

# Leadership in changing times

**Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse  
2002**

# Leadership in Changing Times

## Introduction

Times of rapid change demand new patterns of leadership. This resource focuses on the concept of SHARED LEADERSHIP - guiding change, working with resistance and mobilizing partners to build capacity - the type of leadership that has always been important for the work of health promotion and community development.

We all feel the impact of leadership. We may be in awe of leadership. We may oppose leadership. But we are always aware of its presence. And yet, leadership is difficult to describe. Clearly the traditional idea of leadership - a few designated people determining the actions of others - is seldom a comfortable fit for the work of supporting health and social development in communities. Upheaval and organizational changes in the 80s and 90s led to the need for different ways of leading so that people can work together more fully as part of a larger whole rather than in separate sectors. We need more than just a designated few to create solutions and keep our work going.

This resource looks at leadership that resides in relationships rather than in one person. We realize that many readers currently hold recognized leadership positions, (e.g., community leaders, directors of boards, elected officials, managers), whereas others are being called upon to show more leadership. And still others may be able to influence their organizations in ways that are not yet understood as leadership. We offer encouragement, suggestions and resources to support new and effective ways of leading.

## The Paradoxes of Leadership

Leadership is tied to power, and we each have an automatic emotional response to power. We are predisposed to these responses by experience and socialization about rank, boundary and position in our relationships, communities and organizations.

Power, and the rank and authority that accompany it, creates barriers between those who make decisions and those who carry them out. On the other hand, how can there be leadership without authority? But we often resist if we feel that leadership takes away our control. At the same time, we often demand good leadership, or we have a desire for someone to be accountable for decisions and events. In our work, it is reasonable to expect leaders to use their authority appropriately to make things happen, but not at the cost of subordinating people into rigid structures.

The ultimate paradox for traditional approaches to leadership is that they are ineffective under our current circumstances. Our organizations and communities are experiencing the pressures of change through technology, global economies, shifting values, and constrained social and economic resources. Our communities are more diverse and have more education and access to information than ever before. And the problems they face - the situations addressed by health promotion and community development - are increasingly complex.

Traditional top-down approaches to leadership cannot support the skills, creativity and commitment needed to adopt changing structures, to develop new relationships, to learn new skills and to address current issues. The linear structures that have organized our systems for so long are inappropriate to meet these pressures. A single person can no longer provide the necessary leadership. Leadership needs to be dispersed throughout the system. Somehow we need to create circumstances in which people can collaborate and support each other, rather than follow directions.

## Exploring Shared Leadership

Amid these changes, there are perspectives - influenced by discoveries in science - that challenge a mechanistic understanding of our world with a social systems view. From these perspectives, we can see that change in one part of an organization means a corresponding change in the whole system, which suggests that leadership has to be available throughout that system.

In her book "The Web of Inclusion," Sally Helgesen calls for a rethinking of how we structure our organizations. She describes an interrelated structure: the "web" where positional leaders work from the centre and reach out rather than down. The design reflects organic, rather than mechanical, principles and allows for unpredictability. For example, teams can form as needs arise and disband when the work is accomplished.

Peter Senge has also written about different ways of leading. He defines leaders as "people who walk ahead; people who are genuinely committed to deep change in themselves and in their organizations and who demonstrate their commitment through their actions." Senge argues that leaders come from many places within an organization. In particular, he refers to the "internal networkers" who have no positional authority, but have influence because they move freely throughout the organization. They understand informal networks through which information moves, and they connect and coordinate people and processes. He suggests that there is a quiet kind of leadership that is not often acknowledged. If we were to value the influence that comes from connections and inclusion, we would be able to support and acknowledge this different kind of leadership-where people lead without a need to control.

## **Functions of Shared Leadership**

Shared leadership directs; it does not dictate. Within shared leadership, people approach problems in collaborative ways, engaging each other in defining the work to be done, facilitating interaction and sustaining action so that goals can be realized. People come to focus on the work itself rather than on who has authority to do it.

When we consider some of the functions of shared leadership, it is not surprising that this type of leadership works for health promotion and social change initiatives among diverse groups of people. Shared leadership's functions include:

- Creating a vision and sense of community
- Fostering commitment rather than demanding compliance
- Integrating diverse views through skilful dialogue
- Helping others exert their influence
- Facilitating, energizing, sustaining
- Leading by example, providing a role model

The elements of shared leadership are not new, but they have not always been part of the dominant mode of thinking, acting and organizing. If we can move from an idea of leadership as one person in control to that of seeing our own roles and accountability for the work, we begin to change the dynamics of traditional leadership. Can we help each other to operate fully as part of the larger whole? Can we work with others so they can influence problems and solutions?

People in designated leadership positions need to find different ways to be accountable without acting to control others. These individuals need to understand their own strengths and weaknesses in order to feel comfortable learning from others, rather than always needing to know the answers. Ideally, these leaders draw on the leadership skills throughout the system while creating conditions that allow others to see their own roles in leadership. Such conditions mean moving from where only a few people have authority to more open structures where information, relationships and connections are fluid. We bring energy and commitment to our work if we feel valued and included with a shared sense of ownership. And we are more able to support activities that we help to create. This interactive process of leadership holds more promise for the transformation of our work in changing organizations than do the top-down patterns of traditional leadership.

## **Perils of Shared Leadership**

Can we be both leader and follower? When do we influence through our leadership? Which functions of leadership are needed at which times and in what situations?

The concept of shared leadership does raise anxiety as we try to shed old images and practices and imagine everyone as a leader. There are such different appreciations of power, control and/or authority among us that we begin to wonder where direction will come from if more people actually take on responsibility.

Can we really distribute power throughout our organization so that people closer to the work can make decisions and feel ownership? How do we support each other in our leadership rather than compete? How do we design a context to bring out the best in each of us?

## **Toward Shared Leadership**

Building capacity for shared leadership requires resocialization, which is a slow process that we cannot force. But we can try to progress toward something different from familiar forms of leadership using a number of guiding principles.

- Trust is essential and it has to be nurtured. For example, when considering something new, ask, "Will this build trust or take it away?"
- We need to be explicit about the rules of decision-making and these rules need to be known and used by everyone. Conflicts still arise. Conflict resolution within shared leadership requires patience, skilled dialogue and mediation.
- We need to be aware that, even with less authoritative structures, various kinds of power still emerge. As organizations change and develop, different patterns of leadership are required. Some situations demand leadership that takes charge and instructs to help a team form around a project.

Even within command-and-control structures, where many feel that there is very little possibility of shared leadership, we may still be able to find ways to act that reflect a different pattern of leadership. For example, within a team or unit, perhaps we can create open communication within our own sphere of work, even if the larger organization closes off access to information.

We come back to the idea of leadership as existing in relationships. If we emphasize connections that help more people to define the work, we may be able to reinforce a different view of leadership. To progress toward shared leadership, we need to pay attention to patterns of change in our organizations at the same time as we become more aware of our own capacities for leadership. The following resources highlight different patterns of leadership in organizations and communities.

## **Resources**

### **Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference**

David D. Chrislip & Carl E. Larson, 1994

**Price:** \$48.50

**Ordering Information**

Tel: (416) 236-4433

Fax: (416) 236-4447

E-mail: [canada@wiley.com](mailto:canada@wiley.com)

**Publisher**

[John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd.](http://www.johnwiley.com)

22 Worcester Road

Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 1L1

This book draws on the research of successful community collaborations to explain specific leadership strategies. The authors suggest that citizens from anywhere in the

community can become catalysts for bringing stakeholders together. The following challenges are addressed:

- How to deal with complex issues.
- How to engage frustrated and angry citizens.
- How to generate the civic will to break through legislative and bureaucratic gridlocks.

As well, the authors suggest that collaborative leadership includes the abilities to inspire commitment and action, lead as a peer problem-solver, build broad-based involvement, and sustain hope and participation.

### **Developing Local Leaders: Results of a Structured Learning Experience**

Elizabeth B. Bolton, 1991  
Reference Journal of the Community Development Society, 1991 22 (1): 119-143  
**Price:** \$12.00 US for reprints  
**Ordering Information**  
Tel: (614) 221-1900, extension 217  
Fax: (614) 221-1989  
**Publisher**  
[Community Development Society](#)  
17 S High Street, Suite 200  
Columbus, OH 43215

This study reports on the outcomes of a leadership program designed to develop a pool of local leaders in voluntary associations who could identify and resolve local and regional issues. The study measured statistically significant gains in knowledge, but participants showed only a limited improvement in their capability and self-confidence to use leadership skills in different community contexts. The leadership program modules were designed to develop goal identification and attainment, communication skills, group process skills and citizen involvement.

### **Grassroots and Nonprofit Leadership: A Guide for Organizations in Changing Times**

Berit Lakey, George Lakey, Rod Napier & Janice Robinson, 1995  
**Price:** \$19.95 (paperback)  
**Ordering Information**  
Tel: 800-663-5714  
Fax: 800-565-3770  
**Publisher**  
New Society Publishers  
P.O. Box 189  
Gabriola Island, BC  
Canada, V0R 1X0  
Tel: (250) 247-9737  
Fax: (250) 247-7471  
E-mail: [info@newsociety](mailto:info@newsociety)  
[Distributor Raincoast Books](#)  
9050 Shaughnessy Street  
Vancouver, BC V6P 6E5

This resource is for organizations that work for social change. It is described as instructive, inspiring and informative for non-profit, community-based organizations as they face the challenge of increased service and support demands while sources of funding and sustainability shrink. The book features suggestions for dealing with diversity, inactive or overactive boards of directors, staff burnout, outreach, power struggles and rapid turnover.

## **Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World**

Margaret J. Wheatley, Revised and expanded, 1999

**Price:** \$29.95

**Ordering Information**

Tel: 800-929-2929

Fax: 802-864-7626

**Publisher**

[Berrett-Koehler](#)

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 650

San Francisco, CA 94104

Tel: (415) 288-0260

Fax: (415) 362-2512

E-mail: [bkpub@bkpub.com](mailto:bkpub@bkpub.com)

The author shows how discoveries in quantum physics, chaos theory and biology are overturning scientific models that have dominated for centuries. Using the new science, Margaret Wheatley offers different ways of understanding leadership and organizations.

## **Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence**

Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatz & Annie McKee, 2002

**Price:** \$42.95

**Ordering Information**

Tel: 800-988-0886

Fax: (617) 783-7555 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: [corpcustserv@hbsp.harvard.edu](mailto:corpcustserv@hbsp.harvard.edu)

**Publisher**

[Harvard Business School Publishing](#)

Customer Service

60 Harvard Way

Boston, MA 02163

Daniel Goleman, co-director of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations (Rutgers University), first explored the concept of emotional intelligence (EI). He contends that our EI, that is, how we handle ourselves and our relationships determines life success more than intelligence. From their observations and with recent research on brain functioning and chemistry, he joins with the authors of this current book to identify the links between organizational success or failure and "primal leadership". Combined with an analysis of organizations, the authors provide research and practical advice for assessing, developing and sustaining personal EI competencies over time.

## **Rethinking Leadership in the Learning Organization**

Peter M. Senge

Reference The Systems Thinker, Feb 1996 7 (1): 1-7

**Ordering Information**

Tel: 800-272-0945 / 802-862-0095

Fax: 802-864-7626

Email: [orders@pegasuscom.com](mailto:orders@pegasuscom.com)

**Publisher**

Pegasus Communications

PO Box 2241

Williston, VT 05495

Email: [customerservice@pegasuscom.com](mailto:customerservice@pegasuscom.com)

This publication explores the theory and practice of the learning organization. Senge writes "Hierarchical authority is much more effective at securing compliance than it is in fostering genuine commitment." This article identifies three types of leaders who develop new understandings, new skills and new capabilities and yet who come from many parts of an organization. Senge refers to "local line leaders" who are often focussed on their particular unit or department, "executive leaders" who provide support and develop infrastructures so others can lead, and "internal networkers" who may have no positional authority, but influence through the strength of their convictions and clarity of ideas and their ability to be highly accessible to many parts of the organization.

### **Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest**

Peter Block, 1993 (paperback, 1996)

**Price:** \$31.95

[Ordering Information](#)

Tel: 800-929-2929

Fax: 802-864-7626

**Publisher**

[Berrett-Koehler](#)

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 650

San Francisco, CA 94104

Tel: (415) 288-0260

Fax: (415) 362-2512

E-mail: [bkpub@bkpub.com](mailto:bkpub@bkpub.com)

This book challenges us to rethink our fundamental assumptions about organizations. It provides practical ways of replacing patriarchal systems with ones built on a foundation of shared commitments of service. The author describes "stewardship" as allowing people to define purpose, to engage in dialogue with others and to share accountability. Stewardship is "to honour what has been given to us, to use power with a sense of grace, and to pursue purposes that transcend short-term self-interest."

### **Ten Basic Principles of Leadership in Community Development Organizations**

Jerry W. Robinson Jr.

Reference Journal of the Community Development Society, 1994 25(1): 44-48

**Price:** \$12.00 US for reprints

**Ordering Information**

Tel: (614) 221-1900, extension 217

Fax: (614) 221-1989

**Publisher**

[Community Development Society](#)

17 S High Street, Suite 200

Columbus, OH 43215

Jerry Robinson describes ten theoretical principles of leadership for community and economic development organizations. He indicates that the principles do not stand alone, but are practised in relation to each other.

### **The Drama Of Leadership**

Patricia Pitcher, 1997

**Price:** \$27.50 US

**Ordering Information**

Tel: (416) 236-4433

Fax: (416) 236-4447

E-mail: [canada@wiley.com](mailto:canada@wiley.com)

**Publisher**

[John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd.](#)

22 Worcester Road

Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 1L1

Patricia Pitcher's 8-year study suggests that we have been rooted in a misunderstanding of what leading is all about. Pitcher identifies three types of leaders: artists (people-oriented, intuitive, visionary), craftsmen (humane, wise) and technocrats (detail-oriented, rigid, methodical). She describes the power struggles and the drama among them. She writes "leading is all about the interaction of a leader with timing and context." Patricia Pitcher is Professor of Leadership and Dean of the doctoral program in Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales, Montreal.

### **The Female Advantage: Women's Way of Leadership**

Sally Helgesen, 1995

**Price:** \$26.95

**Publisher and Ordering Information**

Random House of Canada (Currency/Doubleday)

Random House books are available wherever books are sold. They do not sell books directly to consumers.

A classic study of female leaders, Helgesen's book shows how men and women approach work in fundamentally different ways. She gives detailed accounts of four successful women business leaders, examining how they foster creativity, cooperation and intuitive decision-making. The author's research chronicles how experiences as women contribute to their leadership styles. Helgesen used a diary study approach to follow women executives through the course of their days.

### **The Heart Aroused: Poetry and The Preservation of the Soul in Corporate America**

David Whyte, 1994

**Price:** \$22.95

**Publisher and Ordering Information**

Random House of Canada (Currency/Doubleday)

Random House books are available wherever books are sold. They do not sell books directly to consumers.

David Whyte is a poet from England who consults with corporate clients by clarifying personal, not organizational, difficulties at work. He uses poetry and story to locate the creative human soul in the workplace. He suggests that if organizations are demanding more creativity, commitment and innovation from employees, they must also allow them to bring their human souls, with all of their struggles, into the organization.

### **The Tao of Personal Leadership**

Diane Dreher, 1996

**Price:** \$22.00

**Publisher and Ordering Information**

Harper Business, Division of Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

Harper Collins does not sell books directly to consumers, but will link you to booksellers through their [website](#).

Each chapter of Dreher's book starts with the leadership principles of the Tao Te Ching to help the reader understand patterns of change. The author uses questions, personal exercises and examples of innovative leadership. She provides approaches to leadership through community- building, renewal and conflict resolution, and reflects on how we can all become leaders.

### **The Web of Inclusion**

Sally Helgesen, 1995

**Price:** \$39.95

**Publisher and Ordering Information**

Random House of Canada (Currency Doubleday)

Random House books are available wherever books are sold. They do not sell books directly to consumers.

Sally Helgesen profiles five organizations that have adopted a management and leadership approach she calls the "web of inclusion." It is a structure and an ever-evolving process, constantly changing to meet demands of the post-industrial economy. Ideas come from all employees and a premium is placed on flexibility. She suggests that the model of the "web" uses open communication across levels and redistributes power.

### **Thinking in the Future Tense: Leadership Skills For A New Age**

Jennifer James, 1996

**Price:** \$19.25

**Ordering Information**

Tel: (905) 764-0073 or 1-800-268-3216

Fax: (905) 764-0086 or 1-888-849-8151

E-mail: [info@distican.com](mailto:info@distican.com)

**Publisher**

[Simon & Schuster Canada](#)

35 Fulton Way

Richmond Hill, ON L4B 2N4

Jennifer James is an urban cultural anthropologist who suggests, "The key to the future is the ability to think on the edge of one's culture." She discusses expanding concepts of what it means to be a leader: "Leadership will require new contracts, new civility and ultimately a new intimacy between diverse groups." James describes eight leadership skill areas required to understand change: perspective, pattern recognition, cultural knowledge, flexibility, vision, energy, intelligence and global values.