Professional Essay: A DEL Reflection of Leadership Development

Lisa M. Tiffin

School of Business & Leadership, University of Charleston

Portfolio

Dr. Ruth G. Wylie

September 7, 2021

Abstract

This paper reflects my identity as a leader and scholar-practitioner. Themes of mindset, implementation, and care are intertwined with my personal and professional goals, DEL outcomes and projects, and growth as a leader. The paper includes my development as a professional, including my leadership model and code of ethics. It also demonstrated self, family, community, and professional leadership followed by two areas of expertise. The paper concludes with a look toward my growth and leadership in the future.

Keywords: mindset, implementation, care, leadership, scholar-practitioner, pragmatism, practical judgment, mentorship, conversation, trust, risk

Professional Essay: A DEL Reflection of Leadership Development

Over the past two years in the Doctorate of Executive Leadership (DEL) program, I have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for the literature on leadership and my own theories of leadership, learning, and implementation. While I had many ideas on leadership, learning, and growth, it was the crucible of the DEL that helped to give me the language to think and speak about these theories and to formalize my ideas in a way that helped theory become part of who I am and how I practice.

My decision to pursue a Doctorate of Executive Leadership came through the pathway of mentorship, as I was encouraged by a well-respected mentor to deepen my learning and decipher my own path of how I wanted to exercise my growing leadership skills. Within six months of creating a formal five-year vision collage, I was enrolled at the University of Charleston (UC) in the DEL as a pathway toward higher education administration. I chose the DEL with its focus on leadership principles, development of the whole person, and the importance of implementation as a scholar-practitioner. Where other programs felt limiting, the DEL felt expansive, and that spoke to my "both-and" (Rohr, 2011, p. 10) personality.

Leadership Principles

In one of my first classes, I was required to present my leadership model. I had never considered what my leadership model might be, and in the process of committing it to paper (or PowerPoint!), I began to see who I am as a leader. My model is called Conversational Leadership and revolves around the everyday interactions we have with others that create lasting change. As Marshak (2019) stated, "Conversations are the principle means by which organization members create coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are, what they should do, and what the requirements are for their own and organizational success" (p. 27). This idea of co-

creating reality together joins Stacey's (2012) idea of change when he stated, "Change can only happen in many, many local interactions (p. 15). As we converse – which includes speaking, listening, creative exchanges – we create change within ourselves, within followers, and within organizations. And that is what executive leaders do.

As I wrote in a recent Critical Analysis Dialog (CAD), executive leadership is characterized by mindset, action, and care. In terms of mindset, leaders need to be cognizant of their ability to influence others and impact their organizations. According to Beck and Wiersma (2013) leaders can directly influence the outcomes of their organizations through a combination of skills, relationships, and mindset. I would add this influence is especially true if they set up a culture that allows for risk taking and learning. But executive leaders cannot stop at mindset and culture; they need to focus on action and implementation. A good leader knows how to present vision, obtain buy in, and execute a plan. Of course, there is learning in the process, especially if that leader is pragmatic (Serra, 2010) and if they allow for feedback and redo loops (Tichy & Bennis, 2009).

The final aspect for me includes care of people. No executive leader does a good job of leading their organization if he or she forgets about the people involved. It is important for leaders to establish trust (Boies, et al., 2015, p. 1083), really listen to their people and other stakeholders (Lloyd, et al., 2015, pp. 518-519), and to make decisions that take the people – and not just the bottom line – into consideration as they lead. This gets at the ethical perspective of leadership as well; leaders must care for the people they lead, they must listen and respond to feedback, and they must integrate the ethic of care as they make decisions and recognize the impact of those decisions on stakeholders.

Learning Outcomes & Milestones

As mentioned, part of the appeal of the DEL is the focus on development as a professional and as a leader. This includes personal development such as the assessment of emotional intelligence through the EQ-i, a personality inventory using the NEO, and behavioral style utilizing the DISC. These assessments captured a snapshot of who I was at the beginning of the DEL and provided insight to both strengths and weaknesses. Over the past two years, I have used these assessments to better understand myself – especially in terms of my leadership – and to improve my leadership skills.

Assessments

In terms of the DISC, I was able to appreciate my confident style and how others may perceive me as a decision-maker and leader. This assessment revealed both a creative verbal side and a goal-oriented change agency. One aspect that surprised me was that active listening did not show to be a natural set point for me; however, over the past two years, I have come to truly value listening, especially as part of my leadership identity and in practice. About six months into the DEL, my executive leadership coach mentioned she experienced me as an "aggressive listener" (C. Crowley, personal communication, January 22, 2020) as a compliment on my attention to people and their ideas. This growth came about through research on building trust as well as through personal conversations with my DEL mentor and with cohort member exchanges on empathy, listening, trust-building, and other key leadership topics.

There were three areas the EQ-i revealed as important for growth, including emotional expression, empathy, and flexibility with the NEO echoing similar areas. With the help of my mentor and concentrated effort, I have worked hard to shift to a learning and growth mindset that allowed for me to improve my flexibility. I have seen this progress in my ability to allow for

others to input on projects, the patience to allow people the time and space to "get there" in terms of direction and strategy, and the ability to pivot and see challenges as opportunities. In terms of empathy and emotional expression, I have made strides in the ability to be vulnerable with colleagues and friends, which creates the space both for my own emotional expression as well as theirs. I have learned that this vulnerability and expression naturally creates more empathy for others and makes me a better leader (Hess & Ludwig, 2017).

Exponential Growth through Practice

This learning and growth have felt exponential, especially as I put theory into practice. Working through the write-ups for Artifacts, I have come to realize how the practice of leadership not only advances our organizations but also spurs personal and professional growth. One example of this is my first artifact in which I used research on employee retention and intention that found the key indicator is not pay but rather leadership and career development (Mahan, et al., 2019, p. 14). From this research, I realized that our college did not have a formal leadership development plan and was able to assemble a team and pursue a grant to fund just such a program. As an added layer of learning and scholar-practitioner implementation, as I led the team through structuring the grant, I was able to lead in such a way as to honor my motto to let others shine and allow for them to take ownership of the project rather than just have them follow my lead and decisions.

Another milestone for me was changing jobs. As I think about the mindset I needed to lead my team as we worked through the leadership development grant and in developing a federal grants strategy (another artifact), I think of my mindset as a leader who can sense opportunity and is also ready to take risks, think creatively about my position, and take action. When I realized I had gone as far as I could with Roberts Wesleyan, I started a search that

included institutions within a five-hour radius of my home. As soon as I got down the road with Champlain College, I knew I had found my next professional home. This move came with significant risk, including the need to travel twice per month, invest in a home in Vermont with the idea of permanently moving within the year. I also received a challenge from my Vice President to raise a certain amount of money within a year in order to secure a significant promotion. For me, this move gave me pathway to advancement, the ability to build a new program, and the opportunity to keep growing. Though it comes with risk, all leaders know that risk is par for the course. According to Bywater and Lewis (2017) risk propensity is one of the most helpful traits in rapidly changing and complex environments (p. 23). I can think of no more complex environment than higher ed and know that accepting a certain amount of risk will make me a better leader.

Care & Mentorship

Without reviewing every artifact, the last one I would like to mention gets at the idea of care, a crucial part of leadership. I have benefitted from mentorship over my own leadership journey, and not only is it beneficial for growth and development but also in establishing care, trust, and loyalty. Murphy, et al. (2018) noted it is critical, especially for women who have less access to top positions and information in firms, for engagement in mentor, peer, coaching, and learning relationships (p. 362) in order advance professional growth and hit career goals. When I left my freelance career behind and entered the world of higher education, it was a key mentor that helped me see beyond grant writing and whet my appetite for higher education administration. It is because of that mentor that I explored doctoral programs and ultimately chose to pursue the DEL.

That mentor along with my DEL mentor urged me to give back and mentor others. Following their lead, I have six mentees whom I engage with in professional and personal discussions that include probing questions, conversation, listening, and feedback. Through this process, I have been able to pass along what I have learned and experienced while also encouraging them and helping them to realize their full potentials. Two have recently earned new positions or promotions and negotiated higher salaries, one was able to attend a leadership development conference that will no doubt propel her career forward, and the others are on a good track of growth. Beyond that, I realize that as much as they value my input and care, I am learning as much if not more than they are as we co-create knowledge and growth in our exchanges. As Walker, et al. (2008) stated:

> A fully formed scholar should be capable of *generating* and critically evaluating knowledge; of *conserving* the most important ideas and findings that are a legacy of past and current work; and of understanding how knowledge is *transforming* the world in which we live, and engaging in the transformational work of communicating their knowledge responsibly to others. (p. 12)

For me, this is the very definition not only of a scholar-practitioner but is the best of what we do as we engage in mentoring relationships.

Development as a Professional

One of the tenants I base my leadership on is the concept of granting and accepting. Marchiondo, et al. (2015) concluded leadership could be "conceptualized as a mutually-recognized role that emerges through a relational process of leadership claiming and granting" and noted as people claimed role responsibility and as other people granted or allowed them to take it, over time the identity as leader solidified (p. 903). This idea of people either stepping up

and claiming leadership or of others allowing for people to lead ties in with my model of Conversational Leadership. For me, it is in the process of relationship that we establish these grantings and claimings. Leaders establish trust, partly in the everyday relational exchanges (Boies, et al., 2015, p. 1083) and rely on language interactions to deepen trust and build buy-in.

Co-Creating Change

Another aspect of leadership through conversation includes the idea of co-creating knowledge. Marshak (2019) referred to this as "generative conversations" and noted how compelling this is in motivating people to act on these new ideas. And as mentioned, Stacey (2012) referred to conversation as a change agent and noted, "Change can only happen in many, many local interactions" (p. 15).

I have built my ideas of leadership around the idea that we are all in an ongoing conversation that builds relationship, engenders trust, co-crates knowledge, and causes change both in people and in organizations. From vision casting to mentoring, large conversations to small, talking to listening, true leadership can and must happen in the everyday conversations we hold with our colleagues, superiors, and followers. As I mentioned in my explanation of my leadership model, "Similar to discursive leadership where there is big "D" and little "d" discourse (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 497), conversational leadership includes the larger, or big "C", conversation that entails the happenings of our culture and organizations and the little "c" conversations that are the day-to-day ways in which we influence. As we interact conversationally and relationally as leaders, we have the opportunity to invoke and create change in ourselves, in others, in culture, and in the organizations in which we serve" (Tiffin, 2020).

In practice, this means I am intentional in my interactions with others. I am intentional in choosing those whom I wish to mentor and am generous with my time with them. Because I

believe in how small interactions change organizations, I am cognizant of my impact in every conversation I hold. One example of this comes from a recent strategy planning session Champlain College held a few weeks ago. As we got the entire campus together for two days of planning, I began to notice several fairly vocal people who expressed being tired of always planning, skepticism that this round would be different, or discouragement that the college simply was not as innovative as it once was before we had significant turnover in the administration (the college has an interim president following a series of short-term presidents lasting one to five years each).

As I interacted with colleagues – many of them for the first time in person – I was careful to both listen and also interject a different viewpoint. I often pointed out the college's willingness to change as evidenced by even hiring a position like mine – one that is dedicated to raising funding to support faculty programming and institutional priorities and one that has been vacant for over ten years. I also talked about how innovative the college is compared to many other institutions I have experienced and studied, even if they have lost some of their edge, and noted how they could easily become innovative again. Through that week and following, I have heard some of my words echoed back to me and have had many conversations where people have expressed renewed energy, feeding off my can-do attitude and impact and gaining a renewed sense of their own abilities.

While I am not the only catalyst at Champlain, I believe and can see some of the fruits of my leadership already in brightened outlook and increased desire to work toward the mission of the college. My favorite compliment came recently when my boss relayed a comment from the Interim President after a meeting we had. He told her he loves meeting with me as I always have

good news and I always have action steps. One more way to impact above – tell the story and keep implementing leadership!

Ethical Leadership

And while impact is important, it is even more important that the impact and decisions we make are ethical. During DEL 730, I was challenged to write a paper on the ethical perspective most unlike my own stance. The problem for me was that while I considered myself ethical, I really did not know what ethic I followed. After a discussion with Dr. White, I wrote my paper on pragmatism and found the words that described my ethics. While I am a person of deep faith and do follow biblical principles. I tend to see the process aspect of pragmatism as more how I operate. I believe we serve people best by being flexible, by always learning, and by employing practical judgment to each situation. Where pragmatism focuses on process and encourages flexibility and new discoveries (Johnson, 2018, pp. 155-156), practical judgment transcends rules and is the "artful synthesis of both knowledge *and* experience" (Madsbjerg, 2017, p. 6).

One of my top strengths on the Clifton's Strengths Finder (Rath, 2007) is Individualization, which speaks to the ability to see people and situations as individual and not lumped under a one-rule-fits-all, if you will. To care for people as leaders, we must be willing to treat them as individuals who need individualized care, recommendations, accommodations, and encouragement. This means for me that sometimes I must step out of a rule book and step into process and ask, "What might this person need to grow or to be successful in this particular situation?" The mark of ethical leadership for me is to focus on growth, to focus on individualized care, and to always model the supremacy of learning over rules as the key to change and success.

This ethic, combined with my leadership model of accomplishing leadership through conversation, can be seen in every aspect of my life and leadership. Through the past two years in the DEL, I have learned to lead myself, my family, my community, and my teams with a deeper focus of care that illustrates my ethical leadership. In terms of self-leadership, during the past two years, I have landed myself in the emergency room with a resulting emergency gall bladder surgery, had outpatient ankle surgery, and suffered from stress-induced Bell's palsy. Through each of these illnesses, I was able to complete my DEL work on time but also was able to take the time to care for myself. In some instances, this meant taking time off work or even asking for a reduction of work while I recovered. I put changes in place to ensure I was healthy, and even going into Residency Three made sure I am entering it rested and ready for the challenges of the week and the work that follows. In changing jobs, I was able to remove some of the expectations to work beyond capacity and removed some of the emotional stress created by a culture that allowed for unreasonable expectations.

Beyond self-care and self-leadership, I have been shepherding my family through the unexpected impact of COVID-19, when both of my children took leave of absences from their university studies. Not only did I remain present – one of my GROW goals in my role as parent – but I was able to help them through the mental stress of losing out on co-ops, the loss of in-person friendships and gatherings, and the depression that resulted for one through additional personal struggles. While I considered taking a leave form school myself, ultimately, I decided it was better to model the resilience I hope for them to further develop. I am proud to say all three of us are on schedule to graduate together in May of 2022.

Within my community, I have given freely of my time and talent, serving on a board for the new Chili Library. I shared fundraising expertise and provided professional presence and

input until my recent job and location change. The new building held its grand opening shortly after I made my move, and I received plenty of pictures and comments from my colleagues, thanking me for my part in making it happen. Additionally, I was a member in job-specific groups such as the one serving corporate and foundation officers in area colleges that I co-founded and the grant writers network where we exchanged ideas and information.

And, of course, I bring these concepts into my work life. As mentioned already, many of my projects at work include aspects of my scholarly learning, and that includes my care of people. I have mentored both coworkers and alumni at my previous college and am mentoring one person in my new context. One of the implementations I am most proud of is my focus on listening tours as I started at Champlain. As a highly accomplished and successful grants director, I could have come in and simply established a similar program as I had built at my previous college. Instead, I took the time to do a listening tour and spoke not only to groups seeking funding but also to many individuals, including all the Vice Presidents, Deans, Center Directors, and key personnel from partner departments such as Finance and HR. This accomplished several things – I was able to understand what was working well and where the pain points were for Champlain, I heard about funding hopes and process needs, and they got to understand how I operate and what supports they might find in my position moving forward. I was also able to vision cast a bit as I explained how I want to see funding as "easy and equitable", meaning people should have easy access to Advancement and all should be welcomed to the funding table where previously Finance had made the process cumbersome, difficult with multiple budget forms, and only accessible to those departments that could wade through the paperwork and process.

In the end, all of my leadership centers around the ethics of putting people first, coming to decisions and learning through process and conversation, and caring about the people and the greater organization. Similar to Beck & Wiersma's (2013) explanation of a leader's managerial capabilities, I rely on my skills and knowledge, but often that skill and knowledge is learned alongside and from others; similarly, it is the social relationships and social capital that enable me to lead and follow in a process of granting and claiming (Marchiondo, et al., 2015); and finally, my frame and mindset enable me to see problems and solutions differently. As Beck & Wiersma (2013) established, the role of the leader is extremely important in focusing people and their capabilities in order to see their organizations thrive.

Emerging Expertise

In terms of emerging areas of expertise, two areas have become prominent through my writing and learning. The first is practical judgment, which came out of both the exploration of pragmatism as ethics and the exploration of complexity and the ensuing experience of the pandemic as I watched and participated in decision making during an unstable time. The second area is the risk mindset. I have been fascinated with risk from the beginning of the journey, and my mastery has deepened in understanding and interest through my study of executive decision making and through my dissertation reading and exploration.

Practical Judgment

Practical judgment has its roots in Aristotle's concept of *phronesis*. Madsbjerg (2017) defined phronesis as the "artful synthesis of both knowledge *and* experience" (p. 6). And Flinn (2018) and others directly connect phronesis with practical judgment (Bachmann, et al., 2018; Kane & Patapan, 2006). What's interesting is Madsbjerg's (2017) inclusion of the phrase "artful

synthesis" in his description (p. 6), as it implies more than simple combination but rather a combination that is more than a formula and potentially produces more than the sum of its parts.

Practical judgment or phronesis is called by many names in the current literature. Bachmann, et al. (2017) noted wisdom-oriented research is "characterized by a wide diversity of approaches, adaptations, interpretations, and terminologies" and preferred the term "practical wisdom" (p. 148) but also noted the terms phronesis, managerial wisdom, prudence, and practical reason (p. 153). Other names and related concepts include evaluative judgment (Tai, et al., 2018) and intuition (Morris & Cunningham, 2013).

Beyond its definition and multiple terms, practical judgment is related to pragmatism for me, especially in the concept of process and learning. Johnson (2018) noted pragmatism is in fact different from many ethical perspectives in that it focuses on a process rather than a set of rules and encourages flexibility and new discoveries. And while this can make a pragmatic approach more difficult to both understand and put into practice, it resonates with the learning, process, and flexibility evident in practical judgment.

One of the key aspects of practical judgment is that of the ability to see beyond a set of rules and to utilize judgment that transcends rules for expertise in making good judgments. Stacey (2012) framed it in terms of proficiency and said, "expert performance requires moving beyond the rules, procedures and models" (p. 107). By learning how and when to transcend roles, leaders and others in organizations can lift decision making out of dominant business culture and closed-system thinking into the realm of complexity, allowing for growth in individual leadership and flexibility and speed in organizational response to threat and opportunity.

Flinn (2018) encouraged an approach to leadership development that included practical judgment, or "the ability to improvise in the moment and work with rules of thumb rather than recipes" (p. 27). Watkins, et al. (2017) put a slightly finer point on it and noted leaders need to work with "situational sensitivity" that becomes the "rule of thumb" because leaders often find themselves in "novel situations where no rules or precedent exists" (p. 152). So, the ability to utilize one's own skilled thinking based on experience and knowledge and based on what that leader knows about his or her organization and followers – in essence utilizing Beck & Wiersma's (2013) notions of managerial capabilities – allows for leaders to become true experts in their fields rather than people who are only capable of following steps, procedures, and rule books.

Related to decision making, practical judgment is a requirement for an executive leader. Badaracco (2013) acknowledged in a complex, recombinant world, leaders often do not have all the information necessary to make decisions. During times of crisis, especially, leaders often have plenty of choices but not enough information, meaning they have to choose, adjust, pivot, and choose again. Useem (2010) presented the 70% solution where leaders have to decide based on partial information and Tichy & Bennis' (2007) idea of the need for redo loops in decision making. And while many younger or less experienced leaders may want to take the time to assess all the choices and then make the best decisions, Klein (2011) disposes of this as not feasible in terms of time, ability to tell the difference between multiple good options or close options, and in terms of not being able to rely on leader intuition and experience.

Klein (2011) advocated for balance in light of multiple and multifaceted alternatives. Nonanka & Zhu (2012) talked about the bricoleur as "knowing what they want to achieve – yet opportunistic and innovative in making their vision real" (p. 121). Bricoleurs often grab

information and resources from wherever they can amass that information, not really worrying about what the "proper" or "defined" use of that information or resource is (Nonanka & Zhu, 2012, p. 120). This means the bricoleur leader is a pragmatist - who often utilizes practical judgment – in the face of decision making to make their vision come true.

The best news about this magical concept of art and science (Madsbjerg, 2017) is that it can be learned and taught, meaning we can train practical judgment into our leaders and into our organizations. The research shows practical judgment can be learned through life experience (Thiele & Young, 2016; Kane & Patapan, 2006) and increases the ability to use it in future encounters (Thiele & Young, 2016; Tai, et al., 2018; Morris & Cunningham, 2013; Stacey, 2012). Additionally, studying others' lives and case studies can increase practical judgment (Thiele & Young, 2016; Paes, et al., 2019), and generative learning (Shaw, 2002), narrative and story (Thiele & Young, 2016), complex conversations (Stacey, 2012), and feedback (Paes, et al., 2019; Tai, et al., 2018; Thiele & Young, 2016) are all effective measures to teach and learn practical judgment. Finally, mentorship (Paes, et al., 2019; Kane & Patapan, 2006; Stacey, 2012) and a culture of trial and error (Snowden, 2016; Paes, et al., 2019; Hallo, 2020) are key for increasing the ability to make decisions and increase practical judgment.

Risk Mindset

Bywater & Lewis (2017) noted risk propensity as a trait that is most helpful in rapidly changing and complex environments (p. 23), and later Bywater (2019) included risk propensity in his "Leadership Ready Reckoner" as a top characteristic to keep a leader in his or her role (p. 22). Sudrajat (2015) tied entrepreneurial mindset – "creativity, motivation, and propensity to take risks" – to the competitive advantages of the firm, similar to Beck & Wiersma's (2013) findings on how the dynamic managerial capabilities of the leader can impact the organization.

Jung, et al. (2020) alluded to the mitigating effect risk-taking mentality has on the ability to embrace change by helping organizations stay agile in the absence of rigid pass-fail mentalities and allowing for the ability to respond quickly to both threats and opportunities. Beyond empowering employees, Jung, et al. (2020) found risk-taking mindsets and task complexity have the ability to help people adapt to change. Dadkhah, et al. (2018) included broad perspective, long-term thinking, and risk taking as a few of the key attributes of a company culture that not only includes strategic foresight but also empowers employees to understand the value of new information and the ability to use that information.

Klein (2011) addressed the idea of risk propensity in his section on the myth of risk management and noted excessive planning can actually increase risks and never guarantees success (p. 239) and advocated for relying on resiliency rather than prevention of risks (p. 247). This ties clearly to Snowden's (2016) ideas on creating a "safe-to-fail" environment and Soliday's notion of creating safety nets around risky decisions (J. Soliday, personal communication, January 5, 2021).

The question of entrepreneurial mindset and its effect on the organization includes ideas of innovation and ambidexterity. Rosing & Zacher (2017) explored individuals who balanced the ideas of exploitation and exploration and found support for leaders who showed higher tolerance for ambidexterity having higher instances of innovation. Again, this idea supports the impact of leaders and their mindset on the performance of the organization and ties back to Beck & Wiersma's (2013) model of dynamic managerial capabilities. The idea of ambidexterity and how he or she wields it – as separate functions as most research suggests or as integrated as Rosing & Zacher (2017) studied – includes aspects of the innovative and entrepreneurial leader's abilities in skills, relational access, and mental framing. A more entrepreneurial and innovative manager

can affect organizations in their ability to see unique solutions to complex problems and can make the difference in creating a resilient culture in which organizations can thrive.

Much of the discussion on resilience, innovation, and entrepreneurial mindset comes back to resource allocation. How much risk a leader is willing to take often shows in the bottom-line allocations he or she is willing to risk. In terms of higher education – a context I am focused on both in my professional leadership experience and in my interests for my dissertation study – Hayter & Cahoy (2018) focused on the competing demands for higher education institutions to both meet their institutional missions of contributing to society while engaging in entrepreneurial activities that help them meet financial goals and responsibilities. Their answer is a form of dynamic capabilities called strategic social responsibility in which strategy, execution through dynamic capabilities, and support of policy and resources work together to accomplish both the mission and the economic thriving of a college or university (Hayter & Cahoy, 2018).

Focusing on dynamic capabilities, we can see that a strong risk mindset leads to innovation (Rosing & Zacher, 2017) and benefits companies by breaking path dependency (Thietart, 2016), encouraging ambidexterity (Rosing & Zacher, 2017), and creating a culture of continuous learning (Heifetz, et al., 2009) and pathways for other members to develop the same risk propensity (Jung, et al., 2020). Another aspect of the leader's role in encouraging a culture of change is that of empowering leadership. Jung, et al. (2020) stated leadership has a "significant effect on attitudes, behaviors, and various levels of performance" (Jung, et al., 2020, p. 2) and noted that one of the key ways this happens is through what they term "empowered leadership", which is simply giving employees both autonomy and authority in which to do their jobs (p. 2). Empowered employees tend to be "more motivated, responsible, and proactive" in performing their work (Jung, et al., 2020, p. 2).

But beyond simply empowering employees, Jung, et al. (2020) found risk-taking mindsets and task complexity have the ability to help people adapt to change. Knowing that employees with more task-complex work understand and are open to change and knowing risk-taking mindsets are also key, it seems to follow leaders can establish a culture in which both task complexity and openness to risk are modeled and encouraged.

Conclusion

Mindset. Action. Care. As you can see from my DEL journey, these three aspects of leadership encompass my learning, my style, and my theory of leadership. What matters most to me is how we frame and think about our work, the implementation and decision-making processes and the learning that comes from those actions, and the people for whom we care.

For me, the leadership journey has been all about the growth in each of these areas. I have seen and felt the change from a goal orientation to a learning and process orientation, and I have found the words for and embraced the pragmatic side of who I have always been. I understand how practical judgment places primacy in people and the unique situations we face over hard and fast rules and procedures and am learning to use it wisely and with growing experience. I have grown in my ability to hold things loosely and to make decisions that could easily require a redo loop, change after feedback, or need a pivot after more information is received. And I am gratified when others see and appreciate the action and confidence I have to put plans in motion. Finally, I have grown in my care for people, in my willingness to be vulnerable and to create space for all of us to try, to fail, and to try again, and through this process, I have grown in my empathy for others, especially those in my care.

Of course, none of us is ever fully done growing, and I plan to continue on a trajectory of learning and growth even as I hope to increase my leadership skills, abilities, and

responsibilities. My hope is that through the exponential growth I have experienced in the DEL program, through my new job and responsibilities and the experience I am gaining, and through my continued research for my dissertation, I will continue to advance in administration in higher education. I do not know if I will become a president at a college, my ultimate professional goal, but I am confident I could see AVP or VP in the next few years. No matter where I land title- or level-wise, I will continue to lead with mindset, action, and care.

References

Bachmann, C., Habisch, A., & Dierksmeier, C. (2018). Practical Wisdom: Management's No Longer Forgotten Virtue. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *153*(1), 147–165. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3417-y

Badaracco, J. (2013). *The good struggle: Responsible leadership in an unforgiving world*. Harvard Business Review Press.

Beck, J. B., & Wiersema, M. F. (2013). Executive Decision Making: Linking Dynamic Managerial Capabilities to the Resource Portfolio and Strategic Outcomes. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*, *20*(4), 408–419. https://doi.org/10.1177/1548051812471722

Boies, K., Fiset, J., & Gill, H. (2015). Communication and trust are key: Unlocking the relationship between leadership and team performance and creativity. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *26*(6), 1080–1094. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.07.007

Bywater, J. (2019). Leadership ready reckoner: What does it take to cope, survive and thrive as a leader in a VUCA world? *Assessment & Development Matters*, *11*(1), 21–26.

Bywater, J., & Lewis, J. (2017). Leadership: What does it take to remain engaged as a leader in a VUCA world? *Assessment & Development Matters*, *9*(4), 20–25.

Dadkhah, S., Bayat, R., Fazli, S., Tork, E. K., & Ebrahimi, A. (2018). Corporate foresight: Developing a process model. *European Journal of Futures Research*, *6*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40309-018-0147-7

Fairhurst, G.T. (2011). Discursive Approaches to Leadership. In Bryman, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The SAGE handbook of leadership* (pp. 493-507). SAGE.

Flinn, K. (2018). *Leadership development: A complexity approach* (1st Edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Hallo, L., Nguyen, T., Gorod, A., & Tran, P. (2020). Effectiveness of Leadership Decision-Making in Complex Systems. *Systems*, *8*(1), 5. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems8010005

Hayter, C. S., & Cahoy, D. R. (2018). Toward a strategic view of higher education social responsibilities: A dynamic capabilities approach. *Strategic Organization*, *16*(1), 12–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127016680564

Heifetz, R. A., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Harvard Business Press.

Hess, E. D., & Ludwig, K. (2017). *Humility is the new smart: Rethinking human excellence in the smart machine age* (First edition). Berrett-Koehler Publishers, a BK Business book.

Johnson, C. E. (2018). *Meeting the ethical challenges of leadership: Casting light or shadow* (Sixth edition). Sage.

Jung, K. B., Kang, S.-W., & Choi, S. B. (2020). Empowering Leadership, Risk-Taking Behavior, and Employees' Commitment to Organizational Change: The Mediated Moderating Role of Task Complexity. *Sustainability*, *12*(6), 2340. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12062340

Kane, J., & Patapan, H. (2006). In Search of Prudence: The Hidden Problem of Managerial Reform. *Public Administration Review*, *66*(5), 711–724.

Klein, G. (2011). *Streetlights and shadows: Searching for the keys to adaptive decision making*. MIT Press.

Lloyd, K. J., Boer, D., Keller, J. W., & Voelpel, S. (2015). Is My Boss Really Listening to Me? The Impact of Perceived Supervisor Listening on Emotional Exhaustion, Turnover

Intention, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *130*(3), 509–524. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2242-4

Madsbjerg, C. (2017). *Sensemaking: The power of the humanities in the age of the algorithm* (First edition). Hachette Books.

Mahan, T. F., Nelms, D., Bearden, C., Ryan, & Pearce, B. (2019). *2019 Retention Report: Trends, Reasons and a Call to Action* (pp. 1–35). Work Institute. https://info.workinstitute.com/hubfs/2019%20Retention%20Report/Work%20Institute%202019%20Retention%20Report%20final-1.pdf

Marchiondo, L. A., Myers, C. G., & Kopelman, S. (2015). The relational nature of leadership identity construction: How and when it influences perceived leadership and decision-making. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *26*(5), 892–908. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.06.006

Marshak, R. J. (2019). Dialogic Meaning-Making in Action. *OD Practitioner*, *51*(2), 26–31.

Morris, J. L., & Cunningham, G. K. (2013). An Exploration of Intuition among Senior Leaders. *The Exchange*, *2*(2), 51–63.

Murphy, W. M., Gibson, K. R., & Kram, K. E. Advancing women through developmental relationships. In Madsen, S. R. (Ed.). (2018). *Handbook of research on gender and leadership* (pp. 361-377). Edward Elgar.

Nonaka, I., & Zhu, Z. (2012). *Pragmatic strategy: Eastern wisdom, global success*. Cambridge University Press.

Paes, P., Leat, D., & Stewart, J. (2019). Complex decision making in medical training: Key internal and external influences in developing practical wisdom. *Medical Education*, *53*(2), 165–174. https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13767

Rath, T. (2007). *Strengths finder 2.0*. Gallup Press.

Rohr, R. (2011). *Falling upward: A spirituality for the two halves of life* (1st ed). Jossey-Bass.

Rosing, K., & Zacher, H. (2017). Individual ambidexterity: The duality of exploration and exploitation and its relationship with innovative performance. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *26*(5), 694–709. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2016.1238358

Serra, J. P. (2010). What Is and What Should Pragmatic Ethics Be?: Some Remarks on Recent Scholarship. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy*, *II*(2). https://doi.org/10.4000/ejpap.905

Shaw, P. (2002). *Changing conversations in organizations: A complexity approach to change*. Routledge.

Snowden, D. (2016). *How leaders change culture through small actions*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsLmjoAp_Dg&t=31s

Stacey, R. D. (2012). *Tools and techniques of leadership and management: Meeting the challenge of complexity*. Routledge.

Sudrajat, D. (2015). The Relationships among Leadership, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Innovation and Competitive Advantage (A Conceptual Model of Logistics Service Industry). *Binus Business Review*, *6*(3), 477. https://doi.org/10.21512/bbr.v6i3.957

Tai, J., Ajjawi, R., Boud, D., Dawson, P., & Panadero, E. (2018). Developing evaluative judgement: Enabling students to make decisions about the quality of work. *Higher Education*, *76*(3), 467–481. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-017-0220-3

Thiele, L. P., & Young, M. (2016). Practical Judgment, Narrative Experience and Wicked Problems. *Theoria*, *63.3*(148), 35–52. https://doi.org/10.3167/th.2016.6314803

Tichy, N., & Bennis, W. (2007, October 1). Making Judgment Calls. *Harvard Business Review*, *October 2007*. https://hbr.org/2007/10/making-judgment-calls

Tiffin, L. M. (2020). *Conversational Leadership.* [Unpublished presentation]. University of Charleston.

Useem, M. (2010). Decision Making as a leadership foundation. In N. Nohria & R. Khurana (Eds.), *Handbook of Leadership theory and practice: A Harvard Business School Centennial colloquium on advance in leadership* (pp. 507–525). Harvard Business Press.

Walker, G. E., & Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Eds.). (2008). *The formation of scholars: Rethinking doctoral education for the twenty-first century* (1st ed). Jossey-Bass.

Watkins, D., Earnhardt, M., Pittenger, L., Roberts, R., Rietsema, K., & Cosman-Ross, J. (2017). Thriving in Complexity: A Framework for Leadership Education. *Journal of Leadership Education*, *16*(4), 148–163. https://doi.org/10.12806/V16/I4/T4