of reciprocation is critical for understanding the ethics of leading and following. It is instructive to do a search for publications on the ethics of leadership as compared to those on leadership power. If leadership is a social, relational and ethical activity, can unethical forms of relationship, influence and dominance be deemed 'leadership'? Is leading more temporary than permanent? Can one fall in and out of leading and following?

In the 2013 election in Australia it was fascinating to observe the open demonisation of 'the other' by a prominent tabloid including the direct portrayal of the Prime Minister as a bumbling Nazi (August 9, 2013. Daily Telegraph, p. 1). Demonising 'the other' is a foundational characteristic of all black-and-white, binary fundamentalisms (binary opposition), and seems attractive to those who see leadership in a binary paradigm. In this modality, leadership as an object is defined against the following of subjects. The binary model of leadership understands itself against 'the other' (followers). Indeed in some models of hero leadership, the follower is the one demonised by the superior leader. The social psychological understanding of 'in-groupness' and 'out-groupness' is critical if we wish to understand how prejudice, demonisation and dehumanisation are manufactured in this view of leading. This has significant implications for how following, leading and organising tackles risk.

In this book we argue that the most effective way to understand risk is to better understand the social arrangements that condition the following-leading Zone of Reciprocal Relationship. We will explore ideas of trajectories and the ethics of leadership, cultic leadership, when followers lead, the authoritarian personality and the importance of leading through what we call 'The Adaptive Toolbox'. Key aspects of social psychology of following-leading will be emphasised through a case study of the Cult of Mac (the leadership of Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple) and numerous stories and illustrations from the experiences of the authors.

The book concludes with the presentation of practical tools to facilitate the reciprocal relationship in following and leading, with a view to better tackling risk.

Structure and Use of the Book

The book has been structured in three sections. The first two sections focus on the traditional model of leadership and the neglect of followers. The final section details a model of following-leading from a social psychological viewpoint and then provide some practical tools for using the model.

Section One: Traditional Leadership vs Following - Leading

In this section we will introduce a comparison between traditional forms of leadership and the concept of following-leading. This will include a discussion on the hero myth of leadership and the lost element of ethics in leading. This part also provides an overview of the worldview, tradition and discipline of social psychology.

Section Two: The Power of Following in Following - Leading

Section Two shifts the focus to the 'following' element of the following-leading dynamic, including a discussion of the Cult of Mac. One of the important things we learn from a study of a cult is the nature of 'cult'-ure and how leadership is exercised culturally. Understanding culture and how social arrangements affect decision-making is critical to leading and following in risk.

Section Three: The Following-Leading Adaptive Toolbox

The third section moves the discussion onto the idea of wisdom and discerning in risk - how risk makes sense through the reciprocal following-leading dynamic and the wise use of dialogic tools. An example of an Adaptive Toolbox is provided along with a small collection of relevant tools.



SECTION ONE

A New Look At Leading





CHAPTER 1

Introducing Leadership, Social Psychology and Following-Leading

The occupy movement is driven by individuals like you coming together to create real change from the bottom up. - Occupy Movement Website

We seem unable to unshackle ourselves from conventional and seductive accounts of leadership. - Amanda Sinclair

The Occupy Movement

On 17 September 2011 approximately one thousand protestors gathered in Manhattan and marched up and down Wall St. The momentum for this gathering was precipitated by an advertisement in the July issue of counter-culture magazine Adbusters (<https://www.adbusters.org/magazine>). (Adbusters co-founder Kalle Lasn registered the OccupyWallStreet.org web address on 9 June). Protests of all sorts are common in New York, but this time things were different. Adbusters tweeted a call to action (including to 'bring tent') in the months before September, and on 23 August Anonymous threw their support behind '#occupywallstreet' with rapid activity across social media. On 17 September, two thousand people attended the protest with approximately two hundred deciding to stay overnight in Zucotti Park, a few blocks down from Wall St.

The Anonymous message reads: 'flood into lower Manhattan, set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street for a few months ... Once there, we shall incessantly repeat one simple demand in a plurality of voices.' No one could have known that the occupation was going to become monumental. For a brief documentary account you can view this YouTube clip <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkBMrFE9p0g>>.

After a few days arrests began, the movement to occupy went viral on social media, and others began to flood to the protest out of empathy for the protestors. By 24 September more than eighty people had been arrested, streets were permanently blocked and police began using pepper spray and a technique of separation called 'kettling'. The use of these nets to segregate and then spray caused outrage across news and social media.

On 1 October protestors attempted to cross the Brooklyn Bridge resulting in more than seven hundred arrests. By 5 October, with the support of unions, students and the unemployed, the number of protestors swelled to more than 15,000. More meetings and protests occurred in other cities in support of the Occupy Movement in New York.

By 15 October protests had spread to 900 cities across the world, spawning slogans such as, 'We are the 99%' (originally sparked by a Tumblr blog page) and 'We won't bail you out again'. In the days following, solidarity mounted as the message against greed and corruption in high places spread across Twitter, Facebook and countless social media sites, a phenomenon termed (by Occupy) 'citizen journalism'.

On 26 October the police raided Occupy Oakland at dawn, injuring an Iraq War veteran called Scott Olsen, a name which swiftly trends across Twitter. By 29 October the number of Occupy protests around the world reached two thousand. On 5 November protestors hold 'Bank Transfer Day' with over 600,000 people shifting their funds from large banks to small credit unions.

Over time, energy for the Occupy movement began to wane and after some surges and waves of intensity things began to settle back to normal. The Occupy website <<http://www.occupytogether.org/>> remains a focus of activity against corporate greed, poverty and corruption.

What is most interesting about the Occupy movement is the power of its activities and the spread of its support without any recognisable 'leader'. The real leaders of Occupy are Twitter, Facebook, Anonymous and other social media. Similar can be said of leadership provided by Wikileaks and follower movements like the Arab Spring. These sorts of movements create a dilemma for those who hold to the traditional view of leadership: how can these movements have achieved so much without the vision and direction of a powerful leader?

The Paradigm of Traditional Leadership

A quick search for 'leadership' in Amazon books results in 120,000 possible purchases, the overwhelming majority of which espouse the traditional view of leadership. The most common discourse in the traditional language of leadership and management is a 'top down' approach, focusing on power transference, with models of leadership starting with the individual and founded in the 'hero myth'. (A deeper discussion of the hero myth will be undertaken later in this chapter). The leadership and management genre is littered with 'the three steps', 'seven habits', 'ten pathways', and 'fifty-nine characteristics' approach to leadership. The tendency is toward a formularistic (and mechanistic) approach and each theory (anthropological and power focus) inherits a stylistic name (transformational, authentic, transactional, service, etc). The following quote is typical of this type of thinking:

Leadership is inspiring others to pursue your vision within the parameters you set, to the extent that it becomes a shared effort, a shared vision, and a shared success. (Steve Zeitchik, CEO of Focal Point Strategies)



The focus therefore is on the (usually male) leader, his vision, attributes etc. In many of the populist books on leadership one could be forgiven for thinking that effective leadership required no understanding of followers; rather, it is all about the characteristics and capabilities of the individual at the top. A counter, minority view does exist and is growing stronger. We live in a new age where the idea of the individual hero-leader model is inadequate to face the complex issues of the 21st century. Leadership needs to be liberated from the hero myth. Fletcher (2004) calls this an era of 'post-heroic leadership', a time in which leadership will become less individualistic and more relational.

The idea of 'leadership *over* others' needs to move to 'leadership *with* others'. How can it be otherwise, with the new and rapid accountability that social media has brought into the mix? Sinclair (2007) has called the hero mythology of leadership the 'seductive account of leadership'. Now with social media, this seduction and its accompanying hubris are being more and more exposed.

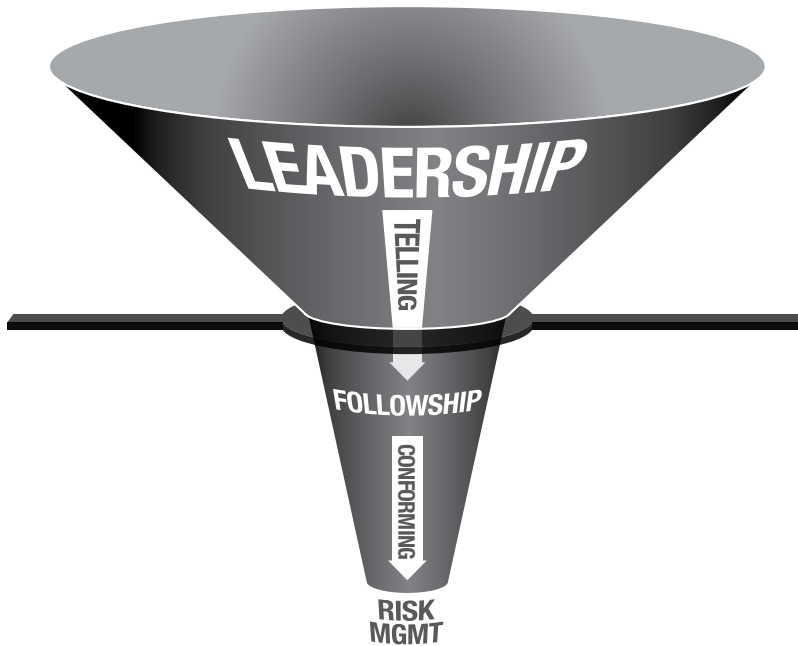
Leadership in Risk: Accentuating the Hero

The traditional view of leadership is accentuated in the world of risk management, with the hero myth represented more starkly in the related literature. It is important for the purposes of this book to remember that our primary focus is on risk. Risk permeates most things in life, including organisational life, and the focus in this series of books has been on how organisations, regulators and people in general deal with risk in practice. There is no doubt that the industries of security, risk and safety have grown exponentially since the 1990s. The greater the regulation of the risk industry the more absurd have become the measures developed to manage risk. The previous books have made it clear that the fixation on risk-aversion in western society has become an obsession. The industries of risk management, security and Work Health and Safety have blossomed under the legislation and regulation of risk. Most medium to large organisations now have a Safety Manager, a Risk Manager and Security Management in place to manage risk. This has led to an increasing dumbing down of risk under a model of leadership by dominance, policing and authoritarianism.

When one looks at leadership in risk, it becomes very clear that the model of authoritarianism dominates. When it comes to fear of risk, humans seem to lose all rights, even the right to harm themselves. In the quest for absolutes under the rubric of zero, all injury and harm is declared 'evil'. Under this rubric of perfectionism, all control must be exercised and all evil exorcised to prevent harm. This is why the ACT Regulator in Canberra, Australia has adopted the comic-book hero motif of Hazardman <<http://hazardman.act.gov.au/>> who swoops in to arrest citizens, protecting them from harm. Here we have the model of the hero leader *par excellence* openly advocated by the regulator as *the* paradigm for risk and hazard management. The focus of Hazardman is on every petty risk, micro-management at its worst. There is no reciprocal dynamic in the relationship between leaders and followers in this model of leadership, just command, control, intervention and dominance. While this absence of the following-leading model is evident in the general literature on leadership, it is even more striking in the world of risk management.

Despite a range of variation in the model, the traditional approach to risk leadership most often starts with the leader as shown in Figure 1a.

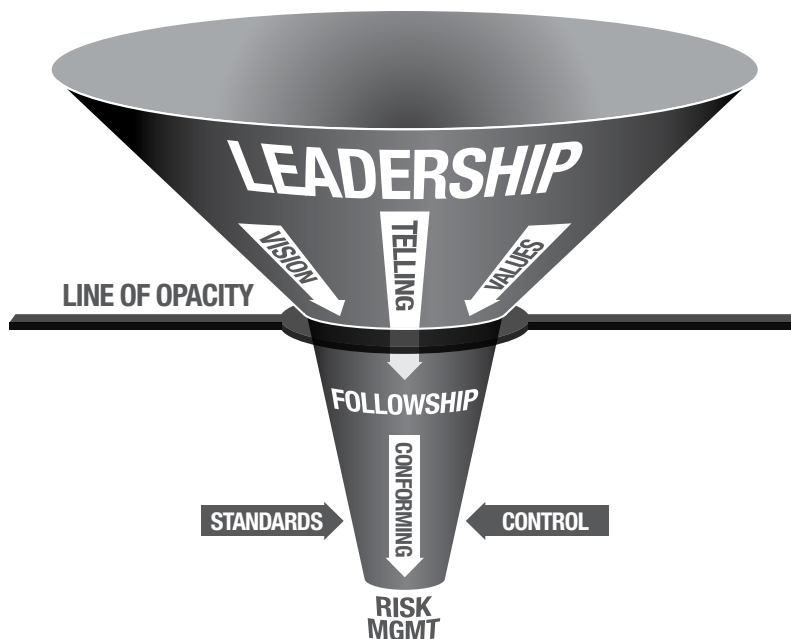
Figure 1a. The Traditional Model of Leadership in Risk.



In the traditional model, risk management begins with the leader, who sets the parameters and direction for the followership. Communication is primarily one-way through telling, instruction, direction, etc. The responsibility of the followers is to further refine the ideas of risk management through conformity, resulting in quality risk management. For the moment it is important to note that one's anthropological assumptions guide one's view of leading and following. The fundamental question here is: what is it to be a human being? Social psychology assumes that humans are socially identified, that is that one is defined by one's social psychological being. As Buber states, there is no such thing as an individual. We are only known in relationship to others. There is no 'I', only 'I-Thou'. Similarly, one's concept of leadership indicates one's starting point.

This traditional focus on leadership results in different expectations for the leadership and followership, as shown in Figure 1b. The leadership is expected to be internally motivated and constrained. The leader's values and vision provide the scope and direction for the organisation's approach to risk. He may well engage in consultation with others but they will usually be peers or outside consultants, not his staff or workers, who could be confused or unsettled by these strategic discussions. This explains the line of secrecy, the idea that the bulk of the leadership discussion must be kept 'commercially in confidence' and only the official non-confusing vision and direction is passed down through the line of secrecy in a primarily one-way communication.

Figure 1b. The Traditional Model of Leadership in Risk - Expectations



In contrast to the internal constraints of the leadership, the followership is constrained externally. Standards are provided and various forms of control are applied to help the followership respond in line with the vision of the leadership. This freedom through conforming helps to refine the approach to risk until an appropriate risk management system is in place that can be measured.

The traditional approach in practice (Craig)

I was engaged as a minor consultant to support a major change program in a large government department. A couple of management gurus were employed to work with the executive management and introduce a new mindset for leadership, including risk. I was personally impressed with the approach and with the impact it was having on the top three layers of the organisation. Everyone involved was pleased with the impact on the leadership, and I was asked to work with an Executive Level One manager to assess how well the vision and message were getting through to the thousands of workers below the executive management levels. A series of focus groups were conducted and almost all came up with the same result. The followership saw the change initiative as one more executive management 'fad', which would have a limited (and negative) impact on most workers. In many cases the focus group members laughed out loud at the new slogans and vision statements, ridiculing them as consultant speak and likening them to Dilbert cartoons. While very few demonstrated any sort of active rebellion, the general approach which emerged was a resigned, external conformity that would gently sabotage any efforts to change their work.

So here in practice was a fairly typical outcome for a traditional top-down leadership approach. The leadership funnel had achieved a level of refinement and focus for the leadership, but the line of secrecy had not protected the workers but instead alienated them. So why does this keep happening? Surely these management gurus are very smart and would realise this problem exists. The reason lies in the fact that the problem is not about intelligence, but about worldview and paradigm. The traditional view of leadership is supported by the dominance of the hero myth of the leader and this makes followers almost invisible and their views unimportant.

The Hero Myth

Management and leadership discourse (managerialism) since the 1970s has been dominated by the 'myth' of the hero. The use of the word 'myth' carries the notion of an underpinning worldview or ideology that is primarily fictitious. The myth of the hero has its foundation in a cultural story dated back to the foundation of Babylon (2800 BC). The first psychologist to study and document the hero myth was Otto Rank (1914). Rank investigated mythology as a way of understanding 'laws of the human mind', 'the theory of elementary thoughts' and 'traits of the human psyche' (p. 3-6). He makes clear that all myth-making has an aspiration to spiritual otherness as an escape from fallibility and finiteness.

While there are many variations of the hero myth, they all relate to defining what it means to be a human individual. Greek mythology provides a range of 'archetypes' that enable humans to understand themselves and their place in the world. Neville (2012) explores the Greek myths through a Jungian lens and shows how the hero myth dominates cultural identity. He states:

The therapist takes on the mission of Prometheus, using her skills (including the skill of relationship) to liberate her client from the power of impulse and compulsion from conditions of worth, from a poor self-concept, from self-destructive habits, from inappropriate self-talk, from dependence on the therapist, or whatever. Neville (2012, p. 29)

The centre of this relationship is the heroic ego as asserted so clearly by Freud. Neville argues that when we are enmeshed in cultural mythology we learn that 'this is the way the world is, it can be no other way ... Assumptions that are taken for granted are mistaken for unassailable truths' (p. 30).

He goes on to say: 'Our lives are pretty deeply embedded in the Hero narrative' (p. 31). Whether we look to an individual, technique or ideology (e.g. Marxism, capitalism or socialism), humans aspire to the world beyond themselves and attribute salvation to the hero. Hook (2008, p. 3-4) states:

The basic fact that provides the material for interest in heroes is the indispensability of leadership in all social life, and in every major form of social organisation. The controls over leadership, whether open or hidden, differ from society to society, but leaders are always at hand – not merely as conspicuous symbols of state, but as centres of responsibility, decision and action. There is a natural tendency to associate the leader with the



results achieved under his leadership even when these achievements, good or bad, have resulted despite his leadership than because of it.

Hook (2008, p. 12) knows, as do we in hindsight, that the notion of savior-as-human is an attribution.

Whoever saves us is a hero; and in the exigencies of political action men are always looking for someone to save them. A sharp crisis in social and political affairs – when something must be done and done quickly – naturally intensifies interest in the hero.

Hook (2008, p.20) elaborates further about the attraction of the hero myth:

The psychological sources of interest in great men may, with as much justification, be regarded as means by which great men exert influence on their followers. These sources are, briefly, (a) the need for psychological security, (b) the tendency to seek compensation for personal and material limitations, and (c) the flight from responsibility which expresses itself sometimes in grasping for simple solutions and sometimes in surrender of political interest to professional politicians.

There is a minority view in the management literature that opposes the hero myth and has sought to expose the consequences of this belief. A key author in this area is Henry Mintzberg, who has written extensively on management and leadership in organisations. In his book *Managers Not MBAs* he devotes a number of sections to the hero myth of leadership (2005, pp. 104-111). In particular he notes how this myth perpetuates a disconnected style of management and is used to give the impression that it is the leader who achieves all the organisation's successes. He supports this through an example from Harvard where one management education program was described as looking at

“... leaders ‘in action’ to see how they develop a vision of the future, align the organisation behind that vision, and motivate people to achieve it. It examines how leaders design effective organisations and change them to achieve superior performance.” All by themselves! (Mintzberg 2005, p. 106)

The hero myth and journey has been expressed diagrammatically as the hero's journey cycle, as represented at Figure 2, The Hero's Journey. We will revisit the hero's journey in the case study of Steve Jobs in Chapter 4.

Jones et.al. (2008, p. 5) draw together this need to seek the hero, stimulate the imagination and bind together the collective cultural unconscious:

So, the hero narrative and myth of the hero are ideologically wound up in the way humans psychologically and socially create meaning in self and leadership. The human attraction to, and attribution of the hero, say as much about ‘following’, social arrangements and the psyche of the followers, as they do about the time, context and nature of the leader.

Figure 2. The Hero's Journey.



The Leading-Following Dynamic

In comparison to the hero leader model, a social psychological approach views leading through an understanding of a *following-leading dynamic*. This will be explained in detail in Chapter 5 but a brief comment now will help to provide a sense of where we are going.

Once leading is viewed as part of a following-leading dynamic, there emerges a necessary emphasis on relationships, discourse and language between leaders and followers. In the social psychological view, one cannot be effective in leading without an understanding of the interdependent relationship between following and leading.

To develop a social psychological understanding of following-leading, one must first consider starting points and trajectories. A social psychological approach to leading begins from the perspective of social arrangements. Social psychology understands that 'everything matters' and that human decision-making is socially and psychologically determined. This means that the social psychological view of leading begins not with the individual but rather with the social arrangements and context (culture and climate) of the 'following'.

Therefore, before proceeding any further in the book it would make sense to explore the discipline of social psychology.



An Overview of Social Psychology

Social psychology is about the study of human social behaviour, with an emphasis on how people think towards and relate to each other under the influence of social arrangements. Because the mind is the axis around which social behaviour pivots, social psychologists tend to study the relationship between the human mind(s) and social behaviours. Social psychology is also the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours can be influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others. The following is a summary of the discussion of this topic from the previous book, *Real Risk: Human Discerning and Risk*.

In 1908 William McDougall published *Social Psychology*, and in 1924 Floyd Allport published a book by the same title. The latter sparked an explosion of research as social psychologists began a wave of experiments to assess how individuals were influenced by social arrangements.

Cialdini (2009) describes how people are influenced and persuaded by social arrangements, identifying six underlying social dynamics that affect human judgement and decision-making:

1. Reciprocation. Anthropologists consider reciprocity to be a universal social norm.
2. Commitment to Consistency. According to Festinger (1957) people are reluctant to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their public commitments.
3. Social Proof. If we see many other people doing something, we are more likely to do it. The psychology of mass movements is foundational for understanding cults, 'group think', the authoritarian personality, gambling and risk, eugenics, xenophobia and a host of social movements/sub-cultures in society.
4. Authority. If someone is recognised as being in authority we are more likely to do what they say. The experiments and work of Stanley Milgram (which we will look at later) demonstrated this.
5. Liking. People are more likely to be persuaded if they feel liked.
6. Scarcity. When we perceive something as scarce we are more likely to want it.

Kurt Lewin, sometimes identified as the 'father' of social psychology, coined the term 'group dynamics' (1947), which he described as the way in which groups and individuals act and react to changing circumstances. Lewin theorised that when a group is established it becomes a unified system with unique dynamics that cannot be understood by evaluating the members individually. This idea quickly gained support from sociologists and psychologists who understood the significance of this emerging field. One of the foundational areas of study for social psychologists is 'in-groupness' and out-groupness'.

One of the reasons people confuse social psychology with other psychological disciplines is that there is significant overlap between the various sub-sets. Social psychology draws on a number of other disciplines and methods of research, particularly cognitive psychology, psychology of the self, social anthropology, educational psychology, sociology and sociolinguistics communication.

Rather than undertake a history lesson, it is perhaps better to look at the kinds of things that interest social psychology. Further information abounds on the Internet, with the following sites as good examples:

- Social Psychology Network <<http://www.socialpsychology.org/>>
- Society of Australian Social Psychologists <<http://www.sasp.org.au/>>
- Wikipedia - Social Psychology <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_psychology>

Interests of Social Psychology

Social psychology is interested in how social arrangements affect relationships and decision-making. It is important that social psychology not be confused with the terms ‘organisational psychology’ or ‘psychosocial’. Organisational psychology focuses on the business of Human Resources in work contexts, mostly in the areas of recruitment, staff selection, learning and development, leadership and talent management, career development, change, performance and well-being. A psychosocial focus has an emphasis on all issues associated with well-being, including fatigue, ageing workforce, work hours, work-life balance, workplace climate, workload, ergonomic effects on humans, stress, mental health, violence, effects of injury, management and supervision stressors, organisational injustice and relationships at work.

Social psychology is a discipline that focuses on human interactions and how social arrangements (actual, imagined or implied) affect human judgement and decision-making. Social psychology is interested in how people think (as affected by others), what they feel and what they do. In order to assist an understanding of social psychology, the following list of interests and relevant authors is presented as a helpful guide. The authors and publications are also listed in the reading list at the end of this book. The reading list should serve as a guide for further study and research.

Table 1. Interests of Social Psychology

Subject Interest - Suggested Researchers	Subject Interest - Suggested Researchers
Addictions - Mate	Heuristics - Kahneman, Plous
Aggression - Aronson,	Homeostasis - Wilde
Attachment - Hogg & Vaughan	Human relationships - Schein
Attraction - Hogg & Vaughan	Implicit knowledge - Gladwell, Polyani
Authority - Milgram	Influence - Klein, Caldini
Belonging - Bandura	Language (priming) - Bargh, Fairhurst
Bounded Rationality - Simon, Gigerenzer	Learning - Robinson, Palmer, Claxton
Bystander Effect -Tuffin	Motivation - Higgins, Moscovitz, Deci
Cognitive Biases - Kahneman, Gigerenzer	Organisational Sensemaking - Weick



Subject Interest - Suggested Researchers	Subject Interest - Suggested Researchers
Cognitive Dissonance - Festinger, Plous	Perception - Slovic
Collective Mindfulness - Weick	Persuasion - Higgins, Deci
Communication - Wolvin, Newberg, Tannen	Power - Klein, Neville
Community - Wenger	Prejudice/Discrimination - Zimbardo, Plous
Conformity - Milgram, Meissner, Ashe	Pro and Anti-social Behaviour - Zimbardo
Culture - Schein, Cameron and Quinn	Reciprocation - Hogg & Vaughan
Decision-making - Plous	Salience - Hogg & Vaughan
Discourse - Wodak & Meyer, Shapiro, Fairclough, Tuffin, Tannen.	Semiotics - Chandler
Ethics - Hamilton, Ellul	Social Politics - Neville.
Followership - Riggio, Kellerman	The Authoritarian Personality - Adorno
Groups - In and out groupness	Unconsciousness - Jung, Neville, Bargh, Gigerenzer, Claxton, Norrtranders
Helping - Schein	

One of the features of social psychology is the examining of human behaviour, both through constructed experiments, and in real-life examples (such as the Abu Ghraib case <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Ghraib_torture_and_prisoner_abuse>). The social psychologist wants to know why people think and act as they do socially, then posits a theory that explains that collective behaviour. They look at social behaviour and ask: Why? What forces, pressures, dynamics, influences and stressors make people consciously and unconsciously make decisions that result in certain behaviours?

Perhaps the best way to understand the focus of social psychology is through discussion of three key concepts in social psychology - The Authoritarian Personality (TAP), Obedience, and Cognitive Dissonance.

However, before we look at these three concepts let's read about 'The Secret Meeting' as a 'frame' and 'anchor' for the discussion. The Secret Meeting story helps bring together both the methodology of social psychology and the key principles of the following-leading dynamic that will be explored throughout this book. It is focused on the 'line of secrecy' that the traditional model of leadership sees as essential to protect the followership and the organisation.

The Secret Meeting (Craig)

Let me set the picture. It was 1991, in a private school based in a Christian fundamentalist tradition, with a new principal who had recently been promoted from the deputy role. For the purposes of this story, let's call the school Hezekiah School. Hezekiah was founded on the principles of morality, obedience, the authority of the Bible, submission to authority, compliance, the language of love, and discipline. The Social Science faculty (comprising History, Geography and Economics) was popular with students and was populated with teachers who were critical and creative thinkers, one of whom was Rob. I was a young teacher who had recently come to the school, attracted by the calibre of the staff in the Social Science Faculty. It was here that Rob and I first met. One of Rob's goals with new, young teachers was to ensure that their first experiences in teaching were positive, supportive and developmental. I flourished in this environment and assumed it represented the approach of the whole school.

However, I soon learned that the discourse of the Social Science faculty sat on a 'fault line' of two cultures. The Social Science teachers were working to facilitate the students' learning in skills of critical thinking, articulation of ideas, deconstruction of history (and its manufacture), and understanding of bias. This focus was in tension with the culture of obedience, authority and compliance that characterised the rest of the school.

One day I was called in to meet with the headmaster to discuss finalisation of a job offer for the following year. This was not a surprise; only a week prior I had approached the Principal to ask if my contract would be renewed for the next year, having been offered work with a previous employer at three times the pay offered by the school. In response I had been told that my first year's probationary report was the best in the school's history, and assured that I would have ongoing work at Hezekiah.

So I entered the meeting, unaware that I was about to become the subject of a crusade and inquisition. The first thing I noticed was that there were more people present than I expected. I sat down, noting the serious and disapproving looks of the principal and both deputy principals. Clearly something was amiss, but when the initial question asked was, 'How do you think you are going?', I replied confidently that 'things seemed to be going very well'. Suddenly, the world changed, as though I had entered a parallel universe. The principal pronounced that my work was appalling and accused me of being the cause of all the recent problems and unrest at the school.

Stunned, I asked for details, which brought forth further accusations, in the course of which the positive attributes of the Social Science faculty were reinterpreted as defiance, disobedience and being anti-Christian. As the accusations mounted I asked whether all this meant that I was not going to be employed as promised. The response was that I would be placed on further probation (against legal requirements of probation), and that I would have to report daily to the principal or deputies regarding all conversations I had with any staff. Finally, the principal demanded that this meeting be kept secret and was not to be discussed with anyone, including my family.

The meeting concluded with a threat that if I didn't comply with all of this, or if anyone found out about the meeting, I would be promptly sacked.



How do we explain this meeting? We can begin to make sense of it if we understand more of the background issues happening in the school prior to the meeting and the leadership reaction to the issues involved. There had been considerable negative reaction towards a variety of decisions that had been made by the principal and executive without consultation. Staff had voiced concerns about dress regulations, relationships with the school Council, a lack of transparency, punctuality issues, meeting compliance and a range of issues around competing ideologies. Rumours were rife, some staff left the school without much explanation, and factions had begun to develop. The leadership had responded by publishing several public letters to enforce compliance and obedience to authority. These were backed up with meetings demanding staff cease expressing their concerns. In reaction the staff had elected two union representatives, one for the primary school and one for the secondary school. The elected representative for the secondary school staff was Craig. This had occurred a week before the secret meeting.

So how did things change for Craig so drastically in just one week? The answer lies in three concepts: the authoritarian personality, obedience and cognitive dissonance. Let's take a closer look at these and see what light they shed on our developing story of the secret meeting.

The Authoritarian Personality

The concept of the authoritarian personality was briefly discussed in the third book in this series, *Real Risk: Human Discerning and Risk* (p.114). Now we will look into it in a bit more detail.

The authoritarian personality (TAP) type was first posited by researchers studying the Nazis in the aftermath of World War II (Adorno, 1950). It describes the type of person who puts his or her value in strength and leadership, and who believes that those who do not think similarly are simply weak. In addition, this personality type is often unwavering and critical, with a superstitious and unfailing belief that a power larger than him or her is governing fate. They tend to be arationally dependent on parental and other authorities. The researchers developed the hypothesis that such a personality predisposes one to accept or be attracted to fascist ideology.

Authoritarians, it seems, exaggerate the differences between the in-group and the out-group. In-groupness provides a frame of reference for self-definition. This idea builds on an analysis of the importance of in-groups and out-groups in understanding the nature of prejudice (Allport and Tajfel, 1981), and is foundational for understanding inter-group dynamics in organisations.

Meissner (1971, p. 118) has identified nine characteristics of the authoritarian personality:

1. Conventionalism - rigid adherence to conventional middle-class values.
2. Authoritarian submission - a submissive, uncritical attitude toward the idealised moral authorities in the group.
3. Authoritarian aggression - a tendency to be sensitive to, and condemnatory and punitive toward, those violating conventional values.

4. Anti-intracception - opposition to the subjective, the imaginative, the tender (as opposed to tough-minded).
5. Superstition and stereotype - belief in mystical determinants of individual fate, and a tendency to think in more or less rigid categories.
6. Power and 'toughness' - preoccupation with control, power-submission, strength-weakness; tendency to identify with power figures; exaggerated assertions of strength and toughness.
7. Destructiveness and cynicism - generalised hostility.
8. Projectivity - tendency to believe that dangerous things are happening; projection outwards of unconscious emotional impulses.
9. Sex - excessive concern with sexual fantasies.

Rigidity of thought, closed-mindedness, and other concepts related to cognitive (integrative) complexity have also been used to describe the thought processes of authoritarians. Integrative complexity refers to the combined ability of an individual to differentiate and integrate complex information. A person of low integrative complexity will tend to use compartmentalised thinking, make premature closure in situations of conflict and be prone to misperception and distortion of information. This is supported by the key work of social psychologists such as Milgram (1969) who conducted experiments establishing conclusively that people's values and beliefs are shaped social-psychologically.

Obedience

In a 1961 research experiment, Stanley Milgram designed a test to see if normal, law-abiding people would give a stranger a lethal electric shock. Milgram wanted to examine how the Nazis could carry out the systematic slaughter of innocent fellow humans. The simplistic answer is that the Nazis were monsters, but Milgram's experiments showed that, given the right social psychological conditions, we are all capable of this kind of behaviour. You can watch a documentary on the Milgram experiments on YouTube <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnBY0FCqJU0>>. His findings have more recently been supported by Derren Brown <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h-fQnltrg6w>> and social psychologist Clifford Stott <<http://stott.socialpsychology.org/>>, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b7YFtiE5EA>>.

The following discussion uses scans taken from Milgram's (1969) *Obedience to Authority* which is out of print.

Milgram advertised in the local paper for volunteers willing to participate in a study for a fee. As in many social psychological experiments, participants were misled into believing that they were participating in research with a different purpose to that of the real experiment. In this case participants believed they were taking part in a study on learning. What they didn't know was that everyone else in the experiment was either a confederate or an actor.

The experiment initially involved three people each with a different role: the Experimenter (an authoritative role), the Teacher (a role intended to obey the orders of the Experimenter),



and the Learner (the recipient of stimulus from the Teacher). The test subject and the actor both drew a fake lottery to determine their roles, but, unknown to the subject, both slips were marked 'Teacher'. The actor would always claim to have drawn the slip that read 'Learner', thus guaranteeing that the subject would always be the 'Teacher'. At this point, the 'teacher' and 'learner' were separated into different rooms from where they could not see each other. The only means of communication between the two was via a microphone in the teacher's room, connected to a speaker in the learner's room. Milgram also made a range of variation in the experiment to monitor any differences in response, including changing the proximity of the Teacher to Learner, adding more teachers, more learners or including learners with a heart condition.

Figure 3. Milgram Advertisement in Local Paper.



Fig. 1. Announcement placed in local newspaper to recruit subjects.

Once the experiment was set up, the 'teacher' (the real participant) was given a sample of the power of the electric shock from the electroshock generator. The 'teacher' was then given a list of word pairs that he was to 'teach' the learner. The 'teacher' would commence by reading the list of word pairs to the 'learner'. The 'teacher' would then read the first word of each pair and read four possible answers. The 'learner' would press a button to indicate his response. If the answer was incorrect, the 'teacher' would administer a shock to the 'learner', with the voltage increasing in 15-volt increments for each wrong answer.

In reality, there were no actual shocks. After the actor was separated from the subject, the actor set up a tape recorder synchronised with the electroshock generator. Prerecorded responses were synchronised for each shock level. After a number of increases, the actor would make noises (such as bang on the wall to demonstrate discomfort and pain). After several times banging on the wall and complaints responses by the 'learner' would cease. The silence in this case could indicate either being resigned to the pain or having been affected by the shock, for example suffering a seizure.

If the subject wished to stop they were prompted by the Experimenter to continue. The experiment was halted either once the 'teacher' required more than four promptings, or after the maximum 450-volt shock had been administered three times in succession. In Milgram's first set of experiments, 65% of participants administered the 450-volt shock, though many were very uncomfortable doing so.

Figure 4. Arrangement of Experiment



General arrangement for Touch-Proximity Condition.

Figure 5. Proximity Configuration

Obedient subject in Touch-Proximity Condition.



The essence of obedience is how we view ourselves in relation to others. When we are obedient we carry out the wishes of another person (due to attachment, cognitive dissonance or social politics), and in so doing are able to divorce ourselves from responsibility for an act. In some respects the Nazis demonstrated more than anything that they were simply

good public servants. During the collapse of domestic airline Ansett Australia in 2001/2002, Rob had a friend who was a senior public servant and when asked about the suffering of the Ansett employees, he responded, “Rob, I serve the Minister’. This is the dynamic of obedience, a trade-off of one allegiance for another. The responsibility of the public servant is to be obedient to the elected Minister. If this creates an ethical conflict for him, the public servant has to juggle his loyalties and priorities so that he can rationalise his obedience.

We observe this with immigration policy and ‘Sovereign Borders’ activities under the current Abbott Government in Australia. All sorts of cruelty and inhumanity can be justified under the rubric of obedience to the democratically elected Minister. The public servant embraces the politics of subversion (Negri) at their own peril.

As Milgram (1969, p. 1) states,

Obedience is the psychological mechanism that links individual action to political purpose. It is the dispositional cement that binds men to systems of authority.

Obedience is a powerful motivator. It requires astounding strength of will to be disobedient, resisting the need for belonging and acceptance through conformity.

Consider how much we struggle to understand why some people do the things that they do. For example, why do some give away all they own to join a cult, or commit suicide for a cause or belief, or maintain a habit or addiction till death despite knowing how much they are harming themselves?

Human judgement and decision-making are strongly influenced by the power of authority, obedience, belonging, social acceptance, identity in purpose, and the capacity to maintain belief in the face of contrary evidence. Many of the decisions people make under these dynamics are neither rational nor irrational, but rather non-rational (or arational). The decisions have more to do with social arrangements than with a conscious thinking process.

The work of Deci (1995) and Higgins (2012) demonstrates that behaviour is not motivated simply by a desire to maximise pleasure or avoid pain (as we might suppose), but rather by belongingness connected to effectiveness of control, truth and value. When one is able to distance oneself from the humanity of another, and turn them into an object, then any action becomes conceivable. If that distancing leads to conflict between *connection to authority* and *rejection of authority*, Milgram shows that most people will give higher value to the former: connection to authority. Good public servants in obedience to the authority can commit all kinds of atrocities as the Nazis demonstrated.

An understanding of the nature of cognitive dissonance sheds further light on why it can be so difficult and distressing to be disobedient.

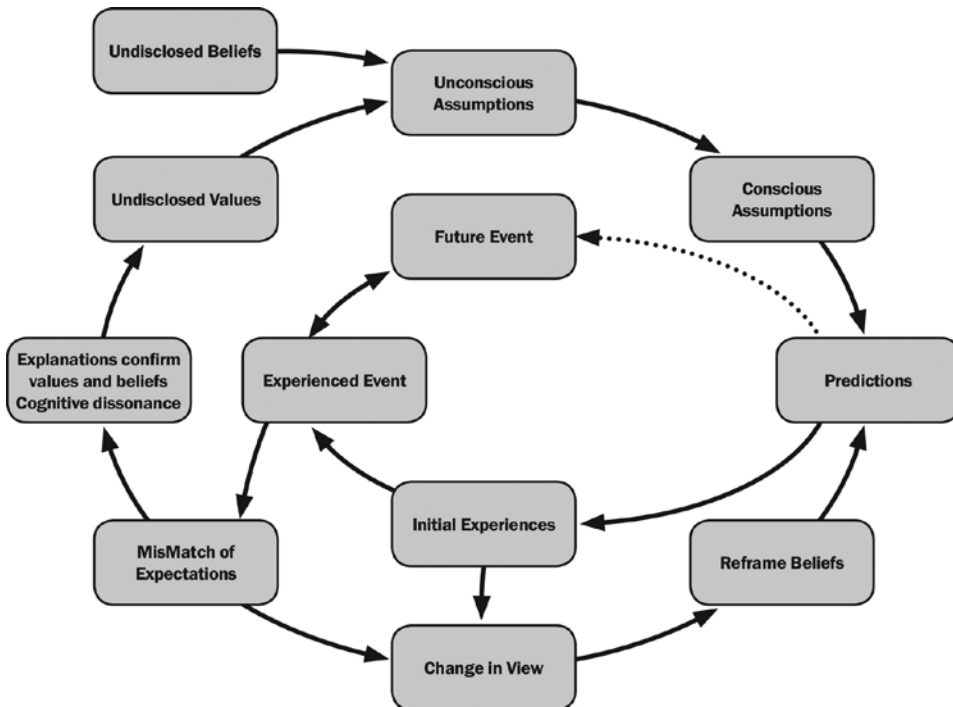
Cognitive Dissonance

The theory of cognitive dissonance and the model of the cycle involved (Figure 6) have been discussed in previous books, particularly *For the Love of Zero*. First defined in the context of learning by Jean Piaget in 1929, the concept was further developed by Leon Festinger in the 1950s. As compared to 'consonance', where ideas or opinions fit neatly together as a consistent whole, dissonance occurs where two or more concepts or opinions do not fit together; that is, they are inconsistent or one does not follow from another. This produces a sense of discomfort and the need to reduce or eliminate the dissonance. These attempts may take one of three forms: the person may try to

1. change one or more of the dissonant beliefs, opinions, or behaviours to remove the perceived inconsistency
2. acquire new information or beliefs that will increase the existing consonance and thus reduce the total dissonance, or
3. reduce, forget or *deny* the importance of those ideas (or evidence) that hold lesser value to the person.

Festinger argued that, in addition to attempting to reduce the dissonance, the person tends to actively *avoid* situations and information which are likely to increase it.

Figure 6. The Cognitive Dissonance Cycle



Commentary on The Secret Meeting

So how do the authoritarian personality, obedience to authority and cognitive dissonance shed light on the secret meeting? A metaphor of parallel universes might help here: the idea that people might be in the same room but effectively living in different worlds. Hiebert (2008 p.15) captures this image nicely:

... below the surface of speech and behaviour are beliefs and values that generate what is said and done. We become aware of still deeper levels of culture that shape how beliefs are formed – the assumptions that people make about the nature of things, the categories in which they think, and the logic that organises these categories into a coherent understanding of reality. It becomes increasingly clear that people live not in the same world with different labels attached to it but in radically different conceptual worlds.

The principal and deputies were acting consistently with their authoritarian personalities aligning with their authoritarian worldview. They were simply protecting Hezekiah from those ‘troublemakers’ in the Social Science faculty, who were disobedient, as demonstrated by their questioning and critical thinking.

Craig’s glowing probation report created dissonance for the school executive, which they resolved not through learning, but by denial and affirmation of their original worldview. This was achieved through a distortion of history and an exaggeration of my actions, to create a story that, for them, justified the victimisation and harsh demands they placed on Craig in the secret meeting. For the executive Craig’s choice was clear: comply and be obedient to anything the authorities demand, or lose his job. [Craig discovered later that the executive had dealt with similar free-thinking staff members in the past through similar threats and secrecy.]

As an employee under this authoritarian leadership, Craig experienced his own severe dissonance. He struggled to make sense of the contradictory messages he was being given: between the one image as a shining new teacher versus the other as the cause of all the problems in the school. He was willing to be obedient but could not obey demands that he saw as unethical and wrong. Finally he wanted to fit in because he liked the school as a whole. This dissonance was not resolved for him until some years after he had left the school, having had the time to work through all that had happened without the ongoing threat and abuse hanging over him.

So this story provides one example of how an extreme version of the traditional leadership model may work in practice. Lets look now at our alternative model that includes leading and following in a relational dynamic.

Workshop Questions

1. Do a search on leadership and followership on the Internet and see what you find.
2. Do a search for concepts of formulaistic leadership such as the 'seven steps', 'five ways' 'ten characteristics' of leadership and see what you find. If leadership is only a matter of doing these things, why do people not follow?
3. Do a search on YouTube for 'social psychology experiments' and see what you find.
4. How do the authoritarian personality, obedience and cognitive dissonance work together to hold people in belief patterns? Do some research on 'sunk cost' and explore what cognitive biases support the nature of these social psychological forces.
5. Raise a controversial subject with someone and try to convince them of the contrary opinion. For example, discuss the problem of illegal immigration of asylum seekers, take the contrary view and see if the temperature rises the more you question assumptions or assert a different view. What is going on?

Transition

In this chapter we have introduced the traditional model of leadership and the hero-myth, a central element of the traditional view. We have also introduced our 'secret meeting' story to ground the concepts discussed in real life experiences; in particular, the role of the authoritarian personality (TAP), obedience and dissonance in the actions of traditional leadership.

As a counter to the dominant voice of the traditional model we have introduced a social-psychological perspective and the insights it provides into the relationship between leading and following. The challenge of social psychology is to observe the web of human behaviours and decisions through social arrangements. When we understand that social arrangements affect all thinking, decisions and behaviour then we see the nature of leading and following differently.

If leading is conditioned by following, why are there so few texts and books on the subject? Why such a dearth on 'following' but such excess on heroic models, individualistic characteristics and recipe books on leadership? Is this because leadership in general is understood as something that doesn't require knowledge of following? Is leadership something we do *to* others rather than *with* others? As Sinclair (2007) suggests, this is the 'seduction' of leadership that is neither liberating nor illuminating.

Another gap in the discourse on leadership is published work on ethics. The silence on this topic is astounding. Is the leadership discourse perhaps so fixated on what it can do to others that the 'other' becomes dehumanised as an object of leadership? A social psychology focus does two things: it puts the emphasis back on following and the social arrangements associated with leading others as subjects, and it shines a light on the nature of relationship between followers and leaders. So before we have a close look at following, we will cast a spotlight on the issue of leadership and ethics.



CHAPTER 2

Ethics in Leadership



What does it profit a person if they gain the whole world but lose their own soul? - Jesus

Virtues are not ideas. They are practices that must be learned. - Riggio

The Health Services Union and Corruption in High Places

In April 2009 the Sydney Morning Herald broke the news of improper use of funds in the Health Services Union (HSUE) East branch. The HSUE was investigated following actions by whistleblower Kathy Jackson (<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/damning-report-of-misuse-of-funds-in-health-union-20120316-1vauc.html>).

The Health Services Union (HSU) was officially formed in 1991 by the amalgamation of the Hospital Employees' Federation (HEF) and the Health and Research Employees Association (HREA). The specialist trade union had around 70,000 members working in all areas of healthcare and represented some of the poorest employees in the Australian workforce. The HSUE was formed in 2010 following several years of factional infighting.

Key players in the unfolding corruption scandal were Craig Thomson (who by this time was a member of federal parliament) and Michael Williamson. They had respectively held the positions of National Secretary and National President, the highest offices in the union.

Following regulatory and administrative investigations and criminal trials, on 18 February 2014 Craig Thomson was found guilty of theft and of defrauding the HSU. He was subsequently sentenced to twelve months imprisonment, with nine months suspended over two years.

In October 2013, Michael Williamson pleaded guilty to two charges of fraud totalling nearly A\$1 million, one charge of fabricating invoices and another of recruiting others

to hinder a police investigation. An earlier independent report showed that companies associated with Williamson and his family had allegedly fraudulently received more than \$5 million from HSUE in the period from 2006 to 2011. In the NSW District Court in March 2014, Williamson was sentenced to seven-and-a-half years of imprisonment, with a non-parole period of five years.

The HSUE affair tormented the Gillard and Rudd governments, as Craig Thomson held a crucial vote in the House of Representatives. The scandal dragged on for years in the courts and the media, drawing continued attention to corruption in high places and the lack of ethics in leadership discourse. The notion of entitlement and corruption in unionism in particular became a recurring theme for management during this period.

In April 2012 the Australian Council of Trade Unions voted to suspend the membership of the HSU on the basis of corruption.

The HSUE affair raises the importance of ethical practice in leadership. It is a truism that corruption and unethical practice demonstrate a lack of leadership. This is seen time and time again from small scale practices in the office and on site, to mega-scale lack of ethics on the world stage such as by Enron (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enron_scandal>) or in Australia by the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) Obeid scandal (<<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/icac-inquiry-finds-corrupt-conduct-by-former-nsw-labor-figures-eddie-obeid-and-ian-macdonald/story-fni0cx12-1226688617206>>).

Victims of Abuse in The Australian Defence Force

At the time of writing this book the scandal of unethical conduct within the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) was surfacing again. After many years of abuse across the services, the launch of numerous enquiries (the latest being the DLA Piper Enquiry 2013), development of training in ethical conduct, changes to operations, the establishment of the Defence Abuse Response Taskforce, yet another call for an enquiry into the ADF echos across the media (<<http://www.news.com.au/national/four-corners-airs-stories-of-former-female-adfa-cadets-who-claim-they-were-raped-sexually-abused-or-denigrated/story-fncynjr2-1226948755192>>). According to a Four Corners investigation perpetrators of abuse remain in the ADF. The comments of an independent and anonymous website set up by a victim reflecting on the DLA Piper enquiry, entitled 'Zero Tolerance - Zero Results' (<http://www.adfabuse.com/Zero_Tolerance_-_Zero_Results.html>) are worth noting:

One of the supposed big wins coming out of the DLA Piper Report was the all seeing, all singing all dancing 'Zero Tolerance Policy'

As an elector, I really wish Defence would treat us with respect and assume we have some intelligence.

I am sure you feel the same way.



The problem has never been an issue of having policy or law to prevent torture and abuse.

The various discipline Acts (with the full authority of Parliament), the various Queens Regulations And Instructions authorised by those and other Acts, and the various Ship and Captain Standing Orders always said that unlawful torture and abuse would not be tolerated and subject to severe disciplinary consequences.

We don't need more paper warfare, we just need the law, regulations and orders already in place actually enforced. What we need is for the senior officers of the ADF to uphold those laws – not generate more policies.

If they cannot enforce the law as mandated by Parliament what hope is there for enforcing a mere policy. Indeed after its release more scandals keep coming out. Please don't insult our intelligence. From all the hype and money they have spent on it, you would think they were Moses coming out with the Ten Commandments.

It would seem that the senior officers of the ADF are armchair generals better at executing a well written memo than displaying true leadership and commitment to the law.

The author then refers the reader to the defence force website (< <http://www.defence.gov.au/fr/frpublications.htm>>), continuing:

Try and download “A Guide To Fair Leadership And Discipline In The Australian Defence Force ... as of 20 June 2012, it won't open because it is corrupt. I think that says something about the senior Management (I won't demean the word by calling them Leaders) of the ADF's true position on the matter

Look at the Sexual Offence Management Guide issued 1/4/2004 – It has been withdrawn. Look at “Management And Reporting Of Unacceptable Behaviour”

21. The complainant has a responsibility to:

a. where practicable, attempt self-resolution at the lowest appropriate level in the circumstances (refer to annex E); and

b. if they make a complaint, to state clearly they have an unacceptable behaviour complaint, and provide a full, fair and honest account of the incident(s), include any supporting information and identify the outcome they seek to achieve.

Those who have been through Torture and Abuse have seen that one before and have only received the response what's your problem?

We then get further torture and abuse for our error of trusting the more senior managers (not leaders)

I believe the latin phrase ... *res ipsa loquitur* (the thing speaks for itself) says it all.

As electors we should not accept this and approach our elected representatives to address this problem.

We can 'feel' in this discourse the desperation about leadership without ethics. Punishment of the victim or the whistleblower is the result of competing ethics of loyalty to the brand, against that of mutuality and reciprocity. It is here in the example of the ADF that we see the quality of leading demonstrated by followers, and a lack of ethics demonstrating that the leadership are not leading. Add to this the farcical nature of the discourse of 'zero harm', and the pain and torment of the victim becomes even more acute.

From our personal experience and what we have witnessed in organisations, the whistleblower is always punished regardless of espoused values or policy.

A Social Psychology of Ethics in Leading

There can be no real discussion of the social psychology of leading in risk without an understanding of discourse and culture. Discourse and culture are containers for the words and language used in conversation and dialogue. One can learn about the discourse in an area of life through the words and actions in use: by what is *not* said and done, as much as by what *is* said and done. Our language and discourse in leading and risk indicate what inner values drive our conscious living.

Our inner values are shaped by both genetic and environmental influences over time. Values are essential for providing meaning and purpose in living. Values embedded in discourse exhibit social or antisocial behaviour. Further, differing values activate different structures within the brain (Newberg and Waldman, 2012, p. 112) and different cultural values activate different areas of the visual cortex. Therefore, brain structure and neurological mapping contribute to differing worldviews. Newberg and Waldman (2012, p. 17ff) argue that the actual words we use shape the neural mapping of our brain so much that fearful words, negative words and sceptical discourse structure neural pathways that normalise a certain worldview. The authors argue (2012, p. 197ff) that without some sense of 'neural resonance' people of varying neural structures will neither understand nor be able to empathise with each other. This is an example of *collective coherence*, where this neural resonance helps a group cohere around common values, while creating a boundary which excludes others.

This is why the discourse of absolutes and perfectionism embedded in the ideology of 'zero' matters, and why the discourse of zero is incompatible with a discourse about leading. An ideology that understands its own success by the absence of harm, rather than what it positively creates, will wire the neural networks of the brain to normalise negativity, scepticism and cynicism. The hero myth embedded in the discourse of fallibility-denial seeks perfectionist leadership and promotes the fear of uncertainty. So when a leadership projects perfectionism in language and discourse in the tradition of the hero myth, the leaders themselves are found wanting by the followers. Perfectionism and no mistakes are expected of the followers but are not expected of the leader. When this contradiction becomes apparent to the followers, the leader is rejected and a new hero is sought. In that state of hiatus, the dissenters, middle managers and whistleblowers become the temporary leaders. It is in this moment that the mental maps of the followers change. The hero they elected or once admired is now rejected as a fraud and is demonised. The followers then seek a new hero yet hold on to the old mental map.



Echoing the work of Newberg and Waldman, Klein (2003, p. 147) calls worldviews 'mental maps':

If you make one mistake in building your mental map of where you are, it can quickly compound as you explain away other anomalies to make them consistent with your original erroneous belief.

As an example, Perrow (*Normal Accidents*, 1999) shows how people actively explain away inconvenient data. Klein refers to 'pattern recognition' as a way of describing decision-making without deliberative analysis; this he says is the basis of 'intuition'. In other words, humans create heuristics through experience and discourse over time, so that they can recognise patterns arationally, and these prime decision-making. Human mental models and values are the foundation of arational decision-making and when these are developed in groups the collective coherence between members reinforces the decision-making of individuals.

When leadership discourse is exposed as being opposed to the coherence of the collective community, it is rejected by followers. Antisocial values cannot create a pro-social collective. This is why hero discourse that lacks the values of learning, compassion and justice will always unravel. Without the language of trust, empathy and compassion the hero leader will eventually be deposed by followers. Nothing is more destructive to leadership than the projection of the ego-self over the well-being of the community. The intrinsic values that followers desire in leadership are happiness, fulfilment, learning, care and kindness. A social psychology of leadership understands that the creation of social-psychological arrangements that foster these values is the key to meaningful relationship and the management of risk.

All ethics are social and relational; something is unethical because it offends the nature of human mutuality and respect for others. When people focus on 'codes' and 'principles' of ethics, they tend to try to turn ethics into a mechanical, forensic activity. This legalistic approach to ethics may appeal to some, but in reality ethics are contextual, situational and relational. The notion of 'absolute' ethics seeks a formula for relationships that fits all occasions, and denies the idea of ethics as communal rather than individualistic. We learn to be ethical because of mutuality and togetherness. The violation of an 'other' is fundamentally a violation of self, of what it is to be human. This is the foundation of a social psychology of ethical leadership. Unless one is connected to followers and understands the experience of following, one will be content to 'lord' it over others rather than see leading as a mutual activity. Just as there is no individual, only I-thou (Buber), so there is no individual leadership, but only leading-following. Perhaps the model for the I-Thou rubric is 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you' (The Bible, Luke 6:21). The principle ethic for a social psychology of risk is reciprocation and mutuality. This is why communication, listening, collaboration, observation and 'everything has significance' matters in leadership and the social psychology of risk.

When someone exploits another, abuses another or violates another, they demonstrate a lack of connection with themselves in the image of an 'other'. This is when the absence of mutuality and reciprocation are evident, when the leading is out of touch with following. This is when unethical conduct most often results.

Waiting in the Transit Lounge (Rob)

On two occasions when I served in the Public Service I witnessed the extreme psychological torment of two people. Despite all manner of Codes of Ethics, Public Service values and language espousing protection for whistleblowers, these two people each were nearly destroyed by the psychological victimisation, 'game playing' and tactics of secret destruction by senior managers. One could certainly not attribute the word 'leader' to those who undertook these savage tactics.

The first public servant we shall call Bruce. I had known Bruce for five years during my time working at Galilee, a school for disadvantaged youth. Bruce had served as a liaison officer to Galilee and had demonstrated his impeccable support for the students in the program. Although not said explicitly, I could tell that Bruce was a person of significant Christian conviction, with a profound personal moral sense of compassion and empathy for at-risk young people. On many occasions Bruce 'educated' me about the Public Service system (before I entered it myself), helping me navigate the maze of obstacles and processes in order to access funding and obtain registration. Bruce had worked in the Education Department for thirty years and was highly experienced in Public Service values, procedures, policy and protocols. In many respects the clandestine strategies of management to persecute him was made worse by this knowledge.

After thirty years Bruce made the mistake of contesting an unethical practice by management. Rather than discipline Bruce the strategy was to place him in the 'transit lounge'. The 'transit lounge' is a place in the public service where you are robbed of meaning by having no work to do, no purpose to achieve, and no relationships to engage with. The transit lounge need not be physical, but is a place of nothingness, isolation and purposelessness. In Bruce's case he was promoted to a cubicle in the basement to undertake research. When I visited Bruce on one occasion he was close to a breakdown, heavily medicated and acutely depressed. The power of isolation, loneliness and purposelessness is far more destructive than a straightforward sacking. It is often prolonged, invisible and deeply soul-destroying. Not long after my visit, Bruce cut his losses and resigned, the outcome the Department was looking for. In the end the personal cost was not worth the moral principle. Since leaving, and after a prolonged battle with paranoia, Bruce began to recover and is now back to normal.

The second public servant I will call 'Edward'. Edward was relatively new to the public service but had over thirty years in the private sector and had run a number of his own businesses very successfully. Edward had had a number of life changes, including a divorce, and decided to accept a position in the public service in the Department of Corrections. Things went well for a few years until Edward witnessed first hand corrupt behaviour of superiors (trading off favours with people in custody). Edward became a whistleblower, believing in good faith that if he presented the truth he would be respected. He experienced the opposite.

The response began with delay and secrecy, with executive meetings held behind closed doors (a lack of transparency in management is a sure-fire signal of non-leadership). Then Edward found himself transported to the 'transit lounge', this time not



a physical place, but more a psychological isolation. Next came trumped-up ‘concerns’ about Edward, and meetings during which he faced accusations and incriminations of not being a ‘team player’. Edward became paranoid, depressed and deeply disillusioned with the lack of justice. This is the common story for people who become leaders as whistleblowers.

The strategic destruction of a person by executives has no paper trail, no procedures or definitive process, but it always seems to result in the creation of a transit lounge, where the invisible dynamics of human destruction take place. Despite espoused values, new values are substituted in an ethic of ‘club protection’, ‘look after your mates’ and ‘demonise the whistleblower’.

Through my experience in the Public Service, I learned that ‘House of Cards’, ‘Yes Minister’ and ‘The Hollow Men’ were pretty accurate when it came to depicting a paradigm of non-leadership. Looking at the experiences of whistleblowers, be it in the HSUE, the ADF or the Australian Public Service, it also becomes clear that whistleblowing is not perceived as leadership. And yet, whistleblowing only begins when those who should be leading cease to do so. No wonder there is so little in the market on ethics in leading.

The Secret Transit Lounge (Craig)

The secret meeting did not remain secret for long. One of the deputies had inadvertently left the strategy for the meeting on the school’s main photocopier. When an administrative staffer found it there, she was so shocked by its contents that she put a copy in each staff member’s pigeon hole. This created a new problem for the executive leadership. In the past they had successfully silenced dissent from other staff members by the same tactics of threats behind closed doors that they were now using on me, managing to keep the whole affair secret (as I was now discovering through approaches by a number of people on staff). Now that their actions had been publicly exposed, would they change their approach?

Not even slightly. They increased their efforts to clamp down on any perceived rebellion or disobedience on my part to the extent that I was forced to threaten legal action and bring in the union. At one meeting the union’s lawyer identified various breaches of the law, but the principal responded that the school’s executive were ‘above the law’ and had the right to respond as they had. The lawyer later told me that he had never met a group so out of touch with reality, and that it was like talking to someone from the middle ages. Here was another example of parallel worlds operating within the one organisation.

So how did the leadership deal with the ongoing problem of my rebellion? They couldn’t sack me, but they could try to setup a situation which would be unlivable. I was made an ongoing relief teacher. This did not seem so bad, but they would then wait until I arrived on any given morning and suddenly change my designated classes. Any request to immediately withdraw to prepare material for the new classes was denied, and I was forced to remain at the daily before-school staff meeting.

Any questions I raised about this process were deemed inappropriate as they related to the confidential decisions of the executive and were none of my concern. I was told to remain silent. Thus I was forced to live in a perpetual transit lounge. My only means of expressing my frustration was to whistle the theme from 'The Odd Couple', reminding me that my world and the world of the executive could never live easily together. One deputy realised this was some form of protest, but never did figure it out.

So, why does this sort of thing continue to happen what is the leadership thinking behind creating transit lounge situations?

Violence: A Test of Ethical Method

How violence is treated in organisations provides a useful case study on ethics and leadership

A guide on work-related violence from the South Australian regulator (<http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/uploaded_files/WorkRelatedViolence.pdf>) makes for interesting reading. Unfortunately, the guide doesn't really get to the heart of what violence is about. This is so often the case when regulators view the world of risk through a binary prism or paradigm. Information is presented, masquerading as helpful guidance, but so laced with concerns about legalities that it results merely in more policies and systems. Then in attempting to map out the minutia of possibilities, the regulator floods the sector with a more mechanistic, rather than humanistic, strategy to manage something. This is not to say that some parts of the guide are not helpful, but rather that we must become more holistic in how we address risk and or we will continue to get bogged down in a 'regulator-only' vision of the world.

SafetyCulture OHS News (<<http://content.safetyculture.com.au/news/>>) promotes the guide, stating, 'there are two types of work-related violence'. The assumption in this binary statement totally removes any chance of a sophisticated, holistic discussion on the issue. The guide adopts a narrow definition of violence (which is never actually made explicit) and provides no sense of a holistic understanding of the fundamental ethical problem that violence poses to leadership 'A Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking' (PCBU). In the end a forensic worldview enables the delusion of objectivity, but it disables leadership. It doesn't take long in using this guide before the focus is taken off subjects and placed completely on objects, perpetuating further the mythology around hazards and controls. With the guide's narrow definition of violence, such serious issues as bullying, abuse, discrimination and sociopathy get no mention. This is how binary and forensic definitions let poor thinking off the hook. Rather than focus on personhood, we now focus on activity and regulation. The trouble is, when one gets to court, violence is defined subjectively rather than objectively; it is always expressed socially and contextually. The guide has checklists, an assessment tool and recommendations for developing workplace policy. In this way the attention of the reader is focused on end points, not starting points (such as dispositions and orientation, belief, attitudes and values). Perhaps policy development should begin with the fundamental values of the organisation and people. The real driver of violence is cultural, not mechanical.



Violence is not just about activity. It is fundamentally about the ‘violation’ of what it means to be human and a person (‘violate’ and ‘violence’ share a common derivative); where the ethical principles of mutuality and reciprocity are breached. When one violates what it means to live in community, humanising others and practising empathy and compassion, then violent acts can easily follow. For instance, one can focus on abusive behaviour to women, or examine the essential misogyny that drives it. The social psychology of leading in risk doesn’t just focus on actions, but focuses first on sources, dispositions, trajectories and orientations. Therefore, when developing a policy on dealing with violence, it would make sense to discuss who or what is being violated, rather than leaping straight to particular actions. If we start with some core values, then when they are violated we can better judge what violence is. As long as we omit discussion of underlying dispositions (culture) and focus only on acts and hazards we won’t shift the real cultural discourse on violence. The mechanistic worldview may make for easier prosecution, but it disables ownership, adaptability in judgement, leading and contextual decision-making.

Workshop Questions

1. Investigate media coverage of a current scandal or corruption. What are the indicators of a lack of leadership? What are the fundamental ethical tensions in the story?
2. What do the ideas of reciprocity and mutuality mean to you? How might this change the way you lead others?
3. Find an example of leadership in the hero model. What does this model offer? How are followers and social arrangements excluded?
4. Consider the social psychology model of the discerning self. How might this be applied to the leading-following discourse in your workplace?
5. There are a range of topics that ‘test’ ethical methods and models of the self. How does your model of leading and ethics bring into focus such things as compassion, suffering and identity with others?

Transition

As we move into the next section of the book we shift attention from traditional leadership to following. In many ways focusing on following draws attention to the everyday and community. Leading in risk requires an understanding of the idea of the catching community, as was discussed in book three, *Real Risk: Human Discerning and Risk*. The leader in risk understands the dilemma and stress of uncertainty, the need for scaffolding and the fulcrum of learning in the human journey. Leading that is disconnected from ethics, learning and imagination has no vision, and is not leadership. Leading that is risk averse and preoccupied with absolutes (e.g. zero goals) cannot develop empathy with following. Leading that does not understand the dynamic of reciprocity and mutuality can neither follow nor lead.

Understanding what happens in the space between those who lead and those who follow is the new frontier in the leadership debate. In this book, the fourth in a series on risk, the authors focus on this space, naming it 'The Zone of Reciprocal Relationship'. They deliberately depart from the traditional leader-centric approach that so dominates our thinking about power, authority and influence. This approach is best captured in the 'hero-myth' model so familiar from ancient stories of myth and legend right through to modern fantasies like Star Wars. In contrast, the authors present an alternative model, where the emphasis is on mutuality between followers and leaders. For this reason they connect the 'Following-Leading' dynamic in one hyphenated word, in which the hyphen becomes more the focus of interest than the words it joins. What happens in this space 'between' is social, relational, ethical, educational and 'risky'.

Since 2004, a change has begun in the leadership discourse, through the influence of social movements evidenced by Wikileaks, GetUp, the Arab Spring, Snowden and the Occupy Movement. These social movements have led to a shift in the balance away from the power of the leader toward that of the follower.

In *The Art of Followership*, Riggio says:

'Too often, followers are expected to be agreeable and acquiescent and are rewarded for being so, when in fact followers who practice knee-jerk obedience are of little value and are often dangerous. If I had to reduce the responsibilities of a good follower to a single rule, it would be to speak the truth to power. We know that toxic followers can put even good leaders on a disastrous path – Shakespeare's Iago comes immediately to mind. But heroic followers can also save leaders from their worst follies, especially leaders so isolated that the only voice they hear is their own.' (2008, p.xxv)

In Australia in 2014, a litany of enquiries has revealed corruption in high places, in the church, politics and unions. Faith in leaders is at an all time low. It is often the whistleblowers, followers and those in the 'out-group' who are doing the leading. A paradigm shift is needed in leadership, especially as it relates to risk.

In the New Testament, Jesus says: *'And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, The old is better'* (Luke 5:36-39).

The message in this series on risk is that risk makes sense. There is no learning through risk aversion. As risk is a social activity, learning and discerning in risk must be undertaken communally rather than individually. There is no hope in absolutes like zero and intolerance, but rather in adaptability, relationship and mutuality. If the management of risk is to be humanised then heroics must go and reciprocity in leading-following needs to be ushered in.

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