

## Leader-centred Perspectives on Leadership

*'If we know all too much about our leaders we know far too little about leadership'.*

*James MacGregor Burns*

*'[They are] sheep, mere sheep ... easily dispersed if we strike the shepherd'.*

*Attributed to King Edward the Longshanks  
(long-legged), circa 1298*

### leader identity and leader behaviour

It seems sensible to start a discussion about leadership with a discussion about the leader. In fact, leadership research has been dominated by an interest in leaders. To be specific, research has looked at who the leader is (leader identity), and what the leader does (leader behaviour). In fact, these two issues are still very important in leadership research. We shall first say a few words about leader identity, then move on to leader behaviour.

All textbooks on leadership seem to commence with a treatise on the trait approach. As a courtesy to thirty years of good-quality publishing, we should do so as well. The trait approach seeks to determine the personal qualities and characteristics of leaders. This orientation implies a belief that leaders are born rather than made – in other words, nature is more important than nurture. As we saw in the introductory chapter, Bruce Avolio has been active in researching the nature–nurture debate with regard to the development of leaders. Refreshingly, the conclusion seems to be that it is a 50–50 bet. Yes, heredity and pedigree determine some elements of leadership, but the experiences that we have at home and in life determine our leadership capabilities just as much.

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Early research tended to be concerned with the qualities that distinguished leaders from non-leaders or from followers. For many writers concerned with leadership, the findings of such research had implications for their area of interest because of a belief that the traits of leaders would distinguish effective from less effective leaders. In general, the simplicity of the trait theory has reduced its attractiveness for scholars and, since the 1940s, a more persuasive trend has shifted to the examination of leadership behaviour. In summary, the trait approach to leadership has had problems, has been discredited, and is really not valid now.

What does happen in the modern era is a continued assumption that the person in charge is the leader, and therefore is the subject of leadership research and scholarship. We have found that this potential problem of confusing the manager-in-charge with the 'leader' is more prevalent in North America, but is nonetheless an issue all round the world. We have had confusing and at times sometimes frustrating conversations with colleagues, usually in the USA, who claim to be researching 'leadership', and they keep talking about the 'leader'. When pressed further, they are actually talking about the manager of the work unit. It all gets confusing when we are not sure whether we are studying leadership, or a leader, or the manager. It might be splitting hairs, but the basis of the research needs to be clear from the start. The value is that if you say that the person in charge is the leader, then at least you know who you are talking about. What you are probably saying is that the person in charge has the greatest leadership role to play in their management responsibility. That is a perfectly sound premise upon which to base your investigation, and is an important basis for your research.

One problem with this research direction is the implication that you either are a leader or are not. If you don't have the right demographic characteristics or even the right rank in the hierarchy, then you cannot be the leader. Another challenge could be that if you are the manager in charge, you must be the leader, and if you are not the manager then you have no leadership role to play. This dichotomy can be a huge burden to bear for the (unfortunate) person who happens to be the manager in charge of a work unit.

Another problem is that people other than the manager-in-charge do demonstrate leadership from time to time; and from time to time the manager-in-charge is a follower rather than a leader. Therefore, research questions can be confused as a result of this potential dislocation between research subject (manager) and research phenomenon (leadership). It is partly because of this dislocation that we must move now from leader identity to leader behaviour.

The implication of concentrating on leader behaviour rather than leader identity is that the leader can get better at her leadership role by

behaving in the most appropriate way. If you strike the right balance between concern for people and concern for production, you will be the most effective leader. Other ways that this balance has been articulated include employee-centred versus production-centred; supportive versus directive; consideration versus initiating structure; relationship-oriented versus task-oriented. These labels pepper the organizational behaviour textbooks and are all talking essentially about the same dichotomy. Some taxonomies of leader behaviours can be quite complex, but the point has been well and truly established that the most effective leaders achieve a balance between the twin challenges of getting the job done and looking after the welfare of the workers.

The behavioural approach to leadership has also gone out of favour in recent years, with the exception that transformational leadership has been criticized as another behavioural theory under a different guise. We will say more about that later.

### gender and leadership

In the previous chapter, we referred to the three most commonly asked questions about leadership. If we had included a fourth it would most definitely have been the one that asks: 'What differences are there between male and female leaders?'. The trait approach to leadership seemed to say that men were better leaders than women. The behavioural approach now seems to suggest that women demonstrate better leadership than men do, on average.

Actually, there is no consensus in the literature about gender differences in leadership styles. For example, only weak evidence exists suggesting that women display more transformational leadership than men. Examples include Eagly and Johnson's 1990 meta-analysis and Bass and Avolio's 1994 research. Another meta-analysis is Eagly et al.'s 2003 work on transformational leadership research which revealed a slight but significantly more frequent display of transformational leadership by women over men, across a large number of studies.

Some of our research in New Zealand also found this. When surveying 2,000 managers across the country, we found that irrespective of the gender of the rater, women are seen to display up to 10 per cent more leadership than men, on average. Interestingly, when women fill out the questionnaire, they also are more likely to tick the boxes at the extreme ends of the scale. On the other hand, men are more likely to go for the mid-point ratings. Women are more likely to say that the subject 'never' demonstrates a sense of power or 'always' demonstrates a sense of power. Men are more likely to say that the subject demonstrates a sense of power 'sometimes' or 'fairly often'. Perhaps husbands

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and boyfriends can empathize with these rather consistent findings. Perhaps wives and girlfriends can empathize with the finding that men are less likely to have a strong view or take a judgemental stand.

Some studies point to gender differences in particular behaviours. For example, Astin and Leland (1992) found that women believe more strongly than men that listening to and empowering followers is important, and women are more likely to use conferences and networks to achieve results. Burke and McKeen suggest that such differences occur because men and women view the world differently, and consequently male leaders seek autonomy and control over their followers while women favour connection and relatedness. It is a complex area and a clear resolution of the issues does not appear to be forthcoming.

Eagly's (1987) social role theory suggests that to avoid criticism and to achieve praise, people behave consistently with society's expectations of their gender. Therefore as leaders, women will strive to be nurturing and caring, while men will be more task-focused, ambitious and competitive. In a large-scale meta-analysis of organizational, laboratory and assessment centre studies, Eagly and Johnson (1990) reported small, but reliable gender differences in leadership style. Female leaders were found to emphasize both interpersonal relations and task accomplishment more than men. Behavioural theory would, therefore, conclude that women are better leaders. However, these differences reduced considerably among organizational leaders vis-à-vis leaders at lower levels. The problem with such small statistical differences is that the significant minority of people who do not conform to stereotype are unfairly labelled with the characteristics of the majority. After all, the 'feminization' of leadership is equally applicable to men as it is to women.

As far back as the early 1990s, many commentators have called for the feminization of leadership as a way to improving long-term organizational effectiveness and well-being. The 'feminization' of leadership does not mean that women are better leaders than men. It means that leaders who conform to the feminized stereotype, that of balance between relationship-orientation and task-orientation, will be the better leaders, irrespective of whether they are women or men.

Eagly and Johnson's findings suggest that leadership processes might vary according to the gender composition of the workplace as much as by the gender dominance of the industry. For example, Chatman and O'Reilly (2004) found that women expressed greater commitment, positive affect and perceptions of cooperation when they worked in all-female groups. Walker et al. (1996) found that in mixed sex groups, men were much more likely to exercise opinion leadership than women. Gardiner and Tiggemann (1999) found that women and men in male-dominated industries did not differ in their interpersonal leadership

orientation, however women in female-dominated industries were more interpersonally oriented than men. Furthermore, women exhibiting an interpersonal-oriented leadership style in male-dominated industries reported worse levels of mental health. This finding suggests that both the gender of leader as well as the gender ratio of the industry in general affects leadership styles, although the findings are inconclusive overall.

Clearly, one future direction for research is to assess the impact on leadership of gender domination in the workplace and within the industry generally. On the one hand, the matter of gender and leadership seems to provide a fertile area for research and scholarship (Adler, 1996; Holmes and Marra, 2004; Sinclair, 2005). On the other hand, we suggest that if all these esteemed researchers can come to no consensus about the thorny question of gender and leadership, then perhaps we are asking the wrong question. Ken has a mantra that if you can't find an answer to a question, then you are probably asking the wrong question. This claim relates to the study of leadership as much as to life in general.

What does seem clear is that research in this area appears to be the domain of ageing male and female baby boomers trying to remedy the ills of the past. Experience suggests that Generation X and Y researchers have a different interest in studying gender issues within the phenomenon of leadership, if any interest at all. They would look at powerful women such as Margaret Thatcher, Anita Roddick and Hillary Clinton and agree that issues such as power and communication are more influential than gender for the success of their leadership.

Ken often cites some fascinating work undertaken by Jenny Neale, in the late 1990s. Jenny was part of a multinational study, which investigated the life stories of men and women who had made it to 'the top' as leaders in their industries (Neale, 2001). She looked specifically at Australia and New Zealand. She found that people who made it to the top had in common the privilege of having someone else to look after their domestic situation, such that they could concentrate on their careers. Men invariably had a wife to look after their domestic situation. Unless they were independently wealthy, women did not have a husband to look after their domestic situation. Therefore, those women had foregone a domestic situation by not having children and/or not having a husband. One interpretation of this phenomenon is that leadership success was a function of power rather than gender. To be sure, there has always been a correlation between gender and access to power, but that correlation is becoming weaker all the time.

We have noticed that contemporary research appears to look at gender as a moderator rather than as a dependent or independent variable. As the twenty-first century unfolds, it appears that the characteristics of the individual workplace and the expectations of workforces

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will have more impact on leadership than does the gender of leaders. The bottom line is that gender differences with regard to leadership, even if significant, are slight. There seems to be little mileage in pursuing this as a specific research direction, unless gender is couched as a social identity rather than as a biological binary relationship.

### transformational leadership

One approach to leadership research that has dominated the literature since the 1980s is transformational leadership. It has been hailed, somewhat unfairly, by some people as another behavioural theory of leadership. Transformational leadership is part of what Alan Bryman has called the 'new leadership'. Apart from the fact that new leadership is no longer strictly new, it has generated a great deal of excellent as well as mediocre research and acts as a powerful touchstone for many contemporary leadership researchers. For this reason, the term 'new' still holds some currency.

'New leadership' describes and categorizes a number of approaches to leadership which emerged in the 1980s and exhibited common, or at least similar, themes. Together these different approaches seemed to signal a new way of conceptualizing and researching leadership and they are still going strong. Writers employed a variety of terms to describe the new kinds of leadership which they were concerned with promoting. Among many others, Bass, Avolio, Alimo-Metcalfe, and Tichy and Devanna wrote about 'transformational leadership'. House and Conger wrote persuasively about 'charismatic leadership'. Sashkin, Westley and Mintzberg wrote about 'visionary leadership'. Finally, others such as Bennis, Nanus, Kotter, Kouzes and Posner simply wrote about 'leadership' usually vis-à-vis 'management'. We will say more about charismatic leadership in the next section.

Together these labels revealed a conception of the leader as someone who defines organizational reality through the articulation of a vision, and the generation of strategies to realize that vision. Thus, the new leadership approach is underpinned by a depiction of leaders as what Smircich and Morgan (1982) described as 'managers of meaning'. Another persuasive distillation of the essence of leadership is that of 'sense-making', made famous by Karl Weick in 1995 and articulated further by Annie Pye in 2005. A third distillation of the essence of leadership is that of 'enhancing adaptability' (Parry, 1999). This third essence of leadership is not as famous as the first two, but the point is that underlying nature of leadership has been explained as more than just an influence process that one imposes upon followers. Of

course, arguably the most popular essence of leadership is that of the transformation – a transformation in the attitudes and motivations, and consequently behaviours, of followers – which is generally termed ‘transformational leadership’.

The all-important foil for transformational leadership is transactional leadership. Transactional leadership involves an exchange between the leader and follower wherein the leader offers rewards in return for compliance and performance. The transaction is usually represented in formal contracts, employment agreements, performance management systems and service level agreements. As with behavioural theories of leadership, the most effective leaders are successful at enacting the transformation *and* the transaction. Transformational leadership theory owes a great deal to the ground-breaking work of Bernard Bass, often in partnership with his colleague of many years Bruce Avolio.

#### bass's research on transactional and transformational leadership

For Bass, the ideal approach to leadership exhibits both forms of leadership – transformational and transactional. Bass developed quantitative indicators for each component. His specification of these components has varied somewhat as his model has undergone development. The seemingly simple dichotomy of transformation and transaction has been modified through richer and more detailed research to now reflect three higher-order factors that give greater richness to the transformation and transaction. According to Avolio et al. (1999b), the leadership factors are:

##### *Transformational leadership*

*Inspirational and visionary* – developing a vision, engendering pride, respect and trust; creating high expectations, modelling appropriate behaviour.

*Intellectual stimulation* – continually challenging followers with new ideas and approaches; using symbols to focus efforts.

*Developmental exchange* (part-transformation and part-transaction)

*Individualized consideration* – giving personal attention to followers, giving them respect and responsibility, always developing them.

*Contingent reward* – rewarding followers for conformity with performance targets.

##### *Corrective avoidant* (transactional)

*Management-by-exception (Active)* – looking for mistakes or exceptions to expected behaviour and then taking corrective action.

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*Passive avoidant* – waiting for mistakes to occur before intervening, abdicating leadership responsibility.

Each of these components is measured with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). If you are into structural equation modelling, the above factor structure was replicated in a national survey undertaken by Ken at the Centre for the Study of Leadership in New Zealand. Empirically, as well as conceptually and theoretically, this is a powerful way to explain transformational leadership.

The MLQ has a self-rating version, a team version and a conventional leader-rating version. The research, which has been conducted on a host of different levels of leader in a variety of settings, typically shows transformational leadership and developmental exchange to be the components of leader behaviour that are most strongly associated with desirable outcomes such as the performance of subordinates, followers and colleagues. Too much corrective avoidant leadership will result in reduced performance and goal attainment.

Programmes for the selection and training of leaders which draw on this conceptualization and measurement of transactional and transformational leadership have been developed (Bass and Avolio, 1990), as have CDs aimed at spreading the word to managers about transformational leadership (Parry, 2004). Phil Podsakoff also developed a questionnaire to test for six factors of transformational leadership and four factors representing contingent and non-contingent reward, and contingent and non-contingent punishment (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Podsakoff's six transformational leadership factors are: articulates vision, provides appropriate role model, fosters the acceptance of goals, communicates high performance expectations, provides individualized support, and intellectual stimulation. Like Bass's original operationalization of transformational and transactional leadership, these are pitched mainly at the individual level of analysis.

Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2001) also developed a Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ). This questionnaire measures nine factors, once again at the individual level of analysis and measuring 'close' or 'nearby' leadership, as opposed to 'distant' leadership. Those nine transformational leadership factors are: genuine concern for others; empowers and develops potential; integrity, trustworthy, honest and open; accessibility and approachability; clarifies boundaries, involves others in decisions; encourages critical and strategic thinking; inspirational networker and promoter; decisiveness, determination, self-confidence; and political sensitivity and skills. Once again, they have been adapted for the selection and training of leaders.

Importantly, Bass's and Podsakoff's measures of leadership contain a transactional component as well as a transformational one. Kouzes and Posner's (1998) and Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe's (2001) measures do not. Waldman et al. (1990) drew attention to the importance of the augmentation effect of transformational leadership over and above the effect of transactional leadership. In other words, as the old mantra says, 'transactional leadership is necessary, but not sufficient'. The transaction seems to be the basis of human interactions. However, it is the transformation, in addition to the transaction, that enables followers to perform beyond expectations. This finding has been supported by Deanne den Hartog and colleagues in 1997, with questionnaire analysis. These theoretical findings, that transactional leadership by itself is necessary but not sufficient for optimal organizational performance, support the conceptual conclusions of Kotter (1990) and others that 'leadership' without 'management' is insufficient for optimal organizational performance.

The idea of transformational leadership has generated an impressive set of findings and has made a great impact on the study of leadership. Given the volume and impact of transformational and 'new' leadership, it is clear that it won't go away in a hurry. Indeed, we believe that it will remain a key component of the study of leadership for many years yet. Some reflections about the new leadership approach can be found in the following overview.

#### the limitations of transformational and new leadership

With the exception of the research stemming directly or indirectly from Bass's work, the new leadership approach can be accused of concentrating excessively on top leaders. While a switch toward the examination of the leadership *of*, rather than *in*, organizations is in contrast to the small-scale, group-level studies of earlier eras, it could be argued that the change in focus has gone too far and risks having little to say to the majority of leaders. Also, as with earlier phases of research, the new leadership has little to say about informal leadership processes, although the qualitative case studies that have grown in popularity have great potential in this regard. On the other hand, quantitative approaches exhibited by the work of Bass, Podsakoff, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, and Kouzes and Posner, are likely to replicate the tendency to focus on formally designated leaders.

Finally, there has been little situational analysis until recently. Much effort was exerted in the late 1990s toward testing the situational validity of the new leadership, transformational leadership in particular. Attention has been drawn to a wide range of contextual factors that can

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limit the room for manoeuvre of prospective transformational leaders. These contextual factors might include technology, industry structure, the international trading environment, national public policy, and social and cultural transformation. We have no doubt that many moderating and mediating variables can be tested upon the relationship between transformational leadership and outcome variables.

However, further research along these lines will just be toying with what we already understand, and will probably add little to the body of knowledge. Therefore, there is growing evidence that situational constraints may be much more important in restricting the transformational leader's room for manoeuvre than is generally appreciated. On the other hand, Bass (1997) is insistent that transformational leadership works in almost any situation, except that the way in which it works is, very definitely, situationally contingent. There is a tendency for new leadership writers to emphasize the exploits of successful leaders, and to engage in insufficient examination of the reasons for the loss of transformational attribution. This can generate a distorted impression since there may be important lessons to be learned from failed transformational leaders.

Apart from these concerns, Gary Yukl has typically provided the most cogent critique of transformational leadership theories (Yukl, 1999). One weakness he identifies is the omission of the specification of important behaviours and ambiguity about other transformational behaviours. In part, this criticism has led to the development of Alimo-Metcalf and Alban-Metcalf's transformational leadership questionnaire, with a broader range of leadership behaviours and interactions with followers.

Another weakness was insufficient identification of the negative effects of transformational leadership. This shortfall has in part been rectified by Bass and Steidlmeier's (1999) examination of authentic and inauthentic transformational leadership, and also by discussion by Maccoby (2000) and Kets de Vries and Miller (1985) and others on the problems of narcissism with people in senior leadership positions. A third weakness was ambiguity about the underlying influence processes associated with transformational leadership.

We expect that the greater use of qualitative methods to research leadership will remedy these perceived weaknesses over time. A final weakness identified by Yukl (1999) was an overemphasis on dyadic processes of transformational leadership. Once again, the greater use of qualitative methods to research leadership, as a social process found generally within organizations, should move researchers toward a resolution of this problem. Either way, there are still many opportunities for broadening out research into leadership as transformation. We invite you to play your part.

We keep waiting for the transformational leadership 'bubble' to burst and for it to be relegated to the historical scrap-bin as another management fad. However, Ken in particular continues to find that an appreciation of the notion of transformation and transaction is a powerful diagnostic and learning tool for managers and executives in executive development forums. Once people get the point, and it is an easy point to get, the leadership learning really takes off.

There are good reasons to continue studying the new leadership, and transformational leadership in particular. First, it is a well-worked area of research so there is a large body of theory upon which to build. Second, it has been dominated by questionnaire-based research, so there is a good opportunity to broaden the methodological base upon which this research is conducted. Certainly, a continued use of questionnaire research will be expected but, as we have suggested, people have an opportunity to research the contexts within which they live and work in order to gain understanding about the processes that are at play in the leadership that they are experiencing. Questions about 'what is going on?' will probably dominate the research agenda. Having staked a claim for more qualitative research into leadership, we need to add a rider: we see a need for more triangulation of data. In other words, both qualitative and quantitative data, used concurrently and within a broader framework of qualitative analysis, might well provide the greatest insights over time.

### charismatic leadership

As we suggested earlier, charismatic leadership is often thought of as a sibling of transformational leadership. It is also thought by other commentators to be a component of transformational leadership. Either way, it is another important aspect of the new leadership that needs to be considered. Much of the research into charismatic leadership has centred on community or political leadership (i.e. the sociological, psychoanalytic and political approaches), rather than leadership in organizations. The transitory nature of charismatic leadership makes it difficult to isolate and therefore to research. For example, Tony Blair was hugely charismatic in the early years of his prime ministership. By the end of it, his charismatic aura had lost much of its glow. For many 'charismatic' leaders, the gain and loss of charisma happens much faster than the ten years it has taken for Blair to lose his. Even so, striving to understand the process of gaining and losing charisma continues to be a fruitful and underutilized research avenue to explore.

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The main approaches that normally attract scholars are the behavioural approach, lionized by Bob House (1977), Bernie Bass (1998) and Jay Conger (1987), the attribution approach, articulated by Jay Conger (as well), Jane Howell, and the great conceptual thinker Boas Shamir (Shamir and Howell, 1999), and the follower self-concept approach (Shamir et al., 1993). Along the same lines, Zaleznik's (1977) and Hummel's (1975) psychoanalytic approach to charisma emphasizes the impact that leaders have on followers. These two follower-centred approaches to understanding leadership will be explored further in Chapter 3.

The key variable is the motivation and response of followers that charismatic leaders can tap into. This approach to leadership is best suited to political leadership; case studies such as Hitler, Gandhi, Mandela and various US presidential candidates are often analysed. Whereas most work on charismatic leadership has focused on the leader behaviours and follower effects as independent and dependent variables, Boas Shamir (1992) has added to the debate by positing an explanation for the intervening variable which links leadership and effect. He suggests that charismatic leadership has its effect by heightening the self-concept of followers. In particular, charismatic leadership generates heightened self-esteem and self-worth, increased self-efficacy and collective efficacy, personal identification with the leader, identification with a prestigious and distinctive social group, and internalization of the values of the leader. Clearly, charisma is a complex psycho-social phenomenon.

Charismatic leadership really is a function of the whole situation. It is leader identity, leader behaviour, follower identity, socio cultural context and organizational setting all working together concurrently. Therefore, one should be researching that whole situation in its entirety to understand what is going on. The topic is perennially sexy. People can readily relate to political, sporting or corporate leadership that has a charismatic effect on followers. As such, charismatic leadership is always relevant to the lives of people in any society. Whether scholars utilize historiography, case study method, phenomenography, biographical analysis, visual ethnography or political psychology the topics are always relevant and entertaining. One just cannot get the feel for charismatic leadership by using the quantitative questionnaire methodology that has otherwise dominated the new leadership. On the other hand, when you discuss charismatic leadership, you cannot avoid the matter of personality and its role in the process.

#### leadership and personality

This is an issue that has always been best researched psychometrically with questionnaire instruments. Leadership has been linked to certain

personality factors in leaders (Judge et al., 2002). Those personality factors are conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion and emotional stability. The works of Cable and Judge (2003) and Smith and Canger (2004) are probably good places to start.

It is important to recognize that the links between the demonstration of leadership and personality factors have always been modest, even though they are statistically significant. Certain personalities lend themselves more to demonstrating leadership than others. For example, a person who is organized, reliable and ambitious (high in conscientiousness) is more likely to be seen as a leader than someone who is unreliable and careless (low in conscientiousness). This finding makes sense, but ironically the finding is not strong and it is not universal. In other words, contrary to what we might think intuitively, some less reliable and careless people can and do have leadership attributed to them.

The point is that, irrespective of your personality, you can engage in the behaviours of effective leadership. We would hate to have to say to someone, 'sorry, but because of your personality, you cannot be a leader', or worse, 'sorry, but because of your personality, you cannot be in a leadership position' – or even worse, 'sorry, but you cannot even be better at leadership because you have the wrong personality!'. However, that being said, we believe it is important to be aware of links between personality and leadership. It is important to know how and why certain leader–follower relationships work. Perhaps a future direction for research should be an examination of the relationship between the personality of followers (or workers) and leadership by the manager. Either way, it is important to understand where people are 'coming from', both figuratively and literally. By the same token let's not lose sight of the idea that, in spite of our personality profile, we can *all* learn to become better leaders.

Craig and Gustafson (1998) developed an instrument to assess the perceived integrity of leaders. Not surprisingly, it is called the Perceived Leader Integrity Scale, or PLIS. Ken utilized a modified version of that scale to test the relationship between transformational leadership and perceived integrity in one of his national surveys in New Zealand (Parry and Proctor-Thomson, 2002). As expected, he found a generally positive relationship between perceptions of integrity and attributions of leadership. However, an intriguing side issue he found was that six per cent of leaders in New Zealand organizations were found to be above average in the display of leadership yet below average in perceived integrity. In other words, some people in leadership positions give all the inspirational speeches and get to know the needs of individuals and display a sense of power; yet followers still believe that those leaders lack integrity.

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These figures resonate with Gustafson and Ritzer's (1995) and Babiak's (1996) finding that approximately one in twenty managers are aberrant self-promoters, a mild form of organizational psychopath. The implication is that some people are enacting all the right transformational behaviours, yet what is in their heart is not as honourable as they would like their followers to believe. These and related findings have heralded an exciting new direction for research which examines the dark side of personality, rather than the conventional components of the rational personality. The dark side includes among other facets of personality: narcissism, passive-aggressive personality, obsessive-compulsive personality, anti-social behaviour, and paranoid, schizotypal and histrionic personalities. We believe that there are plenty of opportunities for further research. If you have a strong psychological leaning this might be an area that you consider studying further. Not only is this a hugely important area of research for the mental and emotional health of our society, it also seems to be a 'hot button' topic that is guaranteed to attract media attention.

#### the narcissistic leader

The examination of the narcissistic leader is more than just an extension of the link between personality and leadership. The narcissistic leader has become a separate sub-field of leadership research in its own right. The narcissistic leader has been the subject of much popular press writing. Some well-read examples are books which directly and indirectly address this issue. Narcissistic leaders hold great fascination for the average tax-paying and voting voyeur, especially those naughty narcissistic CEOs. There is more than a whiff of desire and arousal in the power that goes with the lofty levels at which these people operate. The stakes are high.

In one particularly well-cited issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, Michael Maccoby (2000) discussed the 'incredible pros' and the 'inevitable cons' of narcissistic leaders. There are any number of psychology textbooks that explain the narcissistic personality but, for our purposes here, the narcissistic leader is usually represented by the larger-than-life personalities whom we see running organizations and figuring prominently in our society – best personified by the likes of Richard Branson, Donald Trump and Jack Welch.

One strength of the narcissistic leader is their ability to energize followers with a grand and compelling vision. Another strength is to generate large numbers of followers who can enact the vision. In fact, the narcissistic leader is very dependent upon the followers. There are also weaknesses of the narcissistic leader. They are sensitive to criticism.

They are poor listeners. They lack empathy and have a distaste for mentoring although they have an intense desire to compete.

The focus of research into the narcissistic leader could equally be the leader or the followers. A good example of the latter is the study by Elmes and Barry (1999) of narcissistic behaviour exhibited by mountaineering groups on the rock face which ultimately led to the tragic climbing deaths described in the bestseller, *Into Thin Air* (Krakauer, 1997). By the nature of its subject, this research usually takes the form of a case study. The books and popular press on narcissistic leaders are effectively case studies, albeit lacking in empirical rigour. There is room for improvement in the quality of the research that goes into such case studies. Equally, by virtue of the impact of personality on leadership, there is also still great scope for more traditional questionnaire research into the narcissistic leader. In terms of some of the research that has been undertaken, Post (1986), Kets de Vries and Miller (1985), and Maccoby (2000) have discussed the impact of personality aberrations such as narcissism upon the performance of people in senior leadership roles.

### the rise of the anti-narcissistic leader

Perhaps the most influential leadership idea to emerge in the popular realm in the first part of the twenty-first century has been the notion of 'level 5' leadership which was coined by Jim Collins in his best-selling business book, *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001a). Continuing the theme of sustainable corporate success that was so profitably mined in his earlier bestseller, *Built to Last* (Collins and Porras, 1995), Jim Collins and his research team set out to discover what underlay the continued superior performance of a handful of American corporations over several decades rather than the short term.

Despite their best efforts not to pin success on the quality of the leadership at the top of the organization, that is in fact what they found. In particular they discovered a CEO at each company who had well and truly paid his dues (they were all males) in the company and the industry steadily, had patiently worked his way to the top of the organization, and was sticking around through thick and thin. By no means overnight sensations, these CEOs represented the antithesis of the charismatic and narcissistic turnaround kings who were held up as the archetypal CEOs during the financial booms of the 1980s and 1990s. Collins suggest that the latter 'magic leaders' exemplified what he terms 'level 4 leadership' – highly effective in the short-term but, due to character flaws, doomed to fail in the longer term. They fall short of 'level 5 leaders' who, by contrast:

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are a study in duality: they are modest and willful, shy and fearless. They act with quiet, calm determination and they rely principally on inspired standards, not inspiring charisma, to motivate. They channel their ambition into the company, not the self. They also 'look in the mirror, not the window, to apportion responsibility for poor results, never blaming other people, external factors or bad luck. Similarly, they look out of the window to apportion credit for the company's success to employees, external factors or good luck.

The level 5 leader is personified by Wade Thompson, the co-founder with Peter Orthwein of Thor Industries, the world's largest recreational vehicle company. Since purchasing the iconic but financially ailing Airstream company in 1980, Wade and Peter have slowly but surely built a highly successful company that has become one of America's fifteen most admired companies. They have done this by consistently adhering to a few basic principles rooted in integrity, responsibility and accountability, many of which they share with the legendarily low-key yet spectacularly successful investment guru, Warren Buffet. They have achieved all of this in a studiously understated manner, miles away from the media spotlight. Brad was fortunate to have the opportunity to make a documentary called *The Open Road* which describes the historic growth of this multibillion dollar company as a means to teach the next generation of strategic leaders.

This discernible weather change away from celebrating the 'loud and proud' charismatic leader archetype to a more humble, ethical anti-charismatic leader has also found its way into popular accounts of leadership at other levels within the organization and the community at large. Most notably, Joseph Badaracco (2002) in his book *The Quiet Leader* compellingly observes:

They're not making high stakes decisions. They're often not at the top of organizations. They often don't have the spotlight and publicity on them. They think of themselves modestly; they often don't even think of themselves as leaders. But they are acting *quietly*, effectively, with political astuteness, to basically make things better, sometimes much better than they would otherwise.

Brad and his colleague, Eric Guthey, from the Copenhagen Business School have investigated what they describe as the 'hero manager backlash' that gathered momentum at the beginning of 2002 in the advent of the widely vilified corporate scandals and the burst of the dot.com bubble (Guthey and Jackson, 2005). They trace the media backlash

through an analysis of the changing portrayals of CEOs featured on the covers and within the pages of high profile business periodicals such as *Business Week*, *Fortune* and *Forbes*. They note the tendency of the media to not only seek to demonize heroic leaders, pillorying them in quite shocking visual fashion (after celebrating them only a year prior), but also to find new heroes to replace them. In this regard, they note that the media have replaced the 'Men in Black' level 4 leaders with the 'Men in Beige' level 5 leaders. At what point and in what form these leaders will be subsequently knocked down and replaced by the 'level 6' leaders (whomever they may be), is anyone's guess.

As we shall see in Chapter 6, leadership scholars have not been impervious to this tectonic shift in popular attitudes towards business leadership. In Chapter 6 we describe the three-pronged quest for leaders who have a higher purpose (i.e. above the grubby preoccupation with hard cash and absolute power) by exploring authentic, ethical and spiritual leadership. Much of this work has sought to invigorate the theory and practice of transformational yet drive charismatic leadership to the sidelines. Typical of this search is the observation made by his Gardner and his colleagues about 'the authentic leader':

We are struck by the uplifting effects of lower profile but genuine leaders who lead by example in fostering healthy ethical climates characterised by transparency, trust, integrity, and high moral standards. We call such leaders authentic leaders who are not only true to themselves, but lead others by helping them to likewise achieve authenticity (Gardner et al. 2005: 344).

Essentially, what we are witnessing here is the continued desire by leadership scholars to solve what are perceived to be problems created by poor leadership by selecting and developing the 'right' type of leader. New leadership theory emphasized the dramatic performance improvements that could be realized by visionary leaders who were able to inspire their followers through their charismatic rather than their formal authority. While results have often been dramatic they have sometimes been achieved with unacceptable ethical, moral and psychological costs. This has caused leadership scholars to shift their focus away from the 'means to the ends' of leadership, specifically to inspect the moral and ethical bases of leadership goals. Their quest for genuinely authentic, ethically sound and spiritually enlightened leaders maintains the leader-centric perspective which endeavours to solve leadership problems by focusing on the leader. The followers, therefore, continue to play a marginal and incidental role. In Chapter 3 we will look at a number of bold but isolated efforts to redress this situation by finally bringing the follower into the analysis.

 conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion regarding the relationship between the identity of a leader and his or her behaviour. Related to this we considered the influence of gender on leadership and concluded that, while biologically-oriented research had revealed surprisingly little difference, those who had looked at gender from a social identity perspective had provided comparatively more fertile terrain for leadership researchers. We reviewed the substantial contribution that new leadership theory (encompassing transformational, transactional and charismatic leadership) had made to our understanding of what constitutes effective leadership and how to promote it. We also noted a number of criticisms that have been levelled at this impressive and still highly influential body of work.

In exploring the relationship between personality and leadership, we noted that most research had focused on the positive and rational aspects of personality that were seen to be conducive to fostering good leadership. We also noted and welcomed a growing interest in understanding the 'dark' as well as 'the light' side of leadership personality, pointing specifically to the role of narcissism in promoting good and bad leadership. We closed the chapter by discussing the shift that had taken place in the popular archetypes of sound strategic leadership from the larger-than-life visionary charismatic business leaders of the 1980s and 1990s to the more humble, ethical and understated business leaders of the 2000s, in the aftermath of the corporate scandals and the bursting of the dot.com bubble.