

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: ON THE CUTTING EDGE

James Campbell Quick
*The University of Texas at Arlington
and NelsonQuick Group*

Debra L. Nelson
*Oklahoma State University
and NelsonQuick Group*

This special issue on leadership development contains six articles that bring cutting edge science and practice in leadership to consulting psychologists working in organizations. The purpose is to focus on leadership development from diverse perspectives, thus educating us all. The articles are authored by a range of academic researchers and psychological practitioners with the aims of being both practical and educational to consulting psychologists, while avoiding a prescriptive or “cookie-cutter” approaches. The special issue is directed toward thoughtful consulting psychologists and students of consulting psychology who may draw on cutting edge knowledge, science, and practice while adapting, tailoring, and applying the content in these papers in the service of clients or in the service of advancing their own knowledge and mastery of our field.

Keywords: character, leadership, leadership development

The study and practice of leadership has grown up in the broad context of organizational psychology and organizational behavior over the past 70 years, dating to Ronald Lippitt’s dissertation research in 1939 at the University of Michigan (Nelson & Quick, 2009). Bass and Stogdill (1990) and Yukl (2005) provided masterful reviews of the breadth and depth of the field of leadership studies, which continues to have enduring romance for many (Jackson, 2005). A contemporary focus on leadership and health is reflected in the extension of the Happy-Productive Worker hypothesis to include healthy (Happy-Healthy-Productive) (Quick & Quick, 2004; Wright & Cropanzano, 2004) and the examination of authentic leadership as a pathway to positive health (Macik-Frey, Quick, & Cooper, in press).

James Campbell Quick, Goolsby Leadership Academy, The University of Texas at Arlington, and NelsonQuick Group, Dallas, Texas; Debra L. Nelson, Oklahoma State University and NelsonQuick Group, Dallas, Texas.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to James Campbell Quick, Goolsby Leadership Academy, UT Arlington, Box 19377, Arlington, TX 76019. E-mail: jquick@uta.edu

Common Ground, Common Focus, Diverse Perspectives

Consistent with the breadth and depth of the field of leadership studies and practice, this special issue offers diverse theoretical perspectives or modes of practice, in contrast to one single unifying theory or practice. The strength of this set of articles is their diversity and variance. Jago (1982) provided one excellent typology for considering the diversity of leadership theories. The common focus in the issue articles is on leadership development. How best can leaders be helped to grow and become more competent? What are the pathways to fully developed and mature leadership? How do we select the best and see their success over time? These are some of the many questions on leadership development that dominate our field of science and practice. To facilitate achieving integration and completeness within this more narrowly defined subset of the broader field of leadership, Riggio (2008) provides an integrative capstone article that both reviews the five original contributions and provides an independent assessment of the current state of leadership development, offering a view of the future. This introductory article and his concluding article aim to show how the contributions in the issue form a complementary range of perspectives that collectively shed light on the process of leadership development.

Diverse Perspectives on Leadership and Development

The articles in this special issue that follow offer a variety and range of conceptual-theoretical to empirical and clinical contributions to our understanding of leadership development. Each, however, is either grounded in the practice of leadership in applied settings or has been refined and tested in practice through a range of applied settings. Our own experience is anchored in 25 years of research and practice with executive leaders in a wide range of industries, in a broad understanding of the field of leadership (Nelson & Quick, 2009), and our foundational work with the Goolsby Leadership Academy (Macik-Frey, Quick, & Cooper, 2007) at The University of Texas at Arlington. Our breakthrough insight into the paradox of successful executives led to our continuing interest in leaders and leadership, especially senior executives (Nelson, Quick, & Quick, 1989). From that curiosity and interest we have come to appreciate the breadth and diverse contributions of others within our field.

In his article in this issue, Boyatzis (2008) presents a theory of leadership development that leads to results at the individual level and explains the multilevel causality needed for sustainable development. Once concepts from complexity theory are applied, it then becomes possible to explain sustainable change at all levels of human and social organization, not just leadership development. In addition to development of leadership as the focus of the change effort, leadership is examined as a critical component providing communication of thoughts and feelings across the multiple levels involved in any sustainable change. Three features of complex systems and complexity theory he discusses are: (1) nonlinear and discontinuous dynamic systems, including tipping points and catastrophic change; (2) self-organizing into patterns of equilibrium or disequilibrium; and (3) multileveledness and the interaction among these levels through leadership and reference groups.

Wasylyshyn (2008) is a creative executive coach with Fortune 500 executives, here using poetry to capture deeper understanding of the leaders with whom she works. Her contribution in this special issue offers case study vignettes of executives in poetic

form highlighting the frequent emergence of deeper personal issues or dominant behaviors in consultative work with senior executives. Consulting psychologists, especially those using psychologically informed models of consultation, can assist business executives in addressing these issues as they relate to their effectiveness as leaders. Methodological factors and metathemes of a particular insight-driven consultation model are presented, as well as a typology descriptive of executives who have participated in this approach to leadership development. Her contribution reflects the artistic dimension of leadership development.

Avolio and Hannah (2008) address one of the most commonly asked questions in the field of leadership studies and practice: Can leadership be developed above and beyond what is inherent in an individual? This is the "born versus made" issue. If the answer is 'yes,' then: How do we accelerate such development? This paper addresses these questions through several key topics. The authors examine the type of positive leadership associated with leaders described by others as being authentic; review evidence related to heritability versus life experiences in contributing to leadership emergence; discuss the assessment of a person's readiness to engage and succeed in leadership development; examine what is known about various forms of leadership interventions; and provide concrete suggestions for exploring specific types of interventions that can best accelerate genuine leadership development. The article addresses practical implications for developing leadership faster, with higher quality and greater impact.

Hopkins, O'Neil, Passarelli, and Bilimoria (2008) describe what is known and what is yet to be known about effective leadership development for women. Based on the challenges experienced by women in advancing to corporate leadership positions and differences between women and men in their developmental paths and preferences, they make the case for why leadership development needs to be unique and different for women than for men. Drawing on the literatures in management education, gender studies, and psychology, the authors describe leading and emerging practices of leadership development with a particular focus on women's needs, including training and education, mentoring, executive coaching, and women's networks. The article concludes with suggestions for future research on and practice of leadership development for women.

Thompson, Grahek, Phillips, and Faye (2008) present a three-dimensional performance model of leadership based on the capacity to lead, the commitment to lead, and the character to lead. Within each of the three dimensions, between three and five factors are identified that support the dimensions. These include a range of factors such as communication, influence, integrity, courage, people, and relationships. The article traces the derivation of the model from existing research and professional practice. The applications of the model are examined in the assessment process and select case studies that bear upon the validity and reliability of the model.

Riggio (2008) brings integration and synthesis to the issue, in part through his summarization of the common themes that he sees within the five original contributions. However, this article is more than a summary of the articles in the special issue. His value added is offering an integrated model or framework to guide leadership development efforts, thus making an independent contribution to the body of work. Further, he places emphasis on assessment of leadership development programs. Finally, he turns an eye to the future as a way of conjecturing on trends in both research and practice. Knowing and doing go hand-in-glove for Riggio as they should for all good scientific practitioners.

Consequences for Consulting and Leadership

We focus on leadership development from multiple and diverse perspectives across the articles with this special issue. From a process point of view, this special issue has aimed to educate all of us. Good education aims at bringing out the potential within the person or the system in contrast to attempting to put something into the person or system, which is the task of training. Thus, education stands in contrast to training, the latter of which aims to develop within a person or a system specified skills and abilities. The consequences of the special issue for consulting are to encourage new ideas and innovations among consulting psychologists who takes what is offered here and use it as a springboard to practice and application within their own consulting practices. Rather than offering sets of checklists as to what should be done in practice, we aim to stimulate creative thought within each psychologist's own context and practice. We encourage the reader to think of the theories, practices, and perspectives offered here as tools within the larger framework of leadership development. For many, the ultimate outcome is the high impact leader (Avolio & Luthans, 2006).

The consequences of the special issue in a different direction are to keep the leading edge of our knowledge and science active. For example, leadership and health have been recently connected in the theory and research of some, as in the case of the Goolsby Leadership Academy (cf., Macik-Frey, Quick, & Cooper, 2007). Another domain of advancement in leadership concerns ethics, character, personal integrity, and the virtuous organization (Cooper, Quick, Quick, & Gavin; Gavin & Mason, 2004). Virtue begins, like so many things in organizations, at the top and therefore ethical leadership becomes a cutting edge issue. President Rebecca Chopp at Colgate University and former Howard Hughes Corporation CEO John Goolsby have each taken on ethics and ethical leadership as a signature issue in education and practice (Quick, Cooper, Gavin, & Quick, 2008). In President Chopp's case, she is cultivating ethical leadership at the foundational level with undergraduate students. In Mr. Goolsby's case, he ensures that organizations on whose Board he serves as a Director have ethical policies and guidelines in place for all concerned. New theory, new research, and new ideas should lead into applied practice with the caveat that all of these may not work. The exchange between theory and practice should be such that each informs and feeds back to the other so that we are advancing both sound research and useful practice.

References

- Avolio, B. J., & Hannah, S. T. (2008). Developmental readiness: Accelerating leader development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *60*, 331–347.
- Avolio, B. J., & Luthans, F. (2006). *The high impact leader*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bass, B. M., & Stogdill, R. M. (1990). *Bass & Stogdill's handbook of leadership*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2005). *Resonant leadership*. Boston: Harvard Business School.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (2008). Leadership development from a complexity perspective. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *60*, 298–313.
- Cooper, C. L., Quick, J. C., Quick, J. D., & Gavin, J. H. (2006). Strength of character: Exceptional leadership in a crisis. In R. Burke & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Inspiring leaders* (pp. 272–95). London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis.
- Gavin, J. H., & Mason, R. O. (2004). The virtuous organization: The value of happiness in the workplace. *Organizational Dynamics*, *33*, 379–392.
- Hopkins, M. M., O'Neil, D. A., Passarelli, A., & Bilimoria, D. (2008). Women's leadership

- development: Strategies for women in organizations. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60, 348–365.
- Jackson, B. (2005). The enduring romance of leadership studies. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42, 1311–1324.
- Jago, A. G. (1982). Leadership perspectives in theory and research. *Management Science*, 28, 315–336.
- Macik-Frey, M., Quick, J. C., & Cooper, C. L. (2007). Managerial dimensions of organizational health: The healthy leader at work. *Journal of Management Studies*, 44, 189–205.
- Macik-Frey, M., Quick, J. C., & Cooper, C. L. (in press). Authentic leadership as a pathway to positive health. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.
- Nelson, D. L., & Quick, J. C. (2009). *Organizational behavior: Science, the real world, and you, Sixth Edition*. Macon, OH: South-Western/Cengage Learning.
- Nelson, D. L., Quick, J. C., & Quick, J. D. (1989). Corporate warfare: Preventing combat stress and battle fatigue. *Organizational Dynamics*, 18, 65–79.
- Quick, J. C., Cooper, C. L., - , J. H., & Quick, J. D. (2008). *Managing executive health*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Quick, J. C., & Quick, J. D. (2004). Healthy, happy, productive work: A leadership challenge. *Organizational Dynamics*, 33, 329–337.
- Riggio, R. E. (2008). Leadership development: The current state and future expectations. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60, 383–392.
- Thompson, A. D., Grahek, M., Phillips, R. E., & Faye, C. L. (2008). Searching for worthy leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60, 366–382.
- Wasylyshyn, K. (2008). Behind the door: Leader vignettes in poetic form. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 60, 314–330.
- Wright, T. A., & Cropanzano, R. (2004). The role of psychological well-being in job performance: A fresh look at an age-old quest. *Organizational Dynamics*, 33, 338–351.
- Yukl, G. A. (2005). *Leadership in organizations, Sixth Edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.