



## Phone Link Ups

# Leadership

## Questions Posed

### 1. What is leadership?

### 2. What are the differences between leadership & management?

#### **“Is there such a thing as a born leader?”**

Beginning a dialogue about change, leadership and great achievements.

#### **“The leaders we need are already here.”**

Margaret J. Wheatley




When children's services educators take time to consider the idea of leadership some general assumptions emerge. It is timely that we take some time to pause, reflect and re-imagine many of the taken-for-granted assumptions relating to leadership in children's services. As a consultant in personal and organisational development, I hear many comments people make about leadership. Here are some of the statements I often hear:

- 🌈 **‘Leadership is about managing staff and their performance’**- yes, leadership does encompass in part the supervision of staffing. However, limiting leadership to staff management, restricts the visionary and motivational aspects which are so important in leading people. More importantly in become an effective leader, individuals need to inspire people to grow professionally and personally, as well as assisting them to create positive outcomes for the children, families, communities and staff they come in contact with.
- 🌈 **‘I’m not a leader, that is the role of the centre director’** – it is argued in contemporary literature that leadership skills are vital skills for all employees to have. Whilst people in management roles do have an important part to play in leading the team, restricting these important skills to group leaders or centre directors, can limit your ability to influence positive change.
- 🌈 **‘I’m not very good at leading, it’s just too difficult’** – you’re right, leadership is difficult, however we must challenge this idea that children's services staff are not good leaders. When we look around and take note of the leaders represented in media, you quickly become aware that leadership representations are dominated mainly of men who are middle aged, wealthy and belong to the dominant culture. As such, we have very limited representation of leadership that relate directly to children's services. However, if we pause for a moment and think about particular attributes in other leaders around us, we can begin to select one or two skills that these people may have which relate to our work and which would help strengthen our role as educators.
- 🌈 **‘Men are better and more natural than women at leading people’** – this is a common misconception, in part, because many of the effective female leaders in the world often do not have equal visibility as men do. Females and men share very similar leadership skills which make them dynamic and inspirational.





## Transformational Leadership

Leadership is an important skill for anyone who works in children's services to have. It is also particularly important to those in positions of influence such as centre directors. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985, 1990) identified two common types of leadership. These included transactional and transformative leadership.

Transaction leadership has the following characteristics:

-  Exchange between the superior and subordinate
-  Each party receives something of value
-  However, the transaction does not bind people together to pursue a higher purpose.





Transformative leadership has the following characteristics:

-  No exchange of "commodities" between superior and subordinate
-  Operates out of deeply held values eg. Justice & integrity
-  By expressing these values, leaders unite their followers and change their followers' goals and beliefs
-  Results in achievement in higher levels of performance.




Furthermore, the literature on leadership suggests that effective leaders who adopt a transformative leadership approach share particular commonalities.

## Why Bother with Transformational Leadership?

These commonalities include:






-  **Charisma** - providing vision and sense of mission, instilling pride in the group and gaining trust and respect
-  **Inspiration** - leaders inspire followers to accomplish great feats
-  **Intellectual stimulation** - promoting intelligence, logical thinking and problem solving
-  **Individual consideration** - pay attention to individual differences among subordinates.

It has been suggested that transformational leadership is:

-  Positively correlated to leader effectiveness ratings, leader and follower satisfaction, support for innovation and overall organisational performance
-  Associated with employee commitment to the organisation and trust in the leader
-  Linked to performance, effort and satisfaction rises above that which results from transactional leadership.

In addition a recent study by Stashevsky & Koslowsky (2006) demonstrated that transformational leadership is associated with higher levels of team cohesiveness. With a sound research base supporting the need for a shift in thinking with relation to leadership, how does one begin to make such changes.

Here are some useful questions to consider at a personal level:

-  What strengths do I have in relation to leading others?
-  What leaderships skills do I have/I admired in others/I have come in contact with?
-  How would others define my ability to relate to them?
-  Have I inspired others to achieve beyond their expectations?
-  How can I become persuasive in a positive way?

Here are some useful questions to consider at an organisational level:

- 🎨 What challenges are we facing as an organisation and what leadership skills would be helpful to assist us work through these challenges?
- 🎨 Where do we aspire to be in 2 years time, and what leadership skills should we enhance in order to achieve these organisational goals?
- 🎨 What skills do we have within the organisation that remain untapped or unrecognised?

Transforming one's leadership is no easy task, but take comfort, we are not born leaders. Good leaders work hard and think innovatively about how to inspire, motivate and lead those around them. The first step in becoming a more effective leader is to have clear in your head the kind of leader you want to be, to tap into your hidden strengths, and to expect success in yourself.

**“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success.”**

Henry Ford

### Further Reading

- 🎨 Bloch, S & Whiteley, P. (2003).
- 🎨 [Complete Leadership: a practical guide for developing your leadership talents.](#) Harlow:UK. Pearson Education Limited.
- 🎨 Bass, Bernard (1990).
- 🎨 [From transactional to transformational leadership: learning to share the vision.](#) *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 18, Issue 3, Winter, 1990, 19-31.
- 🎨 Kouzes, James M. & Posner, Barry Z. (1987).
- 🎨 [The Leadership Challenge.](#) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- 🎨 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leadership> - for an overview of leadership theories

*This paper is adapted from an article that appeared in a Child Australia (WA) publication written by Semann & Slattery.*

*Prepared by Semann & Slattery for Contact Inc on behalf of Children's Services Central.*

**Program for Isolated Children, Families and Communities**

