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Leadership Theories and Styles

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> *The brain can be hired. The heart and soul have to be earned.*
>
> John Christensen, ChartHouse Learning

> *If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.*
>
> Sir Isaac Newton, letter to Robert Hooke, circa 1675

Introduction: Leadership – What Does It All Mean?

Leadership has long been a feature of educational, business, industry, military and medical or health service debate. A plethora of books, journal articles, web pages and papers has resulted offering a wide variety of theories, definitions and perspectives about how to recognise effective leadership, develop better leaders, promote change or innovation and promote more effective organisations. Although the focus of this book is clinical leadership and leadership related to healthcare professionals, it will draw on concepts, definitions and theories of leadership from business, industry, educational and military perspectives. In addition, it will explore leadership related to healthcare and care in the clinical setting to support a better understanding of clinically focused leadership.

This chapter attempts to define leadership. Leadership can be a vexed and convoluted concept and it is commonly seen as linked to theories of management and associated with elevated hierarchical positions and power. This book is not specifically directed at titled leaders, people in authority, managers or senior managers. Indeed, leadership and leaders are considered to be different from management and managers (Zaleznik 1977; Kotter 1990; Stanley 2006, 2011). While it is acknowledged that they are related, for the purposes of this book concepts of management are not explored or considered, although the differences between management and leadership are discussed in Chapter 5.

Many people from a range of different groups have been interested in discovering more about leadership and for a long time the nature of leadership has been extensively researched (Swanwick & McKimm 2011). Chinese and Indian scholars have studied and written about leadership. It is referred to in the Old Testament and numerous mythical stories from civilisations across the globe address the act of leadership. Confucius wrote about leadership and Plato, who lived between 427 and 347 BCE, wrote in *The Republic* about the value of developing leadership characteristics by describing the attributes required to navigate and command a sea vessel (Adair 2002a). In almost any field of endeavour, from leading large corporations or massive armies to leading the editorial committee of a

monthly committee newsletter, a clinical area or the local junior football club, leadership and the experience of being a leader are common themes.

Theories and definitions of leadership abound. Stogdill (1974, p. 7) believes that 'there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have attempted to define the concept'. Northouse (2004, p. 2) also indicates that as soon as 'we try to define leadership, we immediately discover that leadership has many different meanings', while Bennis and Nanus (1985, p. 4) feel that in relation to leadership, 'never have so many laboured so long to say so little'.

Here is a smattering of quotations about leadership to help enhance your insight:

Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.
(Warren G. Bennis, President, University of Cincinnati,
University of Maryland Symposium, 21 January 1988)

The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.
(Kenneth Schatz, Managing by Influence, Prentice-Hall, 1986)

A leader is a dealer in hope.
(Napoleon Bonaparte, 1769–1821, Emperor of France,
Maxims of Napoleon)

I am certainly not one of those who needs to be prodded. In fact, if anything, I am a prod.
(Winston Churchill, 1874–1965, UK Prime Minister, writer and
Lord of the Admiralty, speech in Parliament, 11 November 1942)

Charisma becomes the undoing of leaders. It makes them inflexible, convinced of their own infallibility, unable to change.
(Peter F. Drucker, management consultant and writer,
Wall Street Journal, 6 January 1988)

Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions.
(Harold Geneen, CEO of ITT, Managing, Doubleday, 1984)

The reward of the general is not a bigger tent, but command.
(Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr, 1841–1935,
US Supreme Court Justice, 1917)

The rotting fish begins to stink at the head. (Italian proverb)

When the best leader's work is done the people say, 'We did it ourselves.'
Lao-Tzu, 604–531 BCE, Chinese philosopher and
founder of Taoism, Tao Te Ching)

If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.
(New Testament, Matthew 15:14)

More than knowledge, leaders need character. Values and ethics are vitally important.
(Oscar Arias, former president of Costa Rica, humanitarian, June 2001)

> **Box 2.1 The parable of the blind men and the elephant**
>
> Three blind men were asked to lead an elephant and, in the process, to describe what the elephant might be like by touch alone. The first grasped the trunk and declared that an elephant must be like a giant snake; the second felt the rough hide and said that the elephant must be like a giant warthog; and the third grasped the tusk and said that an elephant must be like an enormous walrus.
>
> The point of the parable is that taking only a part of an elephant cannot lead to a complete understanding of the beast. I have always wondered, though, how these three blind men knew what a snake, a warthog and a walrus felt like in the first place. I guess you can only take a parable so far.

Leadership Defined: The Blind Man's Elephant

An understanding of leadership is central to understanding the experience of clinically focused leaders. As such, it is useful to begin with an exploration of the terms 'leadership' and 'leader'. As the quotations show, defining leadership can be like the parable of the blind men and the elephant, and in many respects the definition offered depends on which part is grasped (Box 2.1).

There is a wide variety of beliefs, definitions and perspectives of leadership, which is a complex process with multiple dimensions (Northouse 2004; Jones & Bennett 2012). Because of this, a number of definitions are explored here to elaborate on the concept of leadership and offer a prelude to understanding clinical leadership. These are taken from a wide range of fields and perspectives and support considerable breadth in the definition of leadership.

Fiedler (1967), who primarily studied military and managerial leadership, felt that the leader has long been considered to be the individual in the group with the task of directing and coordinating the group's activities. Others view leadership from a personality perspective, a power relationship perspective, as an instrument of goal achievement (Bass 1990) or as the process of influencing people to accomplish goals (Grossman & Valiga 2013; Northouse 2004).

Leadership can also be described as achieving things with the support of others (Leigh & Maynard 1995) and Wedderburn-Tate, writing from a nursing perspective, feels that the leader's function is to get others to 'perform at consistently high levels, voluntarily' (1999, p. 107). This is in keeping with President Eisenhower's view that leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it (Stanton, Lemer & Mountford 2010, p. 3). These definitions imply that influence is a factor.

Fiedler (1967) and Dublin (1968) suggest that leadership is more than influence and propose that it is the exercise of authority and the making of decisions. They see the leader as the person who has formal authority (power) and functional capacity over a group. Maxwell (2002), however, supporting Leigh and Maynard (1995) and Wedderburn-Tate (1999), feels that this is going too far and that leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less. Stogdill (1950) also considers that leadership and influence are related, but believes that there may be more than just this. He proposes another view, that leadership is the process of influencing people or the activities of a group to accomplish goals. This perspective brings in the concept of influence and acknowledges that people without formal power can exercise leadership. Leadership is also seen as 'a talent that each of us has and that can be learned, developed and nurtured. Most importantly it is not necessarily tied to a position of authority in an organisation' (Grossman & Valiga 2013, p. 18).

As well as goal setting and influence, leadership is an important element in effecting change (Stogdill 1950). Kotter (1990, p. 40) supports this, indicating that 'leadership is all about coping with change'. However, Bennis and Nanus describe a leader as 'one who commits people to action, who
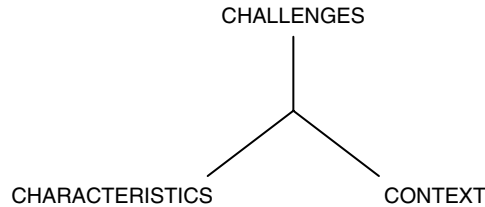
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                          CHALLENGES



               CHARACTERISTICS            CONTEXT
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Figure 2.1 The three domains of leadership. **Challenges** are the critical tasks, problems and issues requiring action **Characteristics** are the qualities, competencies and skills that enable us to contribute to the practice of leadership in challenging situations **Context** is the 'on-site' conditions found in the challenging situation. Source: Pedler, M., Burgoyne, J. & Boydell, T., *A Manager's Guide to Leadership*, © 2004. Reproduced with the kind permission of The McGraw-Hill Companies. All rights reserved.

converts followers into leaders and who converts leaders into agents of change' (1985, p. 3). Lipman, from a business/management perspective, defines leadership as 'the initiation of a new structure or procedure for accomplishing an organisation's goals and objectives' (1964, p. 122).

These views appear to suggest that change is central to leadership and they rest on the assumption that leaders function within an organisation where change, rather than stability, is the goal. Pedler, Burgoyne and Boydell (2004), also from a management perspective, indicate that while leadership includes elements of the leader's character and the context within which the leadership takes place, it focuses on the critical tasks that the leader must perform, the problems and challenges that leaders face. Again, defining leadership by the leader's ability to change or respond to challenges, Figure 2.1 demonstrates these ideas.

Leadership has also been viewed as attending to the meanings and values of the group, rather than just the authority, function, challenges and traits of the leader. Covey (1992) describes what he calls 'principle-centred leadership' and Pondy (1978) similarly proposes that the ability to make activities meaningful and not necessarily to change behaviour, but to give others a sense of understanding of what they are doing, is at the core of leadership. Therefore, the act of leading is about making the meaning of an activity explicit:

> Unlike the supposed individualistic leadership of the past, now leadership is influenced by the impact of the immediate and surrounding context … the contention put forward is that [the] organisational context provides the parameters within which current leadership is contained.
> *(Kakabadse & Kakabadse 1999, p. 2)*

From this perspective it can be argued that the task of the leader is to interpret and clarify the context and thus provide a platform for communicating meaning within the activity.

As a result, leadership becomes more about selecting, synthesising and articulating an appropriate vision for the follower (Bennis, Parikh & Lessem 1995). Greenfield takes this concept of vision further by implying that rather than just clarifying meaning or making the activity meaningful, leadership is about setting meaning, describing leadership as

> a willful act where one person attempts to construct the social world for others … leaders will try to commit others to the values that they themselves believe are good and that organisations are built on the unification of people around values.
>
> *(Greenfield 1986, p. 166)*

Similarly, Bell and Ritchie (1999) and Day et al. (2000), from an education perspective, commonly refer to the 'head teacher' as the person within a school who is responsible for 'establishing core characteristics' (Bell & Ritchie 1999, p. 24), for committing others to their values and for setting the overall aims for the school.

However, no one definition can be considered wholly right or wrong and there are a multitude of others that have not been outlined here. Therefore, adding to the already numerous definitions may seem irresponsible, although I offer a definition nonetheless, as a way of identifying how leadership is understood within the context of this book. This is:

> Leadership is unifying people around values and then constructing the social world for others around those values and helping people get through change.

Like the blind men describing an elephant, there is considerable overlap and blurring at the edges of these varied perspectives, and perhaps an eclectic view of leadership may prove most beneficial, with Duke suggesting that 'leadership seems to be a gestalt phenomenon; greater than the sum of its parts' (1986, p. 10).

No One Way

So leadership has been studied in many fields of endeavour and by many scholars and individuals for a very long time. Rather than this resulting in a clear and unequivocal understanding, many different and sometimes opposing definitions have evolved and still exist (Swanwick & McKimm 2011; Jones & Bennett 2012; Rigolosi 2013). These varied definitions could easily lead to confusion or unsettle our concept of leadership. Instead, I feel that they function like the dishes at a banquet, each individual dish adding to the glory of the collective whole and each offering something that helps explain what leadership is and how leadership can be understood.

However, definitions alone offer only a taste of the meaning of leadership. As with the blind men in their understanding of the elephant, a wider view may be more helpful. To this end, this chapter now explores the theoretical perspectives of leadership and brings a greater array of dishes to the banquet.

Leadership Theories and Styles

In order to clarify information about leadership and leaders, it is both prudent to consider the theories of leadership that are prominent in the literature, and important to explore the concepts, theories and styles of leadership that have previously been developed and described. They are not proposed as a linear progression, although the later theories have grown from, or are at least a reaction to, earlier ones. The following pages offer only an introduction to leadership theories, but it is hoped that they set the stage for a consideration of congruent leadership in Chapter 4 and for clinical leadership in the overall context of this book.

The Great Man Theory: Born to Lead?

The 'great man theory' (Galton 1869) is one of the earliest theories of leadership. It suggests that leadership is a matter of birth, with the characteristics of leadership being inherited or, as Man (2010)

suggests, assigned by divine decree. Bennis and Nanus explain this theory by saying that 'those of the right breed could lead; all others must be led' (1985, p. 5).

Therefore, individuals born into 'great' families were considered to be infused with the skills and characteristics of a leader, and indeed some individuals born into the 'right' family did accomplish great things and changed the course of human history. However, the idea that leaders are born and not made lost credibility after a number of significant changes in the fabric of western society, (Grossman & Valiga 2013). The French and Russian Revolutions and World War I are examples of the types of changes that led people to see that leaders could come from any stratum of society. As such, the great man theory, dominated by an old leadership culture, literally died out as those who supported it were replaced by a new breed of self-styled leaders.

The Big Bang Theory: From Great Events, Great People Come

The 'big bang theory' proposes that calamitous circumstances provide the elements essential for the creation of leaders. Leaders, it suggests, are created by the great events that affect their lives (Grossman & Valiga 2013). Again, the revolutions of the 19th and 20th centuries and World War I are cited as examples of major calamitous circumstances, but this type of event could as easily be a local disaster (such as the floods in Yorkshire in 2015 and fires in the state of Victoria in 2009 and 2015), a family crisis or a personal catastrophe. Bennis and Nanus explain this by saying that 'great events made leaders of otherwise ordinary people' (1985, p. 5), suggesting that it is the situation and the followers that combine to create the leader. The lives of a number of great political and military leaders might be used to substantiate this theory of leadership, with the life and presidency of Abraham Lincoln offering a sound example of a poor person's rise to prominence during the dramatic events of mid-18th-century America (McPherson 1988; Carwardine 2003; Gallagher et al. 2003). The rise to power of Napoleon Bonaparte following the after-effects of the French Revolution are another. The theory that otherwise ordinary people become great leaders because of great events may be true for some leaders, but, as with Lincoln and Bonaparte, much of the leader's success may be attributable to their hard work and knowledge in preparation for the great events that are common features of many people's lives.

From an Australian standpoint the notorious career of the bushranger Ned Kelly could be viewed from the perspective of the big bang theory. A series of calamitous personal and family events during Ned's early life resulted in his decision to take up a life of crime, and ultimately he led a small group of outlaws who committed a series of robberies and murders across the countryside of northern Victoria. The theory argues that without the events that sparked Ned's behaviour and reactions, he is unlikely to have risen to prominence in his chosen field and become Australia's most notorious bushranger.

Trait Theory: The Man, not the Game

The 'trait theory' of leadership rests on the assumption that the individual is more important than the situation. Therefore, it is proposed that identifying distinguishing characteristics of successful leaders will give clues about leadership (Swanwick & McKimm 2011; Grossman & Valiga 2013). Rafferty (1993) and Jones and Bennett (2012) refer to this as the constitutional approach, where part of the assumption is that if great leaders cannot be trained or taught, they can at least be selected, linking this with attributes of the great man theory.

A large number of studies in the early part of the 20th century (Yoder-Wise 2015; Northouse 2004) were initiated to consider the traits of great leaders. However, as Bass (1990) indicates, while a number of traits did seem to correspond with leadership, no qualities were found that were universal to

Table 2.1 Leadership traits.

Stogdill 1948 (cited in Northouse 2004, p. 18)		Mann (1959, p. 253)	
Intelligence	Alertness	Intelligence	Masculinity
Insight	Responsibility	Adjustment	Dominance
Initiative	Persistence	Extroversion	Conservatism
Self-control	Sociability		
Stogdill 1974 (cited in Northouse 2004, p. 18)		**Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991, p. 52)**	
Achievement	Persistence	Drive	Motivation
Insight	Initiative	Integrity	Confidence
Self-confidence	Responsibility	Cognitive ability	Task knowledge
Cooperativeness	Tolerance		
Influence	Sociability		
Smith (1999, p. 6)		**Grossman and Valiga (2013, p. 5)**	
Early loss of a parent		Abundant reserve of energy	
Escape from squalor		Ability to maintain a high level of activity, better education	
First-born child		Superior judgement	
Tall		Decisiveness	
High energy levels		Breadth of general knowledge	
Work long hours		High degree of verbal facility	
Can manage with little sleep		Good interpersonal skills	
Introverted and psychologically on edge		Self-confidence	
Outsiders coming from beyond the group they lead		Creativity	
Enormous self-belief		Above average height and weight	

all leaders. Stogdill (1948), who undertook a major review of universal leadership traits between 1904 and 1947, concluded that no consistent set of traits differentiated leaders from non-leaders in a range of work environments and situations. The traits that he identified in 1948 and again in 1974, as well as others identified by Mann (1959), Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), Smith (1999) and Grossman and Valiga (2013), are listed in Table 2.1.

The descriptive words on these lists indicate that trait theories have evolved and changed with time, but all remain unable to capture any great degree of consistency between the traits identified. Stogdill found in 1948 and again in 1974 that the traits that lead to success may differ according to the situation the leader is in, as well as the personality of the leader. Therefore, the traits themselves could be seen as misleading, although it has been proposed that the leader's characteristics play a critical part in effective leadership (Northouse 2004). It is also suggested that possession of all the traits is an impossible ideal and that there are a considerable number of cases where people who possess a few, or even none, of the principal traits achieve notable success as leaders (Stogdill 1974).

The disadvantage of trait theory is that it does not lead to a comprehensive theory of leadership and it neglects both the impact of the situational context within which the leader operates (Stogdill 1948; Northouse 2004) and the impact of the leader's personality (Mann 1959). Rafferty (1993) also points out that trait theory ignores or under-estimates the degree to which the leader's role could be structured by issues of class, gender or racial inequalities and that it assumes a passive role for the followers.

Trait theory developed as an elaboration of the great man theory and remains central to what Grint (2000) describes as 'the arts of leadership'. However, the investigation and establishment of trait theory developed in line with business and management development in the early 20th century

(Northouse 2004), where it was hoped that once the appropriate qualities and traits were identified, a potential leader could be hired who demonstrated these traits, or who could be supported in acquiring them through study and experience (Bernhard & Walsh 1990). Then, if the appropriate conditions prevailed or could be predicted, appropriate people (who showed the relevant traits) could be selected or trained for the leadership situation.

While it is possible to acquire some (but not all) of the traits, this theory remains divorced from the notion that leadership (in isolation from the traits) could be learnt and, as such, it found limited purchase with the liberated and increasingly educated masses of the western world. Therefore, as community values altered and research about leadership increased, other perspectives of leadership developed (Lett 2002).

Style Theory: It's How You Play the Game

Studies of leadership and management and their relationship to productivity and group behaviour resulted in what are generally called style theories (Handy 1999; Adair 1998; Northouse 2004). Style theories explore how leaders behave, what they do, how they act, as well as how groups respond, with leaders being described as either democratic, paternalistic, laissez-faire, authoritarian and/or dictatorial (Handy 1999; Lett 2002; Northouse 2004; see Table 2.2). As these words were found to have an 'emotive connotation', aspects of style theory are also described as 'structuring and supportive styles' (Handy 1999, p. 101), and much of the literature related to style theory emphasises the benefits or drawbacks of one or other approach to motivating a group (usually of subordinates to the leader).

Early investigations of style theory were undertaken by the Ohio State University, where a Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) was developed and tested in educational, military and industrial settings. Leaders, they concluded, exhibited either *structuring* behaviour, which defined

Table 2.2 Management/leadership styles.

Autocratic: characterised by being highly directive, viewed as having a right to manage.	
Good points: clear objective, single-minded, based on orders, no thinking required.	**Negative points:** diminished autonomy, problem if the vision is false or off, power vacuum if the leader leaves, no debate, no opportunity to experience power before promotion.
Paternalistic: characterised by a caring but overprotective, interfering manager. Manager knows best, may consult, but always decides. High degree of support but no corresponding responsibility or autonomy.	
Good points: followers/employees may feel 'cared for', may foster a sense that they belong or have a team or esprit de corps.	**Negative points:** stifles autonomy. High reliance on the manager/ organisation, even for basic human needs (like some 1970s Japanese companies – when some employees were off sick they felt so lost without their work they were encouraged to come in and spend their time, even if ill, with their colleagues and co-workers).
Democratic: characterised by discussion, debate and shared vision.	
Good points: promotes a shared vision, ownership of outcomes and problems, involvement of the whole team, flatter structure employed.	**Negative points:** can allow the more vocal or more outspoken to dominate; mob may rule and may be wrong. Can lead to ineffective decision making.
Laissez-faire: characterised by an easygoing, non-directive and non-hierarchical approach.	
Good points: promotes autonomy, self-survival, self-direction, individuality, freedom, and self-expression.	**Negative points:** assumes everyone is willing or capable of leadership, or that people are happy to be left to their own devices. This approach can lead to chaos or anarchy.

the work context and role responsibilities of subordinates, or *consideration* behaviour, which focused on building relationships such as trust and respect with subordinates. These studies were elaborated on by the University of Michigan with an approach more focused on the leader's behaviours in relation to the performance of small groups (Northouse 2004). By the 1960s, Blake and Mouton (1964) had developed the 'managerial grid' (now called the leadership grid) as a model to support organisational leadership and management training, by exploring how leaders (managers) could help organisations reach their potential through developing either support for production or concern for people.

The management/leadership grid (Blake & Mouton 1964; Blake & McCanse 1991) can be used to explain how leaders or managers within an organisation function by focusing on the relationship between two factors: concern for people, and concern for production or results.

Concern for people deals with how a manager or leader supports people within an organisation as they try to work towards their goals. This can be achieved by focusing on issues of trust and commitment, motivation, working conditions, fair play and the promotion of strong social support structures (Blake & Mouton 1964). *Concern for results* addresses how the manager/leader achieves various tasks and can include factors such as policies, sales figures, quality targets and other activities and processes concerned with production or the organisation's goals. The original grid was developed as a nine-point scale on which one represents minimum concern and nine represents maximum concern. By plotting the scores from the vertical and horizontal axes, various leadership/management styles could be identified.

The style theory approach to leadership is not designed to instruct leaders in how to behave, but it is useful in supporting leaders (managers) in identifying the major components of their behaviour. However, the theory failed to elaborate on why some leaders were successful in certain situations and not in others.

Different organisations require different styles of management or leadership at different times, depending on their approach, their goals and their stage of development. Many authors use different terms (democratic = participative), but often they end up describing the same thing. It was Kurt Lewin who in 1948 set out the three basic leadership/management styles of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. Since then, other terms have been used and other views expressed. Here are some of them:

- **Supporting:** where leaders pass day-to-day decisions to the follower. The leader facilitates and takes part in decisions, but control is with the follower.
- **Delegating:** leaders are still involved in decisions and problem solving, but control is with the follower. The follower decides when and how the leader will be involved.
- **Directing:** leaders define the roles and tasks of the follower and supervise them closely. Decisions are made by the leader and announced, so communication is largely one way.
- **Coaching:** leaders still define roles and tasks, but seek ideas and suggestions from followers. Decisions remain the leader's prerogative, but communication is much more two way.

The leadership style that individuals use will be based on a combination of their beliefs, values and preferences, as well as the organisational culture and norms, which encourage some styles and discourage others. Examples of these styles are:

- charismatic leadership
- participatory leadership
- situational leadership
- transactional leadership
- transformational leadership
- the quiet leader

Clearly some of these relate to leadership theories, and this is where the matter of styles and theories becomes intertwined. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958) suggest that there are seven leadership styles, Tayeb (1996) claims that there are four styles and Morgan (1986) proposes six styles of leadership (and management). Confused yet? I'd be surprised if you weren't. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) consider that there are six styles – coaching, visionary, affiliative, democratic, pace-setting and commanding – although as you will see from any internet search for "leadership styles", there are many more.

Situational or Contingency Theory: It's about Relationships

To address the failure of style theory and to elaborate on why some leaders are successful in certain situations and not in others, Fiedler (1967) proposed the 'situational' or 'contingency theory' of leadership (Wedderburn-Tate 1999), which was popularised by Hersey and Blanchard in 1988 (Swanwick & McKimm 2011). Here, Fiedler (1967) and others (Tannenbaum & Schmit 1958; Vroom & Yetton 1973; House & Mitchell 1974; Hersey & Blanchard 1988) believed that leadership effectiveness depends on the relationship between the leader's task at hand, the leader's interpersonal skills and the favourableness of the work situation. Fiedler (1967) found – after what has more recently been criticised as limited research (Handy 1999) – that leaders were more effective if the situation within which they were trying to function was more favourable to them or even, surprisingly, less favourable. The three factors (Handy 1999, pp. 103–5) relate to:

- the degree of trust and respect that the followers have for the leader
- the clarity of the objectives to be achieved
- the degree of power in terms of whether the leader could reward or punish the followers or if the leader had clear organisational backing.

From Fiedler's perspective, the key to understanding leadership is to be able to adapt the leadership approach to complement the issue being faced, or to determine the appropriate action based on the people involved and the prevailing situation (Adair 1998). Adair also offers an example of how situational leadership might be applied by describing the actions of a group of survivors following a shipwreck:

> The soldier in the party might take command if natives attacked them, the builder might organize the work of erecting houses and the farmer might direct the labour of growing food … leadership would pass from member to member according to the situation. (1998, p. 15)

Central to Fiedler's (1967) work was the ability to analyse how the leader could use power and influence without losing respect and credibility with the subordinate group. Tannenbaum and Schmit (1958) felt that organisations could help more by either structuring the task, improving the formal power of the leader or changing the composition of the follower group to give the leaders a more favourable climate within which to work. Vroom and Yetton's (1973) decision tree model (Box **2.2**) also recognises the relationship between the leader, the followers and the task at hand, and proposes that there are five types of leadership style to choose from, decided by answering a series of questions.

Criticism of both Vroom and Yetton's decision tree model and Fiedler's situational–contingency model includes that leadership is more complicated than a series of questions and broader than the extent of the relationship between three central factors (Adair 1998). Handy (1999) also feels that even the pleasingly rational decision tree is not complicated enough to fully describe and address the convoluted nature of leadership decision making.

Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi suggest that the development of situational leadership has been in support of the activity of management: that it is used as a 'practical approach to managing and

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Box 2.2 Vroom and Yetton's decision tree model

The leader has five styles to choose from. These are:

AI   You solve the problem or make the decision yourself, using information available to you at the time.
AII You obtain the necessary information from your subordinate(s) then decide on the solution to the problem yourself.
CI   You share the problem with relevant subordinates individually, getting their ideas and suggestions. Then you make the decision.
CII You share the problem with your subordinates in a group, then you make the decision.
GII You share the problem with your subordinates as a group, then together you make the decision.

The seven questions, which could be set out like a decision tree, are:

1) Is one decision likely to be better than another? (if not, go to AI)
2) Does the leader know enough to take it on her or his own? (if not, avoid AI)
3) Is the problem clear and structured? (if not, go to CII or GII)
4) Must the subordinates accept the decision? (if not, then AI and AII are possible)
5) Would they accept your decision? (if not, then GII is preferable)
6) Do subordinates share your goals for the organisation? (if not, then GII is risky)
7) Are subordinates likely to conflict with each other? (if yes, then CII is better)

Source: Handy 1999, pp. 103–5.

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motivating people' and that it has been 'taught to managers at all levels of most of the Fortune 500 companies as well as to managers in fast-growing entrepreneurial organisations' (1994, p. 8). As a result, theories of leadership and management remained closely intertwined and, although Zaleznik (1977) and Kotter (1990) make it clear that management and leadership are different, many of the perspectives and theories that developed to explore and explain leadership grew from a desire to understand human resource management, improve employee and workforce production, and support the development of managers.

Reflection Point

Think about any outstanding leaders from your experience as a clinician/student. Reflect on their influence on you and write a short commentary about what it was about these people that made them stand out as leaders. Also reflect on the great leaders in your discipline. There may be some obvious ones that come to mind, and some you may know personally. Make a list of three great leaders in your discipline from across the globe. You should find an abundance of them! Finally, after considering the information here (and after reading Chapter 4), if given the opportunity to publish the definitive definition of leadership, what would you write?

Transformational Theory: Making Change Happen

In an attempt to understand the distinction between leadership and management – and to address the question of why some leaders are able to inspire their followers even when the situation is less than ideal – the theory of 'transformational leadership' was developed (Northouse 2004). The term was coined by Downton (1973) and later adopted and developed by House (1976) and Burns (1978),

who really secured its distinctiveness by firmly linking leaders' and the followers' motives. It was Bass (1985), while seeking to identify the distinctions between leadership and management, who later refined the theory and felt that transformational leadership motivated followers to do more than was expected by providing an idealised influence, inspirational motivation and vision. Transformational leadership is also strongly associated with the qualitative studies of Bennis and Nanus (1985) and, more recently, of Fuda (2014). These scholars also sought to tease out the differentiation between management and leadership, with transformational leadership seen as connected to a process of attending to the needs of followers, so that interaction between them raised the motivation and energy of both. Transformational leadership is therefore about challenging the status quo, creating a vision and sharing that vision, with successful transformational leaders being able to establish and gain support for their vision, while being consistently and persistently driven towards maintaining momentum and empowering others (Kakabadse & Kakabadse 1999; Swanwick & McKimm 2011).

Bennis and Nanus (1985), expanding on Burns' (1978) theory, identified four themes that they felt were pivotal to effective transformational leadership:

- **Vision**, or the ability to have a dream and actually deliver on it.
- **Communication**, or the ability to articulate the vision so that it steals into the imagination and minds of followers.
- **Trust**, or the ability of followers to feel that their leader is consistent, has integrity and can be relied on.
- **Self-knowledge (self-knowing)**, or what Bennis and Nanus describe as the ability to 'know their worth … trust themselves without letting their ego or image get in the way' (1985, p. 57).

In effect, 'self-knowing' is about looking for the fit between who the leaders are, and who they need to be to fulfil the task. Handy (1999, p. 117) aligns 'self-knowing' with 'emotional wisdom' and Goleman (1996) and Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) elaborate on this aspect of leadership, connecting it to the concept of 'emotional intelligence' where a person is able to motivate themselves, be creative and perform at their peak, sensing what others are feeling and handling relationships effectively. The transformational leader need not be associated with status or power and is seen as being appropriate at all levels of an organisation. In effect, their role is to communicate a vision that gives meaning to the work of others. Crucially, the role of the transformational leader is reconstruction of the context in which people work, removing the old and replacing it with the new.

The interdependence of followers and leaders within this theory has meant that transformational leadership has found favour in care-related and teaching fields (Day et al. 2000) and, according to Welford, 'transformational leadership is arguably the most favourable leadership theory for clinical nursing in the general medical or surgical ward setting' (2002, p. 9). Thyer also feels that it is 'ideologically suited to nurses' (2003, p. 73), and Goertz Koerner (2010) identifies Florence Nightingale as an ideal example of a transformational leader. Sofarelli and Brown (1998), Freshwater, Graham and Esterhuizen (2009), Weberg (2010), Marshall (2011), Swanwick and McKimm (2011), Casida and Parker (2011), Hutchinson and Jackson (2012), Jones and Bennett (2012), Tinkham (2013), Ross et al. (2014), Lavoie-Tremblay et al. (2015) and Weng et al. (2015) also indicate that transformational leadership is a suitable leadership approach for empowering nurses or supporting them within an organisation. The NHS Confederation (1999) takes the view that transformational leadership is best suited to the modern leadership of the NHS. In addition, Weng et al. (2015) suggest, in a substantial Taiwanese research study, that there is a significant correlation between transformational leadership and innovation within the nursing workforce. Casida and Parker (2011), in a study in the USA, likewise propose that leaders who demonstrated a transformational style were seen to be making an extra effort, achieving greater satisfaction and being more effective. Moreover, Lavoie-Tremblay

et al. (2015) found that supportive leadership practices were able to have an impact on increasing retention and improving patient care.

Transformational leadership is strongly connected to the process of addressing the needs of followers, so that the process of interaction increases their motivation and energy (Bass 1990; Jones & Bennett 2012). While this is significant, transformational leadership has also gained favour because it is related to the establishment of a vision and adapting to change. Nevertheless, as Hutchinson and Jackson (2012) state, the attachment of nursing (and other healthcare disciplines) to transformational leadership theory without robust critical review or empirical exploration limits how leadership may be conceptualised in healthcare. Rafferty (1993, p. 8) warns that the 'charismatic' element of transformational leadership can be 'potentially exploitative' if the leader takes advantage of conflict in the needs or values system of followers. However, it is in this area of potential weakness that Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) see the power of transformational leadership, as it offers the leader the opportunity to penetrate the soul and psyche of others, increasing the level of awareness that motivates people to strive for greater ends.

Reflection Point

You may think this a little odd, but ask a child what they think leadership means. Then ask some older members of your family or society. Do they differ? If so, how do they differ? Why might these people take the perspectives they do?

Transactional Theory: Running a Tight Ship

Burns (1978) describes 'transactional leadership' as the antithesis of transformational leadership, indicating that transactional leadership exists where there is an exchange relationship between leader and followers (Jones & Bennett 2012). Here, the role of the transactional leader is to focus on the purpose of the organisation and to assist people to recognise what needs to be done in order to reach a desired outcome through a reward/punishment motivator (Jones & Bennett 2012). Kakabadse and Kakabadse (1999) describe transactional leadership as the skill and ability to deal with the mundane, operational and day-to-day transactions of organisational life. 'Keeping meetings to their time limits, ensuring the agenda is adhered to, and conducting appraisals of subordinates' (Kakabadse & Kakabadse 1999, p. 5) are but a few examples of what they call 'transactional management'. Transactional leaders, in order to lead, need to effectively manage the more routine tasks, partly in order to retain their credibility, but also to keep the organisation on track (Burns 1978).

Criticism of this approach is that it relies on procedures, technicality and hard data to inform decision making, with Day et al. (2000, p. 4) describing it as a form of 'scientific managerialism' that relies on the assumption that leaders are in a position to control rewards. It is also criticised by Rafferty because it relies on the assumption that human behaviour is driven by motivation for reward and an incentive system, and because it is prone to being 'more conservative than creative' (1993, p. 8). The rationale behind transactional leadership is that in order for leaders to function effectively they should be able to control the context within which they are required to lead; in effect, managing their environment and limiting change.

Authentic/Breakthrough Leadership: True to Your Values

'Authentic leadership' (Bhindi & Duignan 1997; George 2003; Avolio & Gardner 2005; Cantwell 2015) and 'breakthrough leadership' (Sarros & Butchatsky 1996) are more recent leadership

theories. Both of these perspectives on leadership point to an approach where leaders are thought to be true to their own values and beliefs, and the leader's credibility rests on their integrity and ability to be seen as a role model, because of these values and beliefs. The 'breakthrough' leader and the 'authentic' leader respect and listen to others and are guided by their passion and meaning, purpose and values (Sarros & Butchatsky 1996; Bhindi & Duignan 1997; George 2003; Avolio & Gardner 2005; Cantwell 2015).

In 2005, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses published a statement aimed at helping establish healthy work environments. The basis for this was a list of six 'standards':

- skilled communication
- true collaboration
- effective decision making
- appropriate staffing
- meaningful recognition
- authentic leadership

Authentic leadership is described as the 'glue' used to hold a healthy work environment together (Shirley 2006), with leaders being encouraged to engage with employees and promote positive behaviours. Wong and Cummings (2009), writing from a nursing perspective, also suggest that authentic leadership is a suitable theory for aligning future nursing leadership practice. Writers such as Gonzalez (2012) have taken authentic leadership further and describe what they call mindful leadership, where leaders employ self-awareness and self-leadership principles while being mindful of their impact on others.

Servant Leadership: A Follower at the Front

In keeping with some of the key elements of authentic leadership, 'servant leadership' focuses on the leader's stewardship role and encourages leaders to 'serve' others while staying in tune with the organisation's goals and values (Swanwick & McKimm 2011; Jones & Bennett 2012). The concept of servant leadership was coined and defined by Robert Greenleaf (1977), who stated that servant leaders rely less on hierarchical position and more on collaboration, trust, empathy and the use of ethical power.

A number of nursing authors have emphasised the relevance of servant leadership as a model to support the development of nursing and healthcare leadership, because its focus is both on promoting user involvement and on patients as the foundation of the health service and the most important group that leaders 'serve' (Anderson 2003; Kerfoot 2004; Swearingen & Liberman 2004; Campbell & Rudisill 2005; Peete 2005; Robinson 2006; Thorne 2006; Walker 2006; Swanwick & McKimm 2011; Jones & Bennett 2012). It is also valued as a model to support staff and influence current staff retention issues that are producing nursing workforce shortages (Swearingen & Liberman 2004). Hanse et al. (2016, p. 232), in a significant Swedish study, were able to show that nurse managers who demonstrated servant leadership had stronger 'exchange relationships' in terms of 'empowerment', 'humility' and 'stewardship' with followers. Their results reinforced the notion that servant leadership was relevant and suited to service-orientated organisations, with benefits for supporting, valuing and developing people.

Servant leadership is also valued because its key principles (Spears 1995; Box 2.3), which support caring and compassion, seem to fit appropriately within current and dominant values that are parallel with healthcare and nursing. Eicher-Catt (2005), however, believes that servant leadership is a

Box 2.3 Ten principles of servant leadership	
Listening	Conceptualisation
Empathy	Foresight
Healing	Stewardship
Awareness	Commitment to the growth of people
Persuasion	Building community

myth that is unworkable in the real world, that it fails to live up to its promise of being gender neutral and in fact – because of the paradoxical language and apposition of 'servant' and 'leader' – that it accentuates gender bias, so that it ends up supporting androcentric patriarchal norms. There is also an argument put forward by Avolio and Gardner (2005) that servant leadership has not been developed from an empirical base and is therefore purely theoretical.

Reflection Point
Reflect on the ward, unit, clinic or clinical area that you are on now. What management/leadership style does the ward manager, clinical manager, therapy team leader (or whatever they are called) adopt? Discuss this (tactfully) with them. What style do they feel they have adopted? Are you both in agreement?

The Right Leader at the Right Time

The essence of the great man, trait and style theories of leadership is that the individual leader is critical, but the context is not. Therefore, as long as the right leader with the appropriate leadership qualities is found or selected, the leader will be able to lead, under any circumstances. These theories imply that organisations, businesses, the military and other groups should concern themselves with the search for and development of leaders rather than be preoccupied with the context within which they have to operate. Indeed, this has been the approach taken by many organisations and much of the literature related to leadership from a military, political, spiritual and business base revolves around describing the lives and achievements of highly regarded military generals (Fest 1974; Grabsky 1993; D'Este 1996; Hibbert 1998; Useem 1998; Grint 2000; Krause 2000; Adair 2002a); political juggernauts (Mandela 1994; Harvey 1998; Danzig 2000; Adair 2002a; Carwardine 2003; Gallagher et al. 2003); religious figureheads (Carson 1999; Grint 2000; Adair 2002a); and captains of industry (Banks 1982; Lacey 1986; Clemmer & McNeil 1989; Allan 1992; Branson 1998; Useem 1998; Danzig 2000; Grint 2000; Krause 2000; Kouzes & Posner 2003).

Situational or contingency theory, and to a small degree the big bang theory of leadership, imply that both the individual and the context are fundamental. These theories describe the leader as being aware of their own leadership skills and of the context within which they lead, so that they can plan for the degree of alignment between their leadership approach and the situation they are in. For example, where a crisis occurs and a strong leader is available, this leader can step forward to lead and only step back (if required) when the situation changes and the context is no longer conducive to

their vigorous approach. Leadership is arrived at by supporting the leader in being self-aware and by situational analysis, so that, in effect, certain situations demand certain types of leader. Skilful leaders may be able to adapt their style to suit particular situations and, as such, the leader's behaviour or actions may change to suit the situation at hand. These theories of leadership found favour in, and developed from, research and literature derived from management and business perspectives (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi 1994; Adair 1998; Adair 2002b; Northouse 2004); and transformational and transactional theories of leadership also developed as researchers sought to explore the differences between leadership and management (Bennis & Nanus 1985; Bass 1990).

If leadership is seen to be about unifying people around values, and then constructing the social world for others around those values and helping people get through change, identifying a leadership theory that will facilitate people or practitioners to understand the application of leadership in their clinical environment or situation is important. To this end, the chapter 4 explores the elements of leadership as they relate to the practice of clinical nurse leadership and leadership for health professionals. In support of this, another theory, congruent leadership, is proposed and explored further.

Case Study 2.1

Elizabeth I is known as a leader who survived and prospered because she was able to blend her style and approach to leadership over the course of her life. Read about Elizabeth and consider the challenge that follows.

Female Leaders: Elizabeth I

Arguably England's greatest queen (notwithstanding a full assessment of the current reigning monarch, Elizabeth II), Elizabeth I (1533–1603) took her country from domestic turmoil into an age of empire that saw it rise to prominence as a world power. Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, was herself a formidable woman, but it was Elizabeth who emerged from the conflict of Henry VIII's reign, her brother Edward VI's short and turbulent stint as king and the religious fervour of her sister Mary's brief occupation of the crown, to become queen in 1558.

And she faced many problems. The religious differences between Protestants and Catholics domestically and across Europe, issues of succession and marriage, internal politics and division within the English court, attempts on her life by Mary Queen of Scots and sedition from foreign powers all threatened her reign.

In terms of religious tensions, Elizabeth favoured a cautious brief. To appease Catholics, she imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots, but kept her alive for many years. She established the Church of England that, although principally Protestant, had the veneer of a blend of both Catholic and Protestant practices. In this way she acted with apparent tolerance towards all religious groups, minimising conflict. However, Pope Pius V was not appeased and had Elizabeth excommunicated in 1570. Mary, although in prison, was encouraged by European allies to continue to plot against Elizabeth and in 1587 Elizabeth's patience's expired and she had Mary tried and executed for treason. Religious tensions in Europe remained high and the execution of the Scottish queen, raids by English privateers, often with royal approval, together with Elizabeth's support for Protestant rebels in the Spanish Netherlands prompted Philip II of Spain to attempt an invasion of England.

Warned of the imminent invasion, the English fleet waited in the Channel for the Spanish Armada. Elizabeth, with her army at Tilbury, addressed the men with these famous words:

> I am come amongst you … in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all; to lay down, for my God, and for my kingdom, and for my people, my honour and my blood, even the dust. I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart of a king, and of a king of England, too.

The Spanish never landed, as history records that the valour of English sailors and the ferocity of the Channel weather scattered the Spanish fleet and cemented the glory of English seamanship.

Elizabeth faced many other enemies, but throughout her 45-year reign she demonstrated great personal courage, cunning, religious tolerance and intelligent leadership, so that she was able to retain almost absolute control of her throne, bringing England to a 'Golden Age'. She was often under pressure to marry and produce a child, but she claimed shrewdly that she was wedded to her kingdom and that she could not give her love or obedience to any one man. Known as 'Gloriana' throughout her reign, Elizabeth I smoothed England's transition to a modern seafaring nation, supported and oversaw the growth of an artistic awakening, and held the nation together in the face of a powerful and determined foreign power. As far as female leaders go, Elizabeth I proved to be a dominant force in national and domestic politics and she can rightly be credited with setting England on a course to becoming a world power.

Challenge: Reflect on how Elizabeth was able to adapt her leadership style to hold the nation of England together through turbulent and troubling times, and how she helped establish a 'Golden Age'. How important are flexibility and adaptability to a leader? There is a saying, 'When it comes to fashion, bend like the wind, when it comes to principles, stand like a stone.' If it is important to know when to bend, it is also important to know when to stand firm. The trick might be in knowing when to do which. How do you know? Might it relate to your values, what you believe and what is important to you? Does it relate to the type of leadership theory you subscribe to?

Summary

- Leadership can be understood and defined in a number of different ways and from a number of different perspectives.
- Leadership can be defined by considering the leader's personality, by the leader's relationship to power, authority or influence over a group, as an instrument of goal achievement or viewed from the perspective of directing or setting a group's values.
- Leadership is considered to be an important instrument in effecting change.
- Leadership can also be said to involve unifying people around values and then constructing the social world for others around those values and helping people get through change.
- There are a number of leadership theories. These include the great man theory, big bang theory, trait theory, style theory, situational or contingency theory, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, authentic leadership, breakthrough leadership and servant leadership.
- There are many different styles of leadership, including autocratic, democratic, paternalistic and laissez-faire.
- Many of the theories and definitions overlap or focus on the individual leader or the context within which the leadership takes place, or both.
- There is a wide range of views, beliefs and ideas about what leadership means, what types of leadership there are and how the types of leadership might be employed to build relationships, establish and communicate a vision, and promote, challenge and bring about change to unify people around values and organisational culture.

Mind Press-ups

Exercise 2.1

Having considered these theories of leadership, do any of them feel as if they 'fit' the clinical environment you work within, in terms of explaining what you understand leadership to be about? Why or why not?

Exercise 2.2

Using a general internet search engine, look for "leadership styles". See what comes up. Identify any styles that you feel will help you and note down the positive and negative aspects of each, or any characteristics that will help you use these when describing or applying leadership styles in practice.

Exercise 2.3

Look at the ten principles of servant leadership (Box 2.3). How do these principles fit within your approach to work? Do you employ any of them in your day-to-day activities?

Exercise 2.4

Transformational leadership is associated with leaders who lead change as a definitive aspect of their role. Think about the characteristics of a transformational leader. Can you reflect on times when you could have employed a transformational leadership approach? Why would this have been appropriate?

Exercise 2.5

Think about great leaders from history, politics, the arts, education, sports or any field of endeavour. List two people for each category you choose and try to describe what it was that made them stand out as a great leader for you.

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