

November 18, 2016

Dear Governor Haley,

Please find enclosed a paper written for the last assignment in a Leadership Theories class in pursuit of a Ph.D. in Leadership Studies, and I wish for you to send on to the president-elect.

I sincerely wish you all the best,

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A Contemporary Perspective on Leadership

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Leadership Theories

LEST 800

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A Contemporary Perspective on Leadership

Introduction

For many the concept of leadership may be somewhat vague. Perhaps a concept most people can recognize when they see it, but otherwise to define leadership may be similar to grasping for air - hard to get a handle on (Northouse, 2016). Leadership, and leadership opportunities, abound all around us in the form of everyday life challenges and opportunities with leadership manifesting itself from our character and authenticity as we accept ownership for the world we live in - the worthy and the wicked, what we can control and what is thrust upon us - to go forth and make, and moreover to leave, the world better than we found it (Bali, 2011). Pleasantly defined from a positive perspective, leadership is consciously influencing one or more individuals to provide boundless guidance, guidance that society at the time, as well as history in hindsight, will speak of in the most auspicious of terms. However, this is one definition of leadership from more than a century of definitions (Northouse, 2016) that all reduce down to the simple dynamic of leadership being one person influencing one or more other persons to do something (Kort, 2008), and this discussion adds ideally with a *positive perspective*.

Having journeyed to the table of leadership knowledge for a better understanding of leadership itself, the influences from the journey facilitate this discussion. Before the journey, this discussion simply would not have taken place, or would not have taken place with the same knowledge and credibility. In leveraging the new leadership influences, this discussion voices the new learnings gleaned from the journey, and applies those learnings to the challenge of the current day. The challenge of the current day is revealed, and the learnings are discussed through a heightened contemporary perspective on leadership from the newly learned positions of the psychodynamic, the authentic, the leadership labyrinth, diversity and gender differences,

ethnocentrism, and the discussion concludes via leading with diversity. As the opportunity is accepted to explore and use the newly learned leadership concepts to better understand the world, also consider the concept that leadership can be simple binary with the option to lead oscillating between either the negative or the positive, and the option of which to seize is free for the choosing. Furthermore, throughout the discussion, keep in mind that what is unique about leadership is not only *how* leaders motivate, but *who* has influence in determining goals and objectives of the group, the organization, the effort (Kort, 2008).

The Challenge of the Current Day Revealed

In the waning hours of the U.S. election night 2016, spilling over into the early morning hours of the next day, amidst the darkness of the night, the United States, and the world for that matter, began to truly grasp the fact that the political pundits, the pollsters, the news media, perhaps even the presidential campaigns and candidates themselves, had got it wrong – Donald J. Trump would emerge as president-elect on his way to being the 45th president of the United States of America, and thus the challenge of the current day revealed.

For the millions that were pleased on one hand, what a disappointing surprise realized for many on the other. What a challenge for many millions, if not billions, throughout the world. Of course, on the other side of the coin, what an opportunity! And to that point, the take-away, the *aha moment*, that often our world is binary with two options: one negative, the other positive; one desirable, the other not so. We choose which to pursue, the negative or the positive, the desirable or the not so. We choose whether we give up and allow the arrogant narcissists, attention getting, self-absorbed, destructive pseudotransformational (Bass & Bass, 2008; Northouse, 2016) persons of the world define us, or whether we mold and make who we are, and what our world is to be. We choose whether we seek, as well as provide, leadership via the

authentic diagonal putting forth positive psychological qualities leveraging awareness of ourselves, an internalized moral outlook, sensible dispensation, and relational transparency stressing leadership's moral component (Northouse, 2016). We choose whether we leverage the psychodynamic to drive the best of our intentions seeking to avoid the paradoxical tendencies influencing decision-making (Northouse, 2016) in the negative.

Many were disappointed and outraged to hear then presidential candidate Trump's self-described *locker-room* talk (note: many have disavowed his comments as anything heard in their locker-rooms). Perhaps the disdain of the self-absorb sexist man heard on audio, the disdain giving courage to alleged victims who later surfaced, will turn on its head the labyrinth fueling the notion that a powerful man equates to a born leader and the same in a woman equates to an anomaly (Northouse, 2016). Furthermore, perhaps Trump, the president-elect, can find the human capital benefits that gender differences in leadership styles and effectiveness offers, and place in key leadership positions in his administration the diversity of women, with Trump taking advantage of the "notion that women are just different from men" (Northouse, 2014, p. 401) and seek their council for the additional insights the diversity of women offers. Moreover, perhaps this narcissistic of a man will further defy conventional wisdom suggesting he identifies with ethnocentrism that culture more akin to his is the best (Northouse, 2016) and cease his perceived ignorance of the culture dynamics that are an interlaced core component of the greatness of America. Perhaps Trump will seek to prove wrong the fallacies constraining persons of color moving beyond cultural conflict and discrimination and exhibit cultural competence (Bass & Bass, 2008) appointing not only African America men, but African American women along with other persons of color and diversity in key roles in his administration. In doing what has been put forth, Trump, the now destined president of the

United States of America, can showcase *how* he can possibly motivate, and gain credibility via *who* has influence in determining the goals and objectives of the group, the organization, the effort (Kort, 2008), and in this case the Trump administration during the pending Trump presidential era.

The Psychodynamic

Human behavior is at the core of leadership influencing what, how, and why we do what we do (Northouse, 2016). The dynamics of human behavior often elude us but the psychodynamic approach to leadership informs that we as human beings are “complex, unique, and paradoxical beings with rich and myriad motivational drivers” (Northouse, 2016, p. 296). Donald J. Trump, if nothing else, is a complex, unique, and a paradoxical being. Though Trump surprised the nation and the world with his victory, and decisively won the Electoral College slate of electors, the popular vote was essentially split between Trump and Hillary Clinton with Clinton having the edge. Counting the votes of the other candidates, more Americans voted against Trump than for Trump. Of course, given no one person exceeded 50 percent of the total vote, any combination of votes compared to one candidate reveals the fact that the entire group of candidates had more votes against any given candidate than for. Nevertheless, how does one move on if they were one of the millions of votes cast against the prevailing winner? Again, the options are binary. One can choose to find the negative, to say Trump is not their president, that Trump does not represent them. Or they can choose to make the best of the events, choose to get involved, perhaps become tempered radicals (Ngunjiri, 2010) if they must, and choose to impact positive change. In doing so, the uncertainty many feel at the moment, with concerns for sound and ethical leadership, has the potential to be abated via the moral dimension of doing what is good and right for America, and by extension the world, resulting in authentic leadership realized

(Northouse, 2016). However, still the questions may linger - *how* can one be motivated and *who* provides the influence?

The Authentic

Through the binary in the option, this discussion recommends to clench the choice to move forward with authentic leadership versus the less desirable options of obstruction and negative destruction. Authentic leadership is comprised of four key positive psychological attributes: confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience (Northouse, 2016). Waite, McKinney, Smith-Glasgow, and Meloy, (2014) describe authentic leadership in terms of relational transparency, self-awareness, unbiased balanced information processing, and an internalized moral perspective (Spence Laschinger, Wongb, & Grau, 2012).

Leveraging the attribute of confidence (Northouse, 2016), Trump excels at the relational transparency by displaying his “true, genuine, uncensored self” (Waite et al., 2014, p. 284) as Trump communicates his opinions and perspectives whether desired or not, respectable or appalling. This feature by itself has left many polarized either passionately for Trump or strongly against Trump. To deal with this polarization, many in the U.S., and the world for that matter, will leverage hope (Northouse, 2016) in trusting Trump has the self-awareness to understand himself, and how he can impact the U.S. and the world. In understanding himself, many will hope and trust Trump to use his many areas of self-improvement displayed, and illustrated with such audacity throughout his campaign, as assets to be improved while leveraging his core beliefs and values staying true to himself (Waite et al., 2014). Though expected to stay true to himself, Trump can do so in a way most would anticipate, but in a way that best serves the country that Trump now is slated to lead, and thus taking advantage to learn from the many resources of knowledge and wisdom that surrounds the president-elect.

In the week after Trump's election victory, many in the U.S. may have found optimism (Northouse, 2016) in Trump's appearance of humbleness as the president-elect perhaps grasped the gravity of what he had achieved. Furthermore, for all who possibly fought with the fact that Trump routinely did not act with the basics of grace and respect during the campaign, the grace and respect that is often sought in leaders (McEvoy, 2010), they hopefully will realize comfort by a Trump wise enough to seek counsel from not only the president that he will succeed, but welcomes the insight, questions, and council from the diversity of the many others that Trump as president will have the locus and opportunity to lead. As the president-elect strives for unbiased balanced processing to offset the natural flaws in human nature (Waite et al., 2014) that he and others cannot avoid, ideally the Trump machine will furthermore avoid the self-protective motives (Wong & Cummings, 2009) that too often routinely hover over members involved in the political process, and that may hover over the president-elect and his team as well. President-elect Trump has obtained the status in life where he can further seek to be in concert with the American public, that their principles are his principles, and that he will act not so much out of concern with pleasing others but more in concert with aligned principles of the American public. Following the positive in the binary, ideally these principles will have Trump himself following the path of esteem values and convictions (Waite et al., 2014) leaving the U.S. citizenry having the resilience to proceed with matching values and convictions. Moreover, the U.S. public shall proceed even more strongly, and proceed for positive change if their values and convictions differ from a Trump set of principles found to have gone astray, and be tempered radicals (Ngunjiri, 2010) if they must to rein in the Trump effect. But nevertheless, the world can be assured Trump will act in his authentic and unique manner, for the binary of better or worse.

Even though, one may still be left with the questions of *how* to be motivated and *who* provides the influence.

Leadership Labyrinth

Moving on from the challenges and dynamics of Trump as president of the United States of America, and the impact on not only the U.S. but also on the world, the concept has been suggested that the key to leadership in the 21st century is “living with questions rather than solving problems” (De Jong, 2011, p. 75). To further address the leadership labyrinth the 21st century presents, De Jong (2011) provides the U model (Scharmer, 2009) as the means to navigate the labyrinth heavily leveraging the notion of listening and reflection followed by testing of actions. De Jong (2011) further suggests that to be successful requires a shift in leadership paradigms from the leader, with all the answers per their expert vision, to an uncertainty enduring facilitator who can truly listen offering trust in one’s inner knowledge. While listening is a key skill for leadership (Northouse, 2016), and a leader as a good listener offering facilitation thru uncertainty is indeed desired and required for credible outcomes (De Jong, 2011), the notion of the binary of living with questions rather than solving problems simply falls short of effective leadership. Yes, we must observe and listen with an open mind, heart, and will using all our senses (De Jong, 2011; Scharmer, 2009), but the effective leader also seeks to influence and solve problems for the attainment of desired goals (Bass & Bass, 2008) for the benefit of all rather than being content to just listen and live with questions. Thus, while Scharmer’s (2009) discussion of U suggests that one deeply connects and sense, the effective leader will do so to achieve desired goals (Bass & Bass, 2008) facilitating the ability to move forward to enact and realize solutions for the problems at hand, and not the other option of the binary to simply observe and live with the questions.

Also among the challenges of the leadership labyrinth is the journey of obstacles women must navigate to realize the pinnacle of leadership roles (Perschel, 2008), and women of color in particular (Peterson, Philpot, & O'Shaughnessy, 2007). A sense of this journey can be garnered from the discourse of the U. S. presidential campaign in 2016, and in particular comments attributed to the winner, President-elect Trump. However, Trump has shown to be a contradiction and change positions to suit the need. Furthermore, perhaps his presidential campaign was not all dumb luck. To that extent, possibly Trump will come to the conclusion, an *aha moment*, or perhaps part of his strategy all along, that diversity in his cabinet, and not just token diversity, but extensive diversity to include not only men, but women, including men and women of color, will best serve his administration's credibility and facilitate the continuation of America as the great nation America is. Additionally, conceivably this credibility will ultimately allow Trump to achieve his presidential goals where ideally the Trump goals align with the U.S. citizenry. All the same, one is still left with the questions of *how* to be motivated and *who* provides the influence.

Diversity and Gender Difference in Leadership

Two weeks following the U.S. election night 2016, the media, where many in the media were wrong for months about the Trump presidential campaign being successful in winning the U.S. presidency, shows a panel of mostly older white men being possibly considered for the Trump cabinet. A critical observer may question if this is just more of a bias media slant from a media that is perhaps struggling to adjust to the Trump paradigm, and possibly other cabinet candidates offering more diversity are being considered? If the media has been fully transparent, and all who Trump has vetted is also transparent, an observer with any sense of the times can easily see the *obvious* falling victim to the *oblivious*. The obvious being that greater diversity

will not only allow the Trump administration to garner greater public legitimacy for eventual decisions and policy, but diversity in the cabinet, and the administration as a whole, positions the Trump era to be better placed to outperform the foresight of the experts (Kanthak & Krause, 2010). The obvious, moreover, being that in today's time one not realizing diversity brings legitimacy, diversity facilitates views encompassing new perspectives benefiting from new skill sets (Kanthak & Krause, 2010), and furthermore not realizing that diversity will either benefit the Trump machine, or be a negative if Trump ignores the assistance of diversity. Either way, Trump is, of course, afforded the option to choose from the binary of the possibility.

As an example, 2010 found a business organization, surely one of many, with leadership seeking the difference to facilitate growth and opportunity to avoid a continuation of the status quo at the time, stagnant continuity. The business was able to find a way to continue over the years, though continue at the time in an air of stagnation as little new business was coming in, and the existing business was not growing the many opportunities needed to endure successfully. Stagnation found in business is often the result of the leaders failing to take advantage of new opportunities, or simply not seizing a new approach for the business (Pieper, Astrachan, & Manners, 2013). Thus, what to do?

As the summer of 2010 was coming to a close, due to the inflexibility of a giant in the business sector, an opportunity presented itself. The opportunity was of course risky for a small organization, and would require a multitude of talent, commitment, and time to have any chance to be successful. Thus the binary of choices again - to stay with the stagnant status quo, and though stagnant, very comfortable, or pursue the risk laden talent, time, and commitment consuming new opportunity offering the possibility of cash flow and profits for growth, if successful - the *big if*. Realizing continued business stagnation would eventually, and likely

sooner than later, result in business cessation, and furthermore still having the fire of business entrepreneurship and hope that overcomes the fears and risks that started the business 14 years earlier, the decision was destiny more than a choice. Thus, yes, run with the opportunity, and in doing so perhaps a destiny similar to Trump's and election night 2016, but of course a destiny of a much different scale with a much different impact.

In running with the opportunity, and as cash flow and profits began to be realized, the binary of decisions again presented itself: horde the profits for the stagnation that would follow after the opportunity matured and ceased, or reinvest in the business via hiring new personnel in the effort to grow new opportunities. The MBA training that was part of the education gave the answer, if not entrepreneurial common sense. Seize the opportunity and make the most of it, and to do so hire new blood to avoid a continuation of the stagnant status quo, and thus perhaps a parallel to the current Trump cabinet selection process.

Reflection found that though not consciously intending to do so, and the business sector not being the best at facilitating diversity, the business over the years had seen its share of employees and associates who looked much like the owner. Thus the owner had another series of binary options in search of the new growth opportunities. Invest in the same sex and the same race and culture when hiring new personnel, a path that would come easily as a result of tradition and the business sector, or be intentional in diversity and recruit for the opposite of sex as well as the difference of race and culture to truly seek new blood. Again, this choice of the binary in options perhaps a parallel to the current Trump cabinet selection process.

In an *aha moment* that would later seem so common sense, the latter of the above options prevailed as the option of choice. The years that followed found a multitude of new associates that opened doors into new venues and opportunities that were so obvious yet so simply

oblivious when the option does not exist in the paradigm. Thus a shift in the paradigm was warranted. And this is among the binary of options available to President-elect Trump as he forms his administration – invest overwhelmingly in the same sex and the same race and culture that perhaps he is so accustomed to and that apparently comes so natural by those that he surrounds himself with, or shift the paradigm and be intentional in diversity and leadership by seeking those of the opposite sex and/or those of a different race and culture. Leading through diversity will help Trump to avoid the tendency to trend towards ethnocentrism and the dangers of focusing solely on one's ethnicity at the expense of others (Bass & Bass, 2008), even if not intentional in doing so. Nevertheless, the questions remain of *how* to be motivated and *who* provides the influence.

Ethnocentrism

Recent history, if not history in general, shows that immigration trends, legal or otherwise, in combination with the natural organic growth in groups of diversity (Hickman, 2016) will continue to place pressures on U.S. society to move forward with diversity having an influence in the United States. Furthermore, all, including President-elect Trump, will be served better if not deceived by, and ignorant in, the ethnocentrism that one's own ethnic, racial, or cultural group is the center of the universe (Northouse, 2016). Many of Trump's comments throughout his presidential campaign may give anyone who does not look like Trump, let alone align with Trump, concern that now that Trump is to become president of the United States of America, ethnocentrism at the highest levels of the U.S. government is imminent. Perhaps Trump's tendency to exhibit ethnocentrism during his presidential campaign is a result of social exclusion (Greitemeyer, 2012) he has possibly experienced in contrast to the well-traveled billionaire many believe him to be, and therefore the assumption that he is much more exposed

to and socialized with other cultures that he can appreciate the value of and welcomes diversity. Again, in contrast to the Trump so many identifies with, possibly Trump lacks the self-image and the self-confidence to where his self-worth is threaten causing him to degrade others who are not like him in his attempt to affirm his social identity (Greitemeyer, 2012). However, perhaps time will show that Trump is truly a benefactor of the well-traveled to where his exposure to the diversity of different cultures will afford him the insight to form an administration to repel the ethnocentric tendencies many currently associate with the president-elect. Possibly Trump will lead with diversity in his arsenal of options focusing on the good and the positive that diversity affords in his binary of choices. Yet, the questions of *how* to be motivated and *who* provides influence remain.

Leading with Diversity

History shows that racial and ethnic groups have been regulated to an acquiescent status (Hickman, 2016) in their attempts to gain deserved standing and influence. Additionally, Tsai, Laczko, and Bjørnskov (2011) found trust to be diminished with diversity, and moreover extensive social and cultural diversity can greatly hinder the benefits of social capital. However, the United States has diversity within its borders today, therefore the United States can expect not only organic growth of diversity within its borders as a result, but growth also via immigration, and consequently the need to better understand and relate to diversity (Morrison, 2012) as diversity increases with the population growth of the nation. Moreover, due to the necessity for leaders in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors needing the wherewithal to accept and work with any number of unfamiliar cultural differences, business students are taught the importance, the wisdom, and the need to reach out and embrace new communities (Morrison, 2012) as well as the communities that currently exist. Donald J. Trump, being the business man

he is, surely knows diversity is a virtue, though his presidential campaign rhetoric may give one a moment of pause in this regard. However, diversity is a great teacher, and much of the acceptance to diversity stems from social and educational exposure. Social exposure itself is an *aha moment* that the resulting learnings in today's world, and surely within the United States, are available to us and our children on a routine basis. Thus, one perhaps should not be surprised to see Trump, as president-elect and eventually the president of the United States, to walk back many of his comments on the campaign trail, especially those regarding the diversity that is part of what makes America great. If embracing diversity in business makes sense (Morrison, 2012), surely embracing diversity makes sense as the president of a country of immigrants. Even though, with all the challenges a President Donald J. Trump brings, and with leadership we can frame these challenges as opportunities, still the questions of *how* to be motivated and *who* has influence remain to be answered.

Conclusion

In a story about *aha moments* in aviation, Haines (2016) shares that one of his fascinations with aviation is that "there's always something that I don't know, that there's something I haven't yet experienced" (p.16). Many will realize this quote applies to much more in life other than aviation. This quote applies to leadership. This quote applies to the president-elect and the many choices and decisions that he will make impacting the U.S. and the world as the president-elect seeks to refine and impart his own style of leadership now, and eventually as president of the United States of America.

As noted in the introduction, for many the concept of leadership may be somewhat vague. A concept that many among us can identify when they see it, but otherwise to articulate clearly what leadership is may escape us (Northouse, 2016). This discussion presented many options of

the binary in search of answers to the questions found with the leadership uniqueness of *how* leaders motivate, and *who* has influence (Kort, 2008). Via this discussion, leveraging the learnings from the journey to date, and applying those learnings to the challenge of the current day, a contemporary perspective on leadership is revealed and addressed from the newly learned perspectives of the psychodynamic, the authentic, the leadership labyrinth, diversity and gender differences, ethnocentrism, and finally leading with diversity. However, before coming to the table for leadership knowledge, the ability to have a dialog of critical thought regarding leadership simply did not exist, and what ability did exist was less succinct and less thorough. After accepting the opportunity to study leadership concepts, and subsequently sitting to inquire, learn, and discuss in depth with colleagues, the new knowledge obtained influences the wherewithal to shape a contemporary perspective on leadership, and the knowledge yet to be obtained can be expected to continue in doing the same. Moreover, the new knowledge obtained influences not only this discussion, but influences a contemporary perspective contributing critical discussion and insight that simply were not and are not forthcoming without the leadership knowledge obtained. A contemporary leadership perspective that is recognized as not just simple dynamics as put forth in the introduction, but the prominently rich and diverse dynamics involved in the leadership of one person influencing others to do something (Kort, 2008). To this extent, like all of us, the president-elect will benefit greatly if he too realizes the value of new knowledge to consider for the many choices that he will effect decisions on. In doing so, President-elect Donald J. Trump, of course, has the binary of options for his presidency to be one of the most disastrous and calamitous, or one of the most auspicious and unsurpassed in history based on the leadership Trump will choose to display. Trump will ensure one or the other of these options, of these outcomes, based on his rejection or acceptance of the simple fact

that the humble quote by Haines above applies also to Trump himself - “there’s always something that I don’t know, that there’s something I haven’t yet experienced” (Haines, 2016, p.16). Perhaps only with God’s grace will the U.S. and the world discover that Trump leans on the latter in the binary, the positive of the choices just presented, and therefore perhaps the answer to the questions of *how* to be motivated and *who* has influence is revealed.

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