

*To Give Their Gifts*

Health, Community,  
and Democracy

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## *Leadership: Making Significant Change*

The narratives of Part I help explain that leadership gets things done by attention to detail, commitment, and—when change is not possible—coping. Leadership also entails intrapersonal and interpersonal change. People discover their own values and facets of their character that remain hidden until they have to confront the doubts that come with leadership and conflict with others. The foundations of interpersonal leadership include compassion; providing inspiration and support for others to change individually; helping people work together to reach places they had not imagined; and delegating any recognition attached to success.

Leadership also involves understanding why and how things get done. Innovative democratic leaders face the common challenges of leadership—change, conflict, and collaboration—but how they face these tasks distinguishes them. Their values explain why they pursue certain objectives, and their inclusiveness, initiative, and creativity explain how they pursue them. The values of inclusiveness, initiative, and creativity distinguish innovative democratic leadership from other forms of leadership and provide the means to improve or at least to understand these other forms.

### **Getting Things Done**

The RWJF leaders have gotten things done, as their narratives make clear. In the process, they have drawn simple, everyday lessons from their efforts for change. Peter Lee reflects most on the practical lessons of leadership. For example, based on his reflections upon the success of TEAM, he advises:

- let success in one place spill over to other places;
- pick conflicts deliberately;
- find common ground in developing collaborations;
- keep people, those who support and oppose you, in conversation; and
- go where you will be successful.

Ironically, Lee understates the conflict between these principles and the work he undertook—the promotion of AIDS awareness, prevention, and care—in a religiously conservative area. Evidently, “getting things done” does not preclude working on difficult issues. Regardless of the difficulty of the issue, successful leadership entails several commitments.

### *Commitment to the Details*

It is easy to conjure up romantic images of innovative democratic leadership accomplishing sweeping social change that brings good people together, ferrets out bad people and their conduct, promotes social justice, and leads to mutual understanding and harmony. We don't think of the time leaders spend proofreading the minutes of the last board meeting of the organization or supervising the bulk mailing of a group's newsletter. Yet these everyday tasks are part of leadership, as Lee insists in his call for detailed attention: “I would have to say good leadership is a person who has some way of attending to some of the detail, like being sure that appropriate people are informed or kept informed or communicated with, whatever. I think there are leaders who are not good with detail but can be good with building some mechanism so that that detail is taken care of. If you don't take care of the detail, the quality of leadership starts spiraling downhill and people start leaving.”

### *Commitment to the Long Haul*

Lee endorses the ideas of vision and motivation but is acutely aware that events do not always follow a clear path of steady progress. Getting started is one task; maintaining the effort of change is another:

I'd have to define leadership by action statements. First, I think a leader is a person who is able to see a bigger picture, being able to think and

visualize a state of being on down the road, and able to find ways to help get people enthusiastic about moving there. I think another quality that defines leadership is the ability to be able to communicate and motivate people.

Some people can really communicate to go forward and to do new innovative things, but then communication for maintenance is a very different kind of thing. That is probably one area where I fail more than anything else. I can get people to see a vision and start getting enthusiastic for something new, but the maintenance stuff is a really tough one for me.

### *Commitment May Mean Coping*

In between times of success, elation, and awards, leaders experience times of failure, discouragement, and criticism. Not all obstacles give way immediately, or at all, despite the best efforts of the most effective leadership. Leadership has to deal with bad times. Studies on leadership generally do not spend a great deal of time discussing bad times. The ability to cope with situations that cannot be changed in the short term, or perhaps ever, forms part of the commitment to the long haul of change and provides another lesson in getting things done. So does the ability to withstand criticism from coworkers and allies. Hotz compares this part of leadership to “putting on that flak jacket and strapping it on tight and staying the course.” We can romanticize this combat image and embrace conflict with adversaries. However, as Lee points out, some of the flak comes from friendly fire:

Leadership’s not easy. Leaders have to have some extraordinary coping skills and thick skin. I have learned that through some of my organizing work, that there are an awful lot of people who are very quick to tell leaders what they think but are not very quick to help support a leader. We have a tendency in our society, at the national level and even in a small group setting, that when somebody gets put into a leadership position, we try to tear that person apart. So leaders must have thick skin and the ability to deal with a lack of support and criticism.

### *Commitment to the Human Dimensions of Change*

Leaders bring their detailed attention to efforts of varying sizes. Some award recipients, such as Neil Calman, have worked on institutional change in a variety of settings. Others, such as Juan Romagoza, have worked on local issues, including the personal needs of local people, but often in a context of violence, even on an international scale. Lorelei DeCora moved from local change efforts about textbooks to an effort to have the federal government approve a twenty-point plan to improve the condition of Native Americans, including her sister. Her later health care programs are federally funded but have roots in local culture. James Hotz traveled in the opposite direction. He began at the national level looking to affect change and ended up working at the local level. And like DeCora, Hotz had federal, state, and philanthropic support from outside the region. Change efforts evidently require that small and local systems relate to larger and more distant systems. Whether concentric or merely overlapping, change efforts seem to be part of mutually dependent sets of systems.

Leadership links these systems together with human bonds or moral resources—starting with friendship, respect, admiration, and trust—and expands those bonds from neighborhood to community and society. No matter how distant the relationship, however, our leaders' narratives would suggest there is still a human bond of mutual responsibility for each other.

Leadership remains aware that its effectiveness in promoting change depends on working within one or many systems at different times or simultaneously. Ron Brown's narrative describes efforts for change at the individual, neighborhood, and city level. Less obvious are the interdependent and sometimes conflicting systems of care at the local and national levels. The provision of services requires advocacy for those served and for the resources to support services. New forms and increased amounts of social goods and moral resources become available at the local level only when someone scours many different levels of support and advocates at those levels for them.

Brown describes one example of how his work involves a number of systems: the individual and the family, at the most local level, and health insurers and the medical profession, at the most distant level. In all of them, he works for change either in the personal attitudes

and behaviors of Odyssey's residents or in the manner in which services are provided by the therapeutic community:

I was just talking to a woman over here last night about that. She's thirty-five and looks and acts like she's about twenty-five. She has two children in here with her—a daughter, who's three, and a baby, who was affected during her pregnancy. I can just look at him and tell he has some problems. He's probably eight to nine months old. We were just talking about how important it is—what we can do, how you can change. I asked, "Are these the only two children you have?" She said, "No, I have two boys. Well, my men, they're seventeen and nineteen, and they're out there dealing." And then we talked about her changing. When she gets out, she is going to say to her two men, "Look, I love you and all that, but we can't do that at home anymore." She's going to really set down some rules. I was telling her, "They're out there, but keep in mind, as their parent you're going to still be a big influence on them. Although they may not change, they now have a reference point where they can say, 'Well, my mother did stop.' You are showing them value, and you have to really do this. Now, you can't be flip-flopping around with this." So, it's number one, getting them the desire to say, "I really want to make the change."

Chronic, not just substance abuse cases, chronic substance abusers, often don't make any substantial change with their addiction problem. Our approach is to address them on several different processes, to get the people to grow to a certain extent. We want to address those underlying issues—the psychosocial type issues, emotional, spiritual—to get people to grow beyond destructive patterns in their life. Substance abuse was just one of those.

It's an attitude to get around. In terms of doing destructive things to themselves or other individuals or the community, I would put my money on those recovering folks before I would put it on people who have never had the criminal or substance abuse history—the one's who've never had a problem. Health's just not physical. It's those things that relate to the physical. It's emotional, spiritual, and social. All of those are linked. You can separate them out and address them individually, but the best approach is to look at them all and say, "How are they balanced, what's the balance between them?"

In our area, the people who consume the majority of the resources are the chronic substance abusers. They make up about 20 percent of the overall substance-abusing population. They consume 80 percent of the resources in many different categories—not just in treatment

centers but in other costs as well: hospitals, emergency rooms, and jails. Drugs take a toll on society in general in terms of crime, human life, and suffering. You just can't put a price on it. That smaller group creates most of the problems. That's the group we are working with. Our average resident has tried and failed four rehabilitation programs before coming to us. So I would say from an economic point and overall value for society, reimbursement in our long-term, holistic approach by the therapeutic community would be a much better investment.

A long-term residential program that uses a therapeutic community's approach is about a two-year process. It's ridiculous from a lot of funders' point of view that anybody can be in a residential treatment center for drugs for two years. From an economic point and overall value for society, it would be a much better investment than what we do now. Now that same person who is structured when they're in treatment, they're not committing any crimes. We'll send an addict to prison easily for three years, which costs significantly more than what the residential treatment would. So there's an attitudinal blockage to trying to see all these things at once and that we need to invest dollars in the long-term, residential programs of recovery.

## **Personal Dimensions of Leadership**

In addition to its set of commitments, successful leadership also requires intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. It involves working with self as well as working with other people.

### *Intrapersonal Dimensions of Leadership*

Juan Romagoza's interpersonal work, for example, reflects only partially the intrapersonal work he has accomplished on values. His encounter with one of his former Salvadorian jailers on the sidewalks of Washington expresses that work remarkably:

One day I found in the streets here, this place, a man who says to me, "I know you. You were in jail. I was too." It was my torturer talking to me. It was him, on the streets, here, and he was drunk. He was an alcoholic. He described to me exactly what they did in the jail, but now he's terrorized.

Others learned that he was my torturer and I had the opportunity

to do to him some of what he did to me. I thought, “Maybe this is what my other brothers died for. Maybe it is the time for revenge or retaliation.” I asked those who knew me to help him. I decided to help him and asked the other people, if they respected me, if they loved me, then help me help him. This was an opportunity for teaching others. It is an opportunity to show what jail had meant for me. What my other brothers might have done if they had not died. It was an opportunity for me to do something for someone else. I brought him to the clinic, and I brought him to my home for three days. Now he can feel peace.

Upon realizing the drunken man talking to him was one of his former torturers, Romagoza had conflicting feelings of “revenge and retaliation” and forgiveness. In the end Romagoza decided, “I could not do to him what he had done to me. I showed love, and now I feel peace. I could not do to myself what I did not let them do to me—kill the spirit of love within me.”

Few of us have our moral values tested to such an extent that we are asked to forgive those who imprisoned us unjustly and tortured us. Few of us have had such dramatic events forge the steel of our inner resolve. However, some form of internal, personal change provides leadership with a direction. Ronald Brown describes the confidence that came with clear goals after dealing with the agony of his substance abuse and addiction: “There’s no question in your mind, not that you are totally closed to anything else, but you’re very confident and self-assured. You know what’s happening and you’re willing to put everything in that, and I think that’s what made some of the great leaders—they have that quality.”

Hotz uses a similar combination of confidence and direction to explain leadership: “Leadership combines a number of facets. One is a confidence in your sense of direction. You’ve got to feel that you are right. You’ve got to be willing to plunge into areas where it is very uncomfortable when people are saying that you may be wrong. So you have got to have confidence in what you are doing.”

The confidence of leadership does not spring from certainty about the definition of a problem or its solution—this is the confidence of the expert. The confidence of leadership comes from the very process and values of adaptive work. The confidence of innovative democratic leadership exudes from a certainty that expressing human bonds and the responsibility that we have for each other embody the highest human moral values. Efforts to bring social prac-

tice into line with those values express the highest form of human activity, whatever their shortcomings. Jackie Reed explains this lesson in terms of her program's experience. She focuses on human capacity, not human capital, and the work to make a community a village of social networks of shared responsibilities and resources. She also makes clear that leadership requires looking within others and ourselves for the energy of human capacity.

James Hotz echoes Reed's thoughts and adds other pieces to the puzzle of leadership:

So there is staying the course, there is conviction in what you are doing, there is deflecting the glory that comes out of it. Then part of community stuff is being connected with what you are trying to accomplish. You've got to have your feelers out. You've got to stay in connection with what you are trying to accomplish. Otherwise, you can be out in orbit by yourself. That is one of the reasons for the Community Health Institute to stay in touch, because you do get detached as you become an institution. You become detached, and the great danger for people in academics is that they get removed from the community.

Intrapersonal leadership is not entirely inward looking. Interpersonal relations with the community validate fundamental values and rejuvenate the intrapersonal resources of community leadership. Ron Brown talks about the important validation that comes from sharing similar narratives. Like Brown's, Judy Panko Reis's community ties are very personal. Her story is the story of the community she serves and what motivates her:

What I always say is, I don't think you need your own story to be credible in what you are doing, but you definitely need it to prevent burnout. I think you tend to burn out a lot less. If you just come in this because it's a "good cause" and you understand the issues and you go, "Wow! That's something I want to fight for." Fine, but are you going to last? Are you going to burn out? When you're living through this, it's different. The people that don't burn out are the people whose bread and butter and whose lives are on the line every day. You can't afford to burn out. Right now, I'm on the verge of losing my transportation again. Right now, I have a door-to-door handicapped service that comes to RIC, but I just learned this morning that this

service will probably be eliminated by March. I've got a whole other dilemma in front of me. How do I get to work? How do I get the women that are going to be affected the same way in here to do something about it? I'm not going to stop fighting for transportation because I'm tired and I've got all the other things going on in my life. I don't have a choice but to fight.

My personal story fuels my ability to keep going, fighting this uphill, upstream battle. That is basically what all of us are doing when we are working in underserved situations. There seem to be cycles that you kind of get stuck in. If you don't have transportation, you can't get a job; if you can't get a job, you can't buy a car. . . . You just keep getting locked into these unending cycles of disempowerment and devaluation. It gets pretty tricky, and it gets very tiring. The personal story is what keeps you going, and the fact that you are relating to so many other people that have those same stories.

### *Interpersonal Dimensions of Leadership*

Every element of leadership implies interpersonal relationships. "Leadership" implies a group, and "innovative" implies an audience for whom stories and values are new or less familiar. For Barbara Garcia, "transforming" implies making the interaction of leaders and followers into a synergy through "energy management." "Adaptive work" requires dissent and dissatisfaction with the ordinary practices of groups that fall short of goals. "Significant change" requires removing some caste-like restrictions from a group. These terms correspond to the interpersonal principles of compassion, individual and group inspiration, and humility.

*Compassion.* Judy Panko Reis found our description of a leader—one who can motivate people to develop and implement solutions to their own problems—insufficient:

I think that compassion is a very big piece of leadership. I can't imagine any leader without compassion, whatever the context, but particularly community health. You are dealing with people that are usually in crisis. It's hard for me to believe it's possible for someone to be an effective leader without having compassion. When I think of the leaders that I revere and the kind of leader I want to be, I would add both a spiritual and a compassionate component to your description.

Spiritual, I know, is a little fuzzy, but certainly compassion for fellow human beings.

Panko Reis's point invokes the moral base of innovative democratic leadership. James MacGregor Burns calls it "*empathy*—the vital leadership quality of entering into another person's feelings and perspectives. This is the beginning of moral leadership" (Burns 1978:100). Burns, anticipating Howard Gardner's work, traces empathy to the earliest thoughts of children about fairness and honesty, early levels of morality that provide the foundation for later judgments: "It isn't fair!" (Burns 1978:77). Indeed, the definition of health, related in Part I, includes a fundamental, profound sense of fairness about social conditions and needs. With the discovery that their own conditions and needs are common to others, leaders take deliberate and intentional action to change conditions for others and to meet their needs.

Peter Lee adds another dimension to compassion. He reverses the roles of stories and initiative when he discusses compassion and empathy. Lee stresses the ability of a leader to listen to the stories of others as well as to relate them:

I think a leader is by nature sensitive to hearing and paying attention to the people he or she works with. I'd almost have to say a "good" leader because there are leaders who don't pay any attention to that at all and just march forward. But a really good leader, who's going to be effective, is certainly able to always take in new information. Part of that new information is listening to the people that you are involved with. Sensitivity to people is an area where I see an awful lot of failure in lots of leaders.

Innovative democratic leadership has a map of morality on which true north points to compassion. Burns endorses this notion explicitly. Heifetz does so implicitly by his concern with compassion and empathy as part of adaptive work. Empathy enables leadership to hear the gap between values and practices. It makes the leader a story-listener as well as a storyteller. It also makes clear that the source of stories that leaders relate is the stream of stories that others have told them. Lorelei DeCora most poignantly illustrates this dual role of story-listener and storyteller with her perspective on col-

laboration as legacy-taking and legacy-making that spans several generations past and future.

*Inspiration for Individuals to Change.* For Sherry Hirota, our question on leadership came at the end of an interview that was already too long, given her crowded day. She gasped, “Oh, my God!” and then suggested that “Leadership is the spark to make people realize a certain vision.” Her succinct definition obviously fits with our concept of innovative democratic leadership. It raises another question, however. Does the vision relate to personal change or change of the social conditions of people? The answer is both. Leadership sparks a vision of change in individuals, which they may realize in their own lives and thereby have an impact on the lives of others as well.

Barbara Garcia develops Hirota’s concise definition with an explanation of interpersonal leadership:

Leadership is trying to figure out who’s not motivated and trying to find those underlying reasons why. I wonder, is motivation an inherent skill or is motivation something you can teach by modeling? Modeling’s the best way that I can think. I had the modeling of mentoring in my life that helped me become a leader and for others to become leaders. Motivation is energy, for me. Motivation is someone’s energy, and when you have people who are feeling totally oppressed, how can you feel like you can motivate to do anything? Good leadership is trying to figure out why people aren’t motivated and how you can help that. Bad leadership is those who don’t motivate people or are in leadership to take control to have power.

Garcia’s lessons on leadership highlight two factors. First, leaders learn leadership from other leaders at the individual level. Models and mentors helped Garcia become a leader, just as listening to stories provided all of the RWJF community health leaders the stories they tell or embody. Second, the transforming work of a group extends to the individual members’ working to bring the group’s values and practices into their own lives and behavior.

Garcia has codified some parts of her adaptive work in the practice of “respectful engagement,” which has four principles:

- Listen and educate yourself about others and their interests and needs.

- Hold out hope for collaboration despite differences and even when in conflict over them.
- Assume the humane character of other people—they understand that they have social responsibilities, they have good will, they are willing to work to improve the human condition, and they are willing to resolve common problems.
- Give and share credit for successful outcomes and beneficial impacts.

Garcia's code suggests how innovative democratic leadership encourages change within the group as well as by the group. Many social movement groups, such as the American Indian Movement, intend to change society but also intend to change group members as a necessary part of the social change process (Couto 1991:299–306). Innovative democratic leadership sows seeds of change not only in communities but also in the souls of people. When those seeds sprout, they may eventually bear the fruit of increased responsibility for self and for others, the motivation about which Garcia talked.

This individual transformation does not have to happen within a group or from direct contact. Nationally prominent figures may also inspire people to increased responsibility for self and others. At least Ron Brown attributes his change to Martin Luther King, Jr., whom he never met: "I think you need to be committed, loyal, be well defined. Defined. What inspired me was what Martin Luther King was saying. You know, he's been to the mountaintop. 'I may not go there with you, but I'll be there.' It was like he was saying, 'I'm willing to die. I know it. I'm okay with that. I'm well defined. I know what we're doing. I'll die doing it.'"

King's leadership, his enacted innovative narratives, inspired people such as Brown to continue work on the individual and group levels simultaneously—individual recovery within a therapeutic community within a neighborhood of a declining city:

Well, to be able to inspire people for change, inspire people to overcome, to make change, or inspire people to overcome certain struggles—I mean leaders, to me, change. They take you somewhere you couldn't go without them. That's what leaders do. They get you to see something you couldn't see. They get you to do something that normally wouldn't be done. You have to inspire people, which can be done

in a lot of different ways, to go beyond what the normal is, I suppose. There's a whole lot [of ways] to do that, but I think you have to be authentic, generally. People really need that too.

What is leadership? It's to get people, to move people, to get people to get over something they couldn't get over. There's a lot of different ways to do it, I suppose, but that's the criteria that I would place with all them. I have to get them over this, now how do I do it?

*Moving Others to Unimagined Places.* Whether the result is individual or group changes, innovative democratic leadership brings people to a place they could not imagine. Carol Bonds stresses the roles of motivation and vision in accomplishing this. "I think that a leader has to be a motivator," she says. "In order to get things done, it takes someone who has the vision. A leader must have a vision of what is possible and then be a constant motivator to accomplish the goals and activities in the plan. They've got to have the vision and be able to communicate in a constant, energetic, motivated fashion in order to get those things accomplished."

Brown supports Bonds's ideas on moving people through motivation and vision, but he differs about plans: "It's not a plan. I just spontaneously kind of respond to stuff. But that spontaneity comes out of a lot of experience, too. I don't have a plan. It just comes up, what to do at that time. Sometimes you get real creative, but it's a lot of experience that allows you to do that. I don't plan a whole lot of tough situations. I go in. I just go in thinking, whatever the problem is, we'll figure it out."

Whether there is a plan or not, change requires trust in working together with people to "figure out" how to move from the initial problem to some solution. The mistaken belief that a plan negates the need for trust underestimates the moral resources necessary for good leadership. Motivation and vision are grounded in and sustained by the encouragement of groups and individuals as well as their capacity to do the problem solving within a plan or vision. Mary Atum captures this principle in her comparison of leader as teacher. "The word that I would use synonymous to leader would be teacher," she says. "Another word would be facilitator. Another old word that I would use would be catalyst. But I think teacher best describes how I think of leadership. It's not out front. It's not necessarily visible. It is really a role of teaching."

Whatever the appropriate analogy, leadership entails initiative. Burns has come to a position in his writing that underscores the initiative of a leader, the willingness to act first or early. Initiative lies implicitly in the theory of Gardner because the innovative leader initiates new stories or familiar stories with new values. Initiative resides explicitly in the theory of Heifetz's adaptive work. Someone has to point out the gap between values and practice and then mobilize a group to narrow it. Lorelei DeCora provides a simple formulation that relates initiative with vision: "The leader takes or accepts responsibility for the people before [the people do] themselves. A leader is someone who puts the good of the people first. Years later, the impact of what that person does still exists."

*Delegating the Glory of Success.* James Hotz gave the most detailed critique of our description of leadership. He also emphasized the need to delegate any glory that comes with success—the last point of Garcia's schema of respectful engagement:

Ironically, when you are doing the greatest leadership, you've got to be able to do a disappearing act. It's like the point guard (basketball) analogy. You've got to basically be able to take the spotlight off you while you are doing this. If you ever notice, the really good ballplayers at the end of the game, like Walter Payton, don't say, "That was a great run." He says, "With the blocking I had, what these guys did, anybody could have gone through there."

It was something I learned when I was in college. We had a guy that finished second in the Heisman Trophy balloting, Ed Marinaro, and his locker was right behind mine. As a sophomore, this guy broke the school record against Harvard. The *New York Times* and everybody was there. It was all me, me, me. The team sucked; we won, I think, four or five games. But by the time he was a senior—I think that was the last time Cornell won the Ivy League in football—he was always taking his linemen out to eat. When something happened he would point out one of them. He would say, "Did you see this block this guy threw me? I would never have gotten open."

So one of the real leadership challenges is that at the time you are doing your best work to be mostly invisible and make the heroes out of other folks. It's that delegation, not just the delegation of responsibility, but the delegation of the glory that comes from what you do.

The spotlight, interviews, publicity, I just try to avoid them as much as I can unless they are a part of accomplishing something. Sometimes to get a cause across, you've got to go for publicity.

Hotz's principle extends beyond good group practice. It recognizes that leadership depends on the gifts and actions of others. Delegating the glory of success makes other people aware of who contributed in very real terms to a successful effort. Jackie Reed also measures leadership by giving others credit for success, although she goes a bit further. For her, leadership delegates credit as part of developing the leadership of others. "Leadership sets up an opportunity for others to give their gift, for others to contribute to community," she says. In this sense then, Reed's lesson about leadership combines much of what we have said so far. Innovative democratic leadership moves people to unimagined places first by helping them discover their own talents and gifts, which in turn take them and others to that new and better place. The process of discovery that triggers individual and group change begins with compassion, which means accepting the starting point of people in their effort to reach a better place.

For Reed, that better place begins with the bond of community among people as neighbors. That bond facilitates the process of neighbors meeting the material and human needs of one another. She does not use the terms "social goods" and "moral resources," but she explains them in the description of what she does:

The biggest joy and the biggest challenge in communities are that you can't explain what you do. I cannot say that we counsel. I cannot say that we provide medical services to twenty-five clients, or I can't say we feed the hungry. We don't. Our job, I think, as a community-based organization, is to be a vehicle for other people to learn and self-discover what they have inside their hearts and to provide an opportunity for them to see their vision about what they would like to see happen in the community happen. And so we provide a place for them to meet. We provide technical support for them to carry out their vision, and we facilitate the process. We facilitate the process by which neighbors converse with each other. And that's what we do.

## Transforming the Common Tasks of Leadership

Innovative community leadership transforms the common processes of leadership—change, conflict, and collaboration—and explains how they may be conducted to better ensure democratic processes and outcomes of social justice.

### *Change*

All programs or organizations, individuals, and groups exist in systems within and among other systems in which change occurs frequently. Leaders may seek to change something about themselves, a group, or a system, but theirs will not be the only effort for change that is happening. If they are not merely to invite or resist change for its own sake, then leaders need some criteria—values—by which to judge the worth of change efforts. Innovative democratic leadership suggests several principles of change:

- The worth and value of change comes from new forms and increased amounts of social goods and moral resources that reduce social and economic disparities and increase and improve communal bonds.
- Change happens constantly and is constantly impacting the social goods and moral resources that produce and sustain people in community.
- One way to measure the impact of change is to ask whether those with too few goods and services are included or excluded from the benefits of change.
- The innovative narratives that express these values may not be new but only neglected to the point of being unfamiliar. Innovative democratic leadership may envision a place and time in which people renew commitments to neglected values.
- Change comes from and must reach back to several interdependent systems, individual and group, near and far. Effective social change entails becoming familiar with people, the most proximate interdependent “systems” with whom leadership works for change.
- Change efforts change the agents of change. Change for democratic values entails interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions and interorganizational and intraorganizational dimensions.

- Social change occurs most often in areas in which human needs are addressed by a mix of public and private providers.
- Change efforts may begin with a deeply personal experience of exclusion or need. They continue and mature when that personal experience becomes understood as part of a pattern involving many other people.
- Change comes primarily from trust in self, others, and values and secondarily from plans.
- Mistakes inevitably happen, but by reflecting on them and learning from them, leaders are better prepared to handle the next challenge.
- The significance of change is less in its degree, incremental or large, than in the values it promotes. Modest success may provide important lessons for other later efforts, which may be more significant. Likewise, failure teaches lessons that may be applied successfully later. Learning limits of change may make a leader a more effective agent for change.

### *Conflict*

Some leaders enjoy conflict. Others do not. However much our leaders enjoy or dislike conflict, they recognize its inevitability and its primary role in clarifying values. Conflict inheres in work for democratic values and other forms of change that take as their premise the need to bring practice into line with values. How do leaders conduct conflict effectively?

- Leaders use conflict to clarify values, including the dysfunctional practices of a system, and to target social justice work and priorities. A system that values and encourages individual achievement and acquisition will systematically underproduce and undervalue investments of social goods in community resources and members. The narratives of social justice challenge a stifled or repressed imagination about community and what is possible in expressing responsibility for each other.
- Leaders choose conflicts that clarify and express values. Such conflicts entail not only what decisions will be made but how they will be made and who will make them. The values of participation and representation extend to the process of making decisions as much as they do to the allocation of resources that result from them. These values are worthwhile grounds for conflict.

- Leaders permit intrapersonal conflict to clarify their own competing values. This permits them more confidence when acting on those values in conflict with others. Change efforts change the agents of change through internal conflict as well as external conflicts with allies and opponents.
- Leaders engage in conflict as a prelude to collaboration and as an assertion or defense of one set of values among other sets.
- Conflict may be necessary to gain representation and participation or even to establish a place to conduct conflict.

Several leaders see their ability to sleep at night as a measure of whether they have handled conflict well. The leaders' narratives are replete with the elements of conflict listed above, which may explain their ability to rest their hearts and minds after a conflict. Regardless of how it is handled, some conflict may be unwelcome. Some conflict, for example, occurs because of existing practices that are rooted in repression, fear, inaction, and large-scale apathy. Change agents may expect frustration and even reprisals to result from their struggles with such obstacles. Juan Romagoza experienced severe reprisals in El Salvador and from the United States government for his support of the sanctuary movement. Conflict may also occur with others who share the same values but disagree over strategies and tactics, as Neil Calman experienced in his differences with community board members.

### *Collaboration*

As seen in the narratives of the RWJF leaders, collaboration expresses the human relationships that are the goal of change efforts. As a moral resource, successful collaboration increases the capacity of participants to do more collaboration. It does not diminish with use. It atrophies without use. One successful collaborative effort encourages those involved to try another or to expand the first. Collaboration within innovative democratic leadership has the following characteristics.

- There are shared visions of change and what is possible and a shared view of the roles that different actors can play in achieving that change. This shared vision may be limited to a few people in conflict

with others. Clarity of values stemming from conflict may lead some antagonists to understand the vision and roles that they share.

- In pursuit of social justice, collaboration extends back in time to continue the leadership of those who have gone before and forward in time to prepare for the leadership of those who will follow. This connection through time, from those in the past, who gave us a legacy, and to those in the future, to whom we pass on a legacy, gives leadership a transcendent and not merely a transforming character.
- Collaboration on behalf of innovative democratic leadership also transcends space. It inspires and is inspired by the work for democratic values in other places.
- It takes some creativity to recognize the relevance of others' successes to one's own tasks and to invite or invent new relationships within and among groups.
- Collaboration may come from conflict if that conflict has clarified values and common goals. Likewise, one collaborative effort may provide the foundation for additional efforts, including the provision of social goods, by increasing the moral resources of trust.
- Because change occurs in many different interdependent systems, collaboration needs to occur across systems and with members of many different systems. Good collaboration emphasizes the development of people and the communal bonds among them, not just the completion of tasks.

## **The Distinctive Features of Innovative Democratic Leadership**

Inevitably, lists such as the one just constructed may appear as bromides, self-evident generalizations, or a checklist for success. To move the considerations of leadership beyond this level and in an effort to gain precision and clarity about it, James MacGregor Burns convened some forty scholars to study the study of leadership. With the support of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, these scholars met regularly from 1995 to 1998. Part of their work produced recognition of common tasks of leadership: dealing with conflict, conflict-ing with others, and collaborating with others. Many features distinguish how leaders carry out these tasks; primary among them are

values. After three years of participating in these discussions, Lorraine Matusak, the former Kellogg Leadership Program director, noted in exasperation, “We keep coming back to the question, ‘What?’ What is leadership for?”

The questions of “What?” find their answer in values, about which the RWJF leaders are explicit. Values in turn distinguish the other features of leadership—inclusiveness, initiative, and creativity.

### *Values*

The RWJF leaders draw their common values of human worth and dignity from different sources. Calman and DeCora take no inspiration from Christianity but Romagoza does. Romagoza and DeCora place their confidence in values of the culture of community residents—whether they be campesinos or tribal elders. Calman places more confidence in the values of professional culture. DeCora worked patiently for fourteen years to resolve conflicts among community board members, whereas Calman worked fast and asserted professional authority quickly to avert conflict with community boards.

Whatever their source, leadership begins with clarity about values—what one stands for—and the roots of those values are imparted by a sense of family, community, and culture. The RWJF community health leaders remain centered on values imparted to them and on their responsibility to impart those values to others.

Ironically, the extraordinary experiences, efforts, and achievements of the RWJF community health leaders may obscure some of the values behind them. For example, DeCora’s explanation of the cultural values expressed in health may seem crystal clear when applied to Native Americans but less apparent when applied to the cultural values of the United States. Obviously, however, the latter values have more to do with the subjugation of the Native American people, their current health status, and their access to health care than the cultural values of Native American people.

### *Inclusiveness*

We all share the values of innovative democratic leadership to some degree. Likewise, we all know the social and political contexts that hinder the fullest expression of human dignity and worth—a lack of

medical insurance and access to health care; international violence (sometimes sponsored by the United States government); violence on our streets, in our hollers, and on our reservations; and the specific plight of particular groups in the United States, including a disproportionate amount of illness. These issues ordinarily separate us into privileged and underprivileged, haves and have-nots, or us and them. In terms of innovative democratic leadership, however, these issues bond us with common, not separable, problems. This type of leadership reasserts old ideals of human dignity and worth, personal and mutual responsibility for one another, and a sense of the connection or tissue that binds together “those” somehow “different” from “us.”

Not surprisingly, inclusiveness weaves in and out of the narratives of efforts to extend services and advocate for individuals and groups with inadequate services. Inclusiveness is also clearly found in the efforts to mobilize individuals and groups to provide services and to advocate for needed services.

Innovative democratic leadership extends the bonds of community to groups marginalized by social practice and public policy—the neglect of inner cities and some rural areas, the prejudice and discrimination toward immigrants and different language groups, or the exclusiveness and subordination of class, gender, and race relations. It extends communal bonds primarily by insisting on increased amounts and improved forms of social goods such as health care and housing. However, the change that social justice entails goes beyond a transfer of goods and services. It involves personal and social relationships between and within marginalized and privileged groups that demonstrate respect for different cultural expressions of human experience and aspirations. These relationships make the surest paths to health and community.

Innovative democratic leadership insists on including marginalized groups in improved and increased bonds of community *and* including them in the process of change. However many professional allies these groups may have, mobilizing them and confronting their opponents remains the work of the groups intended to benefit from change. The interdependency and mutuality that characterize high levels of social justice and well-developed forms of community cannot await the initiative of those with privilege. The hopes of innovative democratic leadership for increased and improved social goods

and community lie in the conflict over change that marginalized groups initiate. Innovative democratic leadership catalyzes that mobilization.

### *Initiative*

Initiative distinguishes leadership further. What makes some people or groups take responsibility for a condition that everyone can see but few are willing to address? Why are some people willing to shoulder the responsibilities of meeting the needs and mobilizing the resources of others? Burns emphasizes initiative so much that he centered his recent work on it. He has a particular interest in “the special kind of initiator, the *innovator* who not only proposes a change to meet a need but a means of realizing it” (Burns 1998:28, emphasis added). Part of initiative lies in the psychology of a person and part lies, relatedly, in values. Several RWJF community health leaders recalled coming by their values in the era of social movements with a belief that broad social change was needed and possible. Some participated in dramatic episodes of those movements and derived life-changing lessons from their participation. In all cases, the democratic values of innovative leadership emerge from and explain efforts to form, sustain, and defend community—whether it be family, neighborhood, or some other group. In clear and certain ways, the leadership efforts of the RWJF community health leaders preserve values embodied by people very close to them. The initiative of our award recipients, for example, seems guided as much by their families’ and friends’ past exemplary efforts for democratic values as they are by the prospect of future change. Initiative seems to be related to a desire to be included in a legacy of values as much as to extend a legacy to others.

The ordinary stories of social change explain how one person spontaneously resists oppressive measures and begins a historic course of profound change. The value extolled in this narrative is standing up for what is right, and its moral suggests that individual action may bring change for democratic values. Rosa Parks’s role in the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott is often told this way although her story is far more complicated. She had a long involvement in efforts to break down racial segregation. As secretary to the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People (NAACP), she worked with the longtime organizer E. D. Nixon. Parks and others had violated the local law of segregated buses before, but their protest had not sparked a local or national movement. Other people, including eventually Martin Luther King, Jr., built upon Parks's action to stimulate organized, collective action for social change.

Parks's story of initiative, indeed anyone's story of initiative, has more complexity than an individual action of protest. The unholy trinity of exclusion, lack of services and resources, and lack of attention to a problem stimulate the initiative of innovative democratic leadership. The initial impetus to action may be an individual problem: Panko Reis's need for transportation, for example. Eventually, however, leadership means taking on other people's problems. It may not be a choice entirely. It may be a conclusion—reluctant as well as rational, and visceral as well as cerebral—that one cannot do anything else (Couto 1995).

Continuing in innovative democratic leadership despite setbacks requires continued initiative. Significant change does not come easily or quickly. Conflict with others may raise doubts in the minds of the people taking initiative. "Who am I to ask—demand—that these things be changed?" Personal and financial costs eventually take a toll, sometimes a heavy one, on those who show initiative and perseverance. Ironically, the longer one stays in a social change effort, the more one realizes the difficulty of the task, the likelihood of failure, and the significance of small victories. Initiative, therefore, applies not only to the initial act for change but to the continuation of those efforts. Innovative democratic leadership continues its initiative because it makes a legacy for others to follow in their own initiative, perhaps in other conditions, on different issues, at other times, and in different places.

### *Creativity*

Vision, imagination, reflective practice, and critical thinking are all elements of creative leadership. In addition to them, or burrowed within them, lies resilience—the ability to come back from failure, disappointment, and fear. Again, the special creativity of innovative democratic leadership seems to come from the values that inspire and sustain it.

The vision of the CHLP leaders has at least three views. First, it sees value in each person. Perhaps Ron Brown has the hardest test of this vision, working with chronic substance abusers. Nonetheless, he speaks most explicitly about it: “The potential’s in everybody. It’s like what Mother Teresa said. ‘I see hope,’ she said. She saw God in everybody’s face, and I kind of do too.” Second, they see interconnections of problems, such as the social and psychological context of addiction, and of promised remedies, like the game plan of professional collaboration in rural Georgia. Third, they can envision change. When Carol Bonds learned about school health centers, she knew she had to have one.

Vision becomes imagination when leaders not only picture a changed set of conditions but also think through the strategies and tactics to make that change. In other settings, their work would be called entrepreneurial for its ability to find the resources to meet a “market” of unmet human and social needs.

Leadership shows a reflective side. The CHLP leaders could define elements of successful collaboration or list elements of successful conflict. They have also learned from the mistakes that they or others made. Their reflections extend to empathy with those they have served and shock at their conditions. The essential creativity of innovative democratic leadership comes from the story of expanded human possibilities embodied in its action and determination.

A profound level of human bonds underlies the values of this leadership. The provision of social goods and moral resources expresses the gift relationship of those bonds, as the concluding chapter explains.