**LDR 807-12 Leader Development: Transforming Self-Concept,**

Sandra Anderson McGraw

Omega Graduate School

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**Professor: Dr. Curtis McClane**

**Assignment**

**Assignment #3 – Essay**

1. Write a 5-page paper based on the description below:

a. Synthesize and integrate all that you have learned thus far to write an essay on

the following question**: “Why are self-concept, spirituality, and moral**

**development so critical for leadership?”**

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the

remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

**Three Critical Components of Leadership:**

**Self-Concept, Spirituality and Moral Development**

**Self-Concept**

**Three critical components of leadership are self-concept, spirituality and moral development.** Great leaders start by first leading themselves. In a TED talk, Lars Sudmann noted three essentials in leading ourselves; self awareness, self reflection and self regulation. Sudmann quoted the philosopher and Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, “The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts” (Sudmann, 2016). In short, highly effective leadership begins with leading our own thoughts, which is in line with the Scriptures. When you examine 2 Corinthians 10:5, “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,,” God is instructing us to take our thoughts captive (NASB, 2020). Becoming more self aware as a leader begins with leading our own thoughts.

Self reflection is the second essential component in leading ourselves. Through self reflection, leaders of change, or transformational leaders, need to increase their awareness through self reflection to avoid becoming narcissists. In their article on transformational leaders, O’Reilly and Chatman noted that, “Positive transformational leaders-such as Jeff Bezo, founder of Amazon, and Reed Hastings, founder of Netflix—have pioneered new industries. Others— such as Lou Gerstner, former CEO of IBM, and Alan Mulally, former CEO of Ford— have saved iconic firms from extinction. Still other transformational leaders have led social movements that have changed society—think of Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, or Susan B. Anthony. Each of these leaders left an enduring impact by not only inspiring change, but by leaving their organization or movement in a condition that allowed subsequent leaders to further improve it. But transformational leaders, especially those who are narcissistic, can also embody a dark side, mobilizing followers to pursue goals that are dangerous. A failure to understand these differences can put organizations at risk. For example, Elizabeth Holmes promised to revolutionize health care. At one point her company, Theranos, had 800 employees, was valued at $9 billion and had attracted sophisticated investors including Tim Draper and Larry Ellison. She was subsequently found to have engaged in a massive deception, resulting in the loss of the $700 million invested in the firm. She has been criminally charged with fraud” (O’Reilly, C. A., & Chatman, J. A., 2020). Self reflection is such a critical part of leadership because without it we can ignore our own conscience and cause great harm ((Daud, Y. M., 2020; Lin et al, 2019; Neck, C.P., et al, 2019).

A leader must first lead by regulating his or her own behavior. “To bring anything into your life, imagine that it’s already there” (Neck et al, 2019). Research studies have shown that transformational leadership rated as the most effective style of leadership, but that the leaders themselves paid a high cost to themselves. This study also showed that transformational leader behaviors can be exacerbated by the characteristics of followers. Research suggests that adhering to "good" leader behaviors can be costly, as adhering to procedural justice rules can leave leaders depleted. Leader-member exchange literature highlights the taxing nature of transformational leader behaviors, which can consume limited resources like time, energy, and power. An example of this would be enthusiastically motivating and compelling followers to embrace collective goals above their self-interests. The resources that transformation leaders put into this require emotional, physical, and spiritual regulation to avoid becoming depleted. (Lin et al, 2019). Being cognizant of leading ourselves first through self awareness, self reflection and self regulation are essential components (Sudmann, 2016; Daud, Y. M., 2020; Neck, C.P., et al, 2019).

**Spirituality**

So what can leaders do to avoid depletion? This is where spirituality and religion comes in. Jesus said, I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5). Religion plays a significant role in moral development or formation, influencing individuals, communities and educational systems. Regardless of worldview, religion is an essential element of culture, impacting human life by answering questions about its meaning and purpose. Marek and Walulik found in their research that it is possible to view religion and morality as elements that support a person's sense of personal integrity and the harmony of their various realms of existence, ultimately safeguarding and supporting their health and well being. Religion provides certain tools for achieving moral competence and conscience, which strengthens the person’s general psychosomatic well-being. Religion emphasizes human life’s transcendent dimension, which makes us aware of the temporary character of life on earth and the infinity of life with God. Moral competence that is gained during religious education aids in the finding of this idea. In turn, this competency makes it possible for the individual to develop an informed opinion about the compatibility of conscience and the law (Marek & Walulik, 2021).

Van Kaam believed that from the moment of our conception until the end of our life that we are being formed and are forming the world around us. Van Kaam explains that an unborn child is being formed and shaped by God, and the woman’s body and environment. While being molded in the mother’s womb, the child is forming and shaping the mother and continues after birth. The child receives sustenance and nurture from parents and others, but also her existence, whether through cries or adoring smiles, shapes the lives of people around her. This continues throughout life. “Humans beings are being formed by and are forming the world around them. Van Kaam referred to this human potency to give form (form donation) and receive form (form reception) as formability, and noted that there is a basic human striving to maintain this potency throughout our lives. Formability is ongoing and is never static, but it is one of the dynamis of spiritual formation always present throughout our lives'' (Letterman, R., Muto, S., 2017).

Christian Spiritual Formation (CSF) is deeply rooted in Scripture, requiring a fundamental connection to the gospel message. This connection shapes our understanding of our context, relationships, practices, and growth in Jesus Christ, as it shares the mind and heart of God, ensuring a strong foundation for spiritual growth. Interaction with the Bible is a crucial tool for spiritual formation. It is essential to avoid dividing the Scripture into pious, academic and informational consumption, but rather to encourage one’s own spiritual formation and moral development (Wilhoit, J. C., & Howard, E. B., 2020).

**Moral Development**

Global research highlights the alarming high levels of violence, hate speech, bullying, and brawls among students in educational settings, indicating a lack of effective Character Education. Countries continues to face numerous acts of violence, destruction, hatred, bullying, brawls, immoral acts, sexual harassment, and drug abuse, indicating a moral decline (Sanusi, S., et al, 2022). While Sanuni, Musnandar, Sutomo, Ibrahim, & Lantong’s research indicates a need for Character Education, religion, not character education, is one the the highest predictors of people making moral decisions (Wilhoit, J. C., & Howard, E. B., 2020). In Muslim Shiite’s view, what is done to please God has an ethical value. Any action (behavior) that brings humans closer to God is good, and any action that takes away humankind from God is bad. In fact, the important point is that moral reasoning cannot be a guarantee of ethical behavior (as mentioned by Kohlberg) while in Shia morality, religion is the guarantee of the implementation of morality. The Holy Quran introduces morality as one of the prophetic purposes. One of the functions of religion, in the field of ethics, is to provide a criterion for ethical work. Some religious teachings such as the belief in divine justice, the existence of resurrection, and the Day of Resurrection – which all human beings will see the results of their actions on that day – can provide a guarantee of morality. Overall, religion leads people to moral values by providing the necessary guarantees and expressing the effects and benefits of the worldly and the future of moral verbs (ethical behaviors) (Lafmejani, A. Q., 2019, 111). In Matthew 7:1-5, Jesus teaches about removing the sin and judgment of others out of our own eyes in Christian spiritual development so that we truly reflect His love and leadership.

Lawrence Kolberg’s Stages of Moral Development indicates that moral development transcends job status, socio-economical, ethnicity, gender and even religion. Kolberg’s summarizes that t stage 1, children associate right with authority, obeying it and avoiding punishment. At stage 2, they recognize different perspectives and the relative nature of everything, allowing for personal interests and relationships. Young people's stages 3 and 4 focus on conforming to conventional society's values, norms, and expectations, prioritizing being a good person in stage 3, and obeying laws to maintain society in stage 4. At stage 5 they emphasize basic rights and the democratic processes that give everyone a say, and at stage 6 they define the principles by which agreement will be most just. According to Kohlberg, you are not advanced morally unless you have reached stage 6 as an individual (Kohlberg, 1971).

 John Gibbs goes even further in explaining moral development with not just explaining the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, Martin Hoffman and Honathan Haidt. Gibbs believes that, “morality is rooted in the reality of social interconnections and develops as we come to understand that reality” (Gibbs, 2019). Gibbs suggest that, “the moral salience of human relations lies in a deeper reality of human interconnection that can be glimpsed occasionally in near-death experiences” (2019) Gibbs states that morality is not just about what is right or about knowledge and reasoning, but about what is good and involves both emotion and cognition. Gibbs highlights Hoffman’s emotional side of moral development and empathy for others and coordinates Hoffmans and Kohlberg theories to expand moral development to include both emotion and cognition toward progress in both justice and care. Gibbs' work expanded moral development even more in his book, but one that is clear, moral development involves empathy and concern (Gibbs, J. C., 2019).

 In conclusion, self-concept, spirituality and moral development are critical for leadership. Through self-concept leaders hold themselves accountable first in leading their own thoughts and actions first. The same is true with spirituality and moral development because as a leader it is important to depend on God and develop your relation with Hims, thus, taking responsibility for your own spiritual and moral development and behavior (Romans 8:28; Proverbs 23:7; 2 Corinthians 5:17: Romans 12:1-2; Romans 12:18, Mark 12:30-31; John 15:5).

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