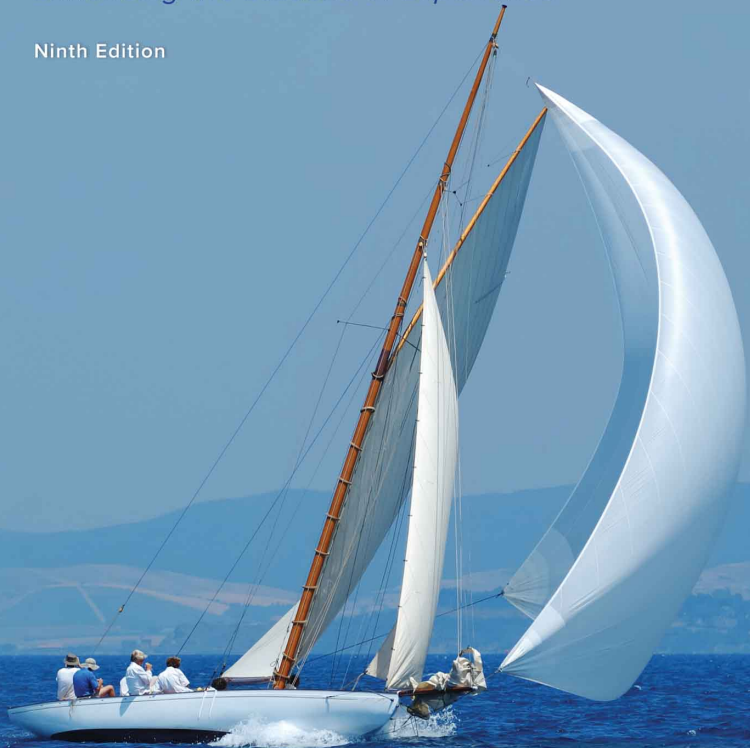# LEADERSHIP

Enhancing the Lessons of Experience

Ninth Edition

McGraw Hill Education

Richard L. **Hughes**   Robert C. **Ginnett**   Gordon J. **Curphy**

Leadership

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LEADERSHIP: ENHANCING THE LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE, NINTH EDITION

About the Authors

Rich Hughes has served on the faculties of both the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and the U.S. Air Force Academy. CCL is an international organization devoted to behavioral science research and leadership education. He worked there with senior executives from all sectors in the areas of strategic leadership and organizational culture change. At the Air Force Academy he served for a decade as head of its Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership. He later served at the Academy as its Transformation Chair. In that capacity he worked with senior leaders across the Academy to help guide organizational transformation of the Academy in ways to ensure it is meeting its mission of producing leaders of character. He is a clinical psychologist and a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has an MA from the University of Texas and a PhD from the University of Wyoming.

Robert Ginnett is an independent consultant specializing in the leadership of high-performance teams and organizations. He has worked with hundreds of for-profit organizations as well as NASA, the Defense and Central Intelligence Agencies, the National Security Agency, and the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force. Prior to working independently, Robert was a senior fellow at the Center for Creative Leadership and a tenured professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he also served as the director of leadership and counseling. Additionally, he served in numerous line and staff positions in the military, including leadership of an 875-man combat force and covert operations teams in the Vietnam War. He spent over 10 years working as a researcher for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, focusing his early work in aviation crew resource management, and later at the Kennedy Space Center in the post-*Challenger* period. Robert is an organizational psychologist whose education includes a master of business administration degree, a master of arts, a master of philosophy, and a PhD from Yale University. He now enjoys doing pro bono work with local fire and police departments and teaching leadership courses at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

Gordy Curphy is a managing partner at Curphy Leadership Solutions and has been running his own consulting business since 2002. As a leadership consultant Gordy has worked with numerous *Fortune* 500 firms to deliver more than 2,500 executive assessments, 150 executive coaching programs, 200 team engagements, and 150 leadership training programs. He has also played a critical role in helping organizations formulate winning strategies, drive major change initiatives, and improve business results. Gordy has published numerous books and articles and presented extensively on such topics as business, community, school, military, and team leadership; the role of personality and intelligence in leadership; building high-performing teams; leading virtual teams; teams at the top; managerial incompetence;

followership; on-boarding; succession planning; and employee engagement. Prior to starting his own firm Gordy spent a year as the vice president of institutional leadership at the Blandin Foundation, eight years as a vice president and general manager at Personnel Decisions International, and six years as a professor at the U.S. Air Force Academy. He has a BS from the U.S. Air Force Academy and a PhD in industrial and organizational psychology from the University of Minnesota.

Foreword

The first edition of this popular, widely used textbook was published in 1993, and the authors have continually upgraded it with each new edition including this one.

In a sense, no new foreword is needed; many principles of leadership are timeless. For example, references to Shakespeare and Machiavelli need no updating. However, the authors have refreshed examples and anecdotes, and they have kept up with the contemporary research and writing of leadership experts. Unfortunately, many of the reasons why leaders fail have also proved timeless. Flawed strategies, indecisiveness, arrogance, the naked pursuit of power, inept followers, the inability to build teams, and societal changes have resulted in corrupt governments, lost wars, failed businesses, repressive regimes around the globe, and sexual discrimination and/or harassment. These occurrences remind us that leadership can be used for selfless or selfish reasons, and it is up to those in charge to decide why they choose to lead.

Such examples keep this book fresh and relevant; but the earlier foreword, reprinted here, still captures the tone, spirit, and achievements of these authors' work.

Often the only difference between chaos and a smoothly functioning operation is leadership; this book is about that difference.

The authors are psychologists; therefore, the book has a distinctly psychological tone. You, as a reader, are going to be asked to think about leadership the way psychologists do. There is much here about psychological tests and surveys, about studies done in psychological laboratories, and about psychological analyses of good (and poor) leadership. You will often run across common psychological concepts in these pages, such as personality, values, attitudes, perceptions, and self-esteem, plus some not-so-common "jargon-y" phrases like double-loop learning, expectancy theory, and perceived inequity. This is not the same kind of book that would be written by coaches, sales managers, economists, political scientists, or generals.

Be not dismayed. Because these authors are also teachers with a good eye and ear for what students find interesting, they write clearly and cleanly, and they have also included a host of entertaining, stimulating snapshots of leadership: quotes, anecdotal Highlights, and personal glimpses from a wide range of intriguing people, each offered as an illustration of some scholarly point.

Also, because the authors are, or have been at one time or another, together or singly, not only psychologists and teachers but also children, students, Boy Scouts, parents, professors (at the U.S. Air Force Academy), Air Force officers, pilots, church members, athletes, administrators, insatiable readers, and convivial raconteurs, their stories and examples are drawn from a wide range of personal sources, and their anecdotes ring true.

As psychologists and scholars, they have reviewed here a wide range of psychological studies, other scientific inquiries, personal reflections of leaders, and philosophic writings on the topic of leadership. In distilling this material, they have drawn many practical conclusions useful for current and potential leaders. There

are suggestions here for goal setting, for running meetings, for negotiating, for managing conflict within groups, and for handling your own personal stress, to mention just a few.

All leaders, no matter what their age and station, can find some useful tips here, ranging over subjects such as body language, keeping a journal, and how to relax under tension.

In several ways the authors have tried to help you, the reader, feel what it would be like "to be in charge." For example, they have posed quandaries such as the following: You are in a leadership position with a budget provided by an outside funding source. You believe strongly in, say, Topic A, and have taken a strong, visible public stance on that topic. The head of your funding source takes you aside and says, "We disagree with your stance on Topic A. Please tone down your public statements, or we will have to take another look at your budget for next year."

What would you do? Quit? Speak up and lose your budget? Tone down your public statements and feel dishonest? There's no easy answer, and it's not an unusual situation for a leader to be in. Sooner or later, all leaders have to confront just how much outside interference they will tolerate in order to be able to carry out programs they believe in.

The authors emphasize the value of experience in leadership development, a conclusion I thoroughly agree with. Virtually every leader who makes it to the top of whatever pyramid he or she happens to be climbing does so by building on earlier experiences. The successful leaders are those who learn from these earlier experiences, by reflecting on and analyzing them to help solve larger future challenges. In this vein, let me make a suggestion. Actually, let me assign you some homework. (I know, I know, this is a peculiar approach in a book foreword; but stay with me—I have a point.)

Your Assignment: To gain some useful leadership experience, persuade eight people to do some notable activity together for at least two hours that they would not otherwise do without your intervention. Your only restriction is that you cannot tell them why you are doing this.

It can be any eight people: friends, family, teammates, club members, neighbors, students, working colleagues. It can be any activity, except that it should be something more substantial than watching television, eating, going to a movie, or just sitting around talking. It could be a roller-skating party, an organized debate, a songfest, a long hike, a visit to a museum, or volunteer work such as picking up litter or visiting a nursing home. If you will take it upon yourself to make something happen in the world that would not have otherwise happened without you, you will be engaging in an act of leadership with all of its attendant barriers, burdens, and pleasures, and you will quickly learn the relevance of many of the topics that the authors discuss in this book. If you try the eight-person-two-hour experience first and read this book later, you will have a much better understanding of how complicated an act of leadership can be. You will learn about the difficulties of developing a vision ("Now that we are together, what are we going to do?"), of motivating others, of setting agendas and timetables, of securing resources, of the need for follow-through. You may even learn about "loneliness at the top." However, if you are

successful, you will also experience the thrill that comes from successful leadership. One person *can* make a difference by enriching the lives of others, if only for a few hours. And for all of the frustrations and complexities of leadership, the tingling satisfaction that comes from success can become almost addictive. The capacity for making things happen can become its own motivation. With an early success, even if it is only with eight people for two hours, you may well be on your way to a leadership future.

The authors believe that leadership development involves reflecting on one's own experiences. Reading this book in the context of your own leadership experience can aid in that process. Their book is comprehensive, scholarly, stimulating, entertaining, and relevant for anyone who wishes to better understand the dynamics of leadership, and to improve her or his own personal performance.

David P. Campbell
Psychologist/Author

Preface

Perhaps by the time they are fortunate enough to have completed eight editions of a textbook, it is a bit natural for authors to believe something like, "Well, *now* we've got it just about right . . . there couldn't be too many changes for the next edition" (that is, *this* one). Of course, there *are* changes because this is a new edition. Some of the changes are rather general and pervasive in nature while others represent targeted changes in specific chapters of an otherwise successful text. The more general and pervasive changes are those things one would expect to find in the new edition of any textbook: the inclusion of recent research findings across all chapters as well as extensive rework in the vast majority of chapters of the very popular Highlights. The latter work involved the addition of numerous new Highlights as well as the elimination of those that had become dated and/or less central to the material in their respective chapters. Examples of the new Highlights include bullying bosses, gender stereotyping, and possible evolutionary roots to the pull toward greater organizational transparency. There are also many new Profiles in Leadership covering leaders as diverse as Sheikh Zayed, founder of the United Arab Emirates; Stan Lee, who was the creative genius behind Marvel Comics; and Lin-Manuel Miranda, whose musical *Hamilton* became a Broadway phenomenon.

The most significant structural change to the book involved changes to the 8th edition's Chapter 9 ("Motivation, Satisfaction and Performance"). In order to better address the extensive academic literature in those broad areas we divided the material into two chapters. In this 9th edition, Chapter 9 is now titled "Motivation, Performance and Effectiveness;" it includes the five motivational theories from before along with a detailed description of the performance management cycle (planning, monitoring, and evaluating performance) as well as common ways to measure team and organizational effectiveness. Chapter 10 is a new chapter entitled "Satisfaction, Engagement, and Potential." It includes substantially enhanced content on engagement as well as a detailed discussion on potential, including readiness and succession planning. And while all the chapters were revised in several ways, two other chapters saw relatively greater change. Chapter 6 has substantially more content on the subject of emotional intelligence as well as more extensive treatment of strength based leadership and neuroleadership. Chapter 12 includes expanded treatment of organizational culture types. And as noted above, all chapters include updates on relevant research and changes in Highlights and Profiles in Leadership.

As always, we are indebted to the superb editorial staff at McGraw-Hill Education including Laura Hurst Spell, associate portfolio manager; Rick Hecker, content project manager; and Tracy Jensen, freelance development editor. They all have been wise, supportive, helpful, and pleasant partners in this process, and it has been our good fortune to know and work with such a professional team. We are

Once again we dedicate this book to the leaders of the past from whom we have learned, the leaders of today whose behaviors and actions shape our ever-changing world, and the leaders of tomorrow whom we hope will benefit from the lessons in this book as they face the challenges of change and globalization in an increasingly interconnected world.

Richard L. Hughes
Robert C. Ginnett
Gordon J. Curphy

Brief Contents

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Leadership
Is a Process,
Not a Position

If any single idea is central to this book, it is that leadership is a process, not a position. The entire first part of this book explores that idea. One is not a leader—except perhaps in name only—merely because one holds a title or position. Leadership involves something happening as a result of the interaction between a leader and followers.

In Chapter 1 we define leadership and explore its relationship to concepts such as management and followership, and we also introduce the interactional framework. The interactional framework is based on the idea that leadership involves complex interactions between the leader, the followers, and the situations they are in. That framework provides the organizing principle for the rest of the book. Chapter 2 looks at how we can become better leaders by profiting more fully from our experiences, which is not to say that either the study or the practice of leadership is simple. Part 1 concludes with a chapter focusing on basic leadership skills. There also will be a corresponding skills chapter at the conclusion of each of the other three parts in this book.

Chapter 1

What Do We Mean by Leadership?

Introduction

It is old news now that in the last presidential election most of the country was dismayed with the candidates of the two major political parties. "Can't we do better than this?" was a question on the minds of many millions of Americans. In fact, however, our collective dismay about the quality of our leaders is not limited to particular presidential candidates—*it is pervasive*. According to a poll by the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School, 70 percent of Americans believe our country is in desperate need of better leaders and faces national decline unless something changes.[1] And a 2013 Harris Poll showed that the percentage of people expressing even *some* confidence in governmental, corporate, and financial leadership has plummeted from about 90 percent to 60 percent since 1996.[2] Yet we also sometimes see stories of extraordinary leadership by otherwise ordinary people.

In the spring of 1972, an airplane flew across the Andes mountains carrying its crew and 40 passengers. Most of the passengers were members of an amateur Uruguayan rugby team en route to a game in Chile. The plane never arrived. It crashed in snow-covered mountains, breaking into several pieces on impact. The main part of the fuselage slid like a toboggan down a steep valley, coming to rest in waist-deep snow. Although a number of people died immediately or within a day of the impact, the picture for the 28 survivors was not much better. The fuselage offered little protection from the extreme cold, food supplies were scant, and a number of passengers had serious injuries from the crash. Over the next few days, several surviving passengers became psychotic and several others died from their injuries. The passengers who were relatively uninjured set out to do what they could to improve their chances of survival.

Several worked on "weatherproofing" the wreckage; others found ways to get water; and those with medical training took care of the injured. Although shaken by the crash, the survivors initially were confident they would be found. These feelings gradually gave way to despair as search and rescue teams failed to find the wreckage. With the passing of several weeks and no sign of rescue in sight, the remaining passengers decided to mount expeditions to determine the best way to

escape. The most physically fit were chosen to go on the expeditions because the thin mountain air and the deep snow made the trips difficult. The results of the trips were both frustrating and demoralizing: The expedition members determined they were in the middle of the Andes mountains, and walking out to find help was believed to be impossible. Just when the survivors thought nothing worse could possibly happen, an avalanche hit the wreckage and killed several more of them.

The remaining survivors concluded they would not be rescued, and their only hope was for someone to leave the wreckage and find help. Three of the fittest passengers were chosen for the final expedition, and everyone else's work was directed toward improving the expedition's chances of success. The three expedition members were given more food and were exempted from routine survival activities; the rest spent most of their energies securing supplies for the trip. Two months after the plane crash, the expedition members set out on their final attempt to find help. After hiking for 10 days through some of the most rugged terrain in the world, the expedition stumbled across a group of Chilean peasants tending cattle. One of the expedition members stated, "I come from a plane that fell in the mountains. I am Uruguayan . . ." Eventually 14 other survivors were rescued.

When the full account of their survival became known, it was not without controversy. It had required extreme and unsettling measures: The survivors had lived only by eating the flesh of their deceased comrades. Nonetheless, their story is one of the most moving survival dramas of all time, magnificently told by Piers Paul Read in *Alive*.[3] It is a story of tragedy and courage, and it is a story of leadership.

Perhaps a story of survival in the Andes is so far removed from everyday experience that it does not seem to hold any relevant lessons about leadership for you personally. But consider some of the basic issues the Andes survivors faced: tension between individual and group goals, dealing with the different needs and personalities of group members, and keeping hope alive in the face of adversity. These issues are not so different from those facing many groups we're a part of. We can also look at the Andes experience for examples of the emergence of informal leaders in groups. Before the flight, a young man named Parrado was awkward and shy, a "second-stringer" both athletically and socially. Nonetheless, this unlikely hero became the best loved and most respected among the survivors for his courage, optimism, fairness, and emotional support. Persuasiveness in group decision making also was an important part of leadership among the Andes survivors. During the difficult discussions preceding the agonizing decision to survive on the flesh of their deceased comrades, one of the rugby players made his reasoning clear: "I know that if my dead body could help you stay alive, then I would want you to use it. In fact, if I do die and you don't eat me, then I'll come back from wherever I am and give you a good kick in the ass."[4]

Lives of great men all remind us We can make our lives sublime And, departing, leave behind us Footprints on the sands of time.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, American poet

What Is Leadership?

The Andes story and the experiences of many other leaders we'll introduce to you in a series of profiles sprinkled throughout the chapters provide numerous examples of leadership. But just what *is* leadership? People who do research on

leadership disagree more than you might think about what leadership really is. Most of this disagreement stems from the fact that **leadership** is a complex phenomenon involving the leader, the followers, and the situation. Some leadership researchers have focused on the personality, physical traits, or behaviors of the leader; others have studied the relationships between leaders and followers; still others have studied how aspects of the situation affect how leaders act. Some have extended the latter viewpoint so far as to suggest there is no such thing as leadership; they argue that organizational successes and failures are often falsely attributed to the leader, but the situation may have a much greater impact on how the organization functions than does any individual, including the leader.[5]

Perhaps the best way for you to begin to understand the complexities of leadership is to see some of the ways leadership has been defined. Leadership researchers have defined leadership in many different ways:

- The process by which an agent induces a subordinate to behave in a desired manner.[6]
- Directing and coordinating the work of group members.[7]
- An interpersonal relation in which others comply because they want to, not because they have to.[8]
- The process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals.[9]
- Actions that focus resources to create desirable opportunities.[10]
- Creating conditions for a team to be effective.[11]
- The ability to engage employees, the ability to build teams, and the ability to achieve results; the first two represent the how and the latter the what of leadership.[12]
- A complex form of social problem solving.[13]

As you can see, definitions of leadership differ in many ways, and these differences have resulted in various researchers exploring disparate aspects of leadership. For example, if we were to apply these definitions to the Andes survival scenario described earlier, some researchers would focus on the behaviors Parrado used to keep up the morale of the survivors. Researchers who define leadership as influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals would examine how Parrado managed to convince the group to stage and support the final expedition. One's definition of leadership might also influence just *who* is considered an appropriate leader for study. Thus each group of researchers might focus on a different aspect of leadership, and each would tell a different story regarding the leader, the followers, and the situation.

Although having many leadership definitions may seem confusing, it is important to understand that there is no single correct definition. The various definitions can help us appreciate the multitude of factors that affect leadership, as well as different perspectives from which to view it. For example, in the first definition just listed, the word *subordinate* seems to confine leadership to downward influence in hierarchical relationships; it seems to exclude informal leadership. The second definition emphasizes the directing and coordinating aspects of leadership,

"Future generations will be living in a world that is very different from that to which we are accustomed. It is essential that we prepare ourselves and our children for that new world."

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

and thereby may deemphasize emotional aspects of leadership. The emphasis placed in the third definition on subordinates' "wanting to" comply with a leader's wishes seems to exclude any kind of coercion as a leadership tool. Further, it becomes problematic to identify ways in which a leader's actions are really leadership if subordinates voluntarily comply when a leader with considerable potential coercive power merely asks others to do something without explicitly threatening them. Similarly, a key reason behind using the phrase *desirable opportunities* in one of the definitions was precisely to distinguish between leadership and tyranny. And partly because there are many different definitions of leadership, there is also a wide range of individuals we consider leaders. In addition to the stories about leaders and leadership that we sprinkle throughout this book, we highlight several in each chapter in a series of Profiles in Leadership. The first of these is Profiles in Leadership 1.1, which highlights Sheikh Zayed, the founder of the United Arab Emirates.

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP 1.1

Sheikh Zayed founded the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 1971 and led it through arguably the world's greatest national transformation of the past 100 years. When he was born in 1918 the area was a desert dominated by warring Arab tribes, and its economy was based largely on fishing and pearl-diving. But consider the UAE today:

- The city of Dubai is one of the safest cities in the world, its airport is the busiest international airport in the world, and a new skyscraper is built every day.
- One of those buildings, the Burj Khalifa, is the tallest building in the world, and the Dubai Mall is the largest shopping center in the world.
- Women hold leadership roles throughout society including in business, government, and the military. Religious openness is evident in the major cities with Muslim mosques, Christian churches, Hindu temples, and even Jewish synagogues found throughout the major cities. It is the first country in the Arab region to enact a comprehensive law combating human trafficking.

So how did Zayed launch this amazing transformation? The story begins with the early life of the man himself. As a boy and young man, he traveled extensively throughout the region living alongside Bedouin tribesmen, learning about their way of life in the desert. That same thirst for learning prompted him to conduct extensive research into the ancient history of the region, leading to his discovery that 15,000 years ago the Arabian peninsula was originally covered by thick forests and only later transformed into a desert. But those ancient forests—transformed through eons into oil—still lay under the desert sand. He committed himself to returning the region to greenness.

One element of that quest became the planting of trees, and now more than a million trees are growing within the UAE. He established experimental agricultural stations across the country. He initiated projects of water distribution, conservation, and desalination. And he believed that the real resource of any nation is its people, and committed his considerable wealth, energy, and talents to make education for all citizens—men and women—a top national priority. The list of his transformations goes on: health care, wildlife conservation, and job rights, to name just a few.

This was a man who transformed a desert into a modern, thriving region still affirming the moderate Islamic values that his entire life embodied.

Mindful of the Profiles in Leadership running throughout the book, you might wonder (as we do) about just what kind of leaders *ought* to be profiled in these pages. Should we use illustrations featuring leaders who rose to the top in their respective organizations? Should we use illustrations featuring leaders who contributed significantly to enhancing the effectiveness of their organizations?

We suspect you answered yes to both questions. But there's the rub. You see, leaders who rise to the top in their organizations are not always the same as those who help make their organizations more effective. As it turns out, **successful managers** (i.e., those promoted quickly through the ranks) spend relatively more time than others in organizational socializing and politicking; and they spend relatively less time than the latter on traditional management responsibilities like planning and decision making. Truly **effective managers,** however, make real contributions to their organization's performance.[14] This distinction is a critical one, even if quite thorny to untangle in leadership research.

A recent 10-year study of what separated the "best of the best" executives from all the rest in their organizations offers some valuable insights even for people at the very beginning of their careers (and this study was studying real effectiveness, not just success-at-schmoozing, as described in the preceding paragraph). These "best of the best" executives demonstrated expertise and across their careers excelled across all facets of their organization's functions—they knew the *whole* business, not just a piece of it. And they also knew and cared about the people they worked with. These top-performing leaders formed deep and trusting relationships with others, including superiors, peers, and direct reports. They're the kind of people others want working for them, and the kind others want to work for. By the way, relational failure with colleagues proved to be the quickest route to failure among the second-best executives.[15]

All considered, we find that defining leadership as "the process of influencing an organized group toward accomplishing its goals" is fairly comprehensive and helpful. Several implications of this definition are worth further examination.

Leadership Is Both a Science and an Art

Saying leadership is both a science and an art emphasizes the subject of leadership as a field of scholarly inquiry, as well as certain aspects of the practice of leadership. The scope of the science of leadership is reflected in the number of studies—approximately 8,000—cited in an authoritative reference work, *Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications.*[16] A review of leadership theory and research over the past 25 years notes the expanding breadth and complexity of scholarly thought about leadership in the preceding quarter century. For example, leadership involves dozens of different theoretical domains and a wide variety of methods for studying it.[17]

However, being an expert on leadership research is neither necessary nor sufficient for being a good leader. Some managers may be effective leaders without ever having taken a course or training program in leadership, and some scholars in the field of leadership may be relatively poor leaders themselves. What's more, new academic models of leadership consider the "locus" of leadership (where

leadership emanates from) as not just coming from an *individual* leader (whether holding a formal position or not, as we'll explore later in this chapter) but also as emanating alternatively from groups or even from an entire organization.[18]

Nonetheless, knowing something about leadership research is relevant to leadership effectiveness. Scholarship may not be a prerequisite for leadership effectiveness, but understanding some of the major research findings can help individuals better analyze situations using a variety of perspectives. That, in turn, can tell leaders how to be more effective. Even so, because skills in analyzing and responding to situations vary greatly across leaders, leadership will always remain partly an art as well as a science. Highlight 1.1 raises the question of whether leadership should be considered a true science or not.

Leadership Is Both Rational and Emotional

Leadership involves both the rational and emotional sides of human experience. Leadership includes actions and influences based on reason and logic as well as those based on inspiration and passion. We do not want to cultivate merely intellectualized leaders who respond with only logical predictability. Because people differ in their thoughts and feelings, hopes and dreams, needs and fears, goals and ambitions, and strengths and weaknesses, leadership situations can be complex. People are both rational and emotional, so leaders can use rational techniques and emotional appeals to influence followers, but they must also weigh the rational and emotional consequences of their actions.

Any fool can keep a rule. God gave him a brain to know when to break the rule.

General Willard W. Scott

A democracy cannot follow a leader unless he is dramatized. A man to be a hero must not content himself with heroic virtues and anonymous action. He must talk and explain as he acts—drama.

William Allen White, American writer and editor, *Emporia Gazette*

Is the Study of Leadership a "Real" Science?

HIGHLIGHT 1.1

In this chapter we posit that leadership is both a science and an art. Most people, we think, accept the idea that some element of leadership is an art in the sense that it can't be completely prescribed or routinized into a set of rules to follow, that there is an inherent personal element to leadership. Perhaps even because of that, many people are skeptical about the idea that the study of leadership can be a "real" science like physics and chemistry. Even when acknowledging that thousands of empirical studies of leadership have been published, many still resist the idea that it is in any way analogous to the "hard" sciences.

It might interest you to know, then, that a lively debate is ongoing today among leadership scholars about whether leadership ought to model itself after physics. And the debate is about more than "physics envy." The debate is reminiscent of the early twentieth century, when some of the great minds in psychology proposed that psychological theory should be based on formal and explicit mathematical models rather than armchair speculation. Today's debate about the field of leadership looks at the phenomena from a systems perspective and revolves around the extent to which there may be fundamental similarities between leadership and thermodynamics.

So are you willing to consider the possibility that the dynamics governing molecular bonding can also explain how human beings organize themselves to accomplish a shared objective?

Source: R. B. Kaiser, "Beyond Physics Envy? An Introduction to the Special Issue," *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research* 66 (2014), pp. 259–60.

A full appreciation of leadership involves looking at both of these sides of human nature. Good leadership is more than just calculation and planning, or following a checklist, even though rational analysis can enhance good leadership. Good leadership also involves touching others' feelings; emotions play an important role in leadership, too. Just one example of this is the civil rights movement of the 1960s, which was based on emotions as well as on principles. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. inspired many people to action; he touched people's hearts as well as their minds.

Aroused feelings, however, can be used either positively or negatively, constructively or destructively. Some leaders have been able to inspire others to deeds of great purpose and courage. By contrast, as images of Adolf Hitler's mass rallies or present-day angry mobs attest, group frenzy can readily become group mindlessness. As another example, emotional appeals by the Reverend Jim Jones resulted in approximately 800 of his followers volitionally committing suicide.

The mere presence of a group (even without heightened emotional levels) can also cause people to act differently than when they are alone. For example, in airline cockpit crews, there are clear lines of authority from the captain down to the first officer (second in command) and so on. So strong are the norms surrounding the authority of the captain that some first officers will not take control of the airplane from the captain even in the event of impending disaster. Foushee reported a study wherein airline captains in simulator training intentionally feigned incapacitation so that the response of the rest of the crew could be observed.[19] The feigned incapacitations occurred at a predetermined point during the plane's final approach in landing, and the simulation involved conditions of poor weather and visibility. Approximately 25 percent of the first officers in these simulated flights allowed the plane to crash. For some reason, the first officers did not take control even when it was clear the captain was allowing the aircraft to deviate from the parameters of a safe approach. This example demonstrates how group dynamics can influence the behavior of group members even when emotional levels are *not* high. (Believe it or not, airline crews are so well trained that this is *not* an emotional situation.) In sum, it should be apparent that leadership involves followers' feelings and nonrational behavior as well as rational behavior. Leaders need to consider *both* the rational and the emotional consequences of their actions.

In fact, some scholars have suggested that the very idea of leadership may be rooted in our emotional needs. Belief in the potency of leadership, however—what has been called the **romance of leadership**—may be a cultural myth that has utility primarily insofar as it affects how people create meaning about causal events in complex social systems. Such a myth, for example, may be operating in the tendency of many people in the business world to automatically attribute a company's success or failure to its leadership. Rather than being a casual factor in a company's success, however, it might be the case that "leadership" is merely a romanticized notion—an obsession people want to and need to believe in.[20] Related to this may be a tendency to attribute a leader's success primarily if not entirely to that person's unique *individual* qualities. That idea is further explored in Profiles in Leadership 1.2.

Bill Gates's Head Start

PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP 1.2

Belief in an individual's potential to overcome great odds and achieve success through talent, strength, and perseverance is common in America, but usually there is more than meets the eye in such success stories. Malcolm Gladwell's best seller *Outliers* presents a fascinating exploration of how situational factors contribute to success in addition to the kinds of individual qualities we often assume are all-important. Have you ever thought, for example, that Bill Gates was able to create Microsoft because he's just brilliant and visionary?

Well, let's take for granted he *is* brilliant and visionary—there's plenty of evidence of that. The point here, however, is that's not always enough (and maybe it's *never* enough). Here are some of the things that placed Bill Gates, with all his intelligence and vision, at the right time in the right place:

- Gates was born to a wealthy family in Seattle that placed him in a private school for seventh grade. In 1968, his second year there, the school started a computer club—even before most *colleges* had computer clubs.

- In the 1960s virtually everyone who was learning about computers used computer cards, a tedious and mind-numbing process. The computer at Gates's school, however, was linked to a mainframe in downtown Seattle. Thus in 1968 Bill Gates was practicing computer programming via time-sharing as an eighth grader; few others in the world then had such opportunity, whatever their age.

- Even at a wealthy private school like the one Gates attended, however, funds ran out to cover the high costs of buying time on a mainframe computer.

Fortunately, at about the same time, a group called the Computer Center Corporation was formed at the University of Washington to lease computer time. One of its founders, coincidentally a parent at Gates's own school, thought the school's computer club could get time on the computer in exchange for testing the company's new software programs. Gates then started a regular schedule of taking the bus after school to the company's offices, where he programmed long into the evening. During one seven-month period, Gates and his fellow computer club members averaged eight hours a day, seven days a week, of computer time.

- When Gates was a high school senior, another extraordinary opportunity presented itself. A major national company (TRW) needed programmers with specialized experience—exactly, as it turned out, the kind of experience the kids at Gates's school had been getting. Gates successfully lobbied his teachers to let him spend a spring doing this work in another part of the state for independent study credit.

- By the time Gates dropped out of Harvard after his sophomore year, he had accumulated more than *10,000 hours* of programming experience. It was, he's said, a better exposure to software development than anyone else at a young age could have had—and all because of a lucky series of events.

It appears that Gates's success is at least partly an example of the right person being in the right place at just the right time.

Source: Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008).

If you want some ham, you gotta go into the smokehouse.

Huey Long, governor of Louisiana, 1928–1932

Leadership and Management

In trying to answer the question "What is leadership?" it is natural to look at the relationship between leadership and management. To many people, the word **management** suggests words like *efficiency, planning, paperwork, procedures, regulations, control,* and *consistency.* Leadership is often more associated with words like *risk taking, dynamic, creativity, change,* and *vision.* Some people say leadership is fundamentally a value-choosing, and thus a value-laden, activity, whereas management