Defining and Developing Your Leadership Style (Tom’s Notes)  
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“Leadership is not a position or a title, it is action and example” – Unknown

“The most important thing I learned is that soldiers what their leaders do. You can give them classes and lecture them forever, but it is your personal example they will follow.” – General Colin Powell

Healthcare has gone through remarkable changes over the decades. It is rare for a patient to die from an elective surgical procedure. The discovery of antibiotics, vaccines, biologic drugs and cutting edge technology has transformed the landscape of patient care. However, we have problems in healthcare. Some examples:

- It takes an average of 15 to 17 years for findings from randomized clinical trials and cohort studies to become accepted into general practice

- Measles vaccination prevented an estimated 21.1 million deaths from 2000 to 2017. This disease was almost eradicated in the US in the year 2000. Sadly the reported measles cases increased by more than 30% worldwide from 2016 to 2017. In the US, there have 880 cases of measles reported in 2019 from January to May.

- In Medscape’s 2019 report surveying 15,000 physicians in over 29 specialties, 44% report feeling burned out, 11% feel symptoms of feeling down, and 4% are clinically depressed.

Add to this the following trends:

- As people live longer, there hasn’t been a time in history with more generations active in the workforce. In 2017, Post-millenials, Millennials, Generation Xers, Baby Boomers and a very small percentage of the Silent/Greatest generation were all in the workforce.

- In 2015, Millennials became the largest generation in the US Workforce. Millennial preferences for organization culture include genuine engagement, flow, accountability and better outcomes.

- In a Deloitte survey of over 7,500 millennials worldwide, 63% said their own leadership skills are not being developed. Respondents who felt this way were more likely planning an exit from their current workplace within two years.

- Authority and responsibility in organizations have become less concentrated as access to world-wide information and networking have become global phenomena.

Our aim is to give you a brief recap of the development of various Leadership styles throughout the ages, their advantages and disadvantages, and a strategy to hone your own leadership style. The goal is to give you a pragmatic approach that is intended to be used in real-world situations.
Great Man and Trait
For the vast majority of known history, the dominant Leadership style was known as the “Great Man and Trait” style. And it is just as horrible as it sounds. The premise is that you are born with certain traits, and only those born with the right traits deserved to be leaders.

You guessed it – males, born in the “right” socioeconomic circles, with no consideration of actual ability. Emphasis was on control and centralization of power, with the common theme of domination. The disease of power is corrosive – Power corrupts, Absolute Power corrupts absolutely.

There was a brief rebranding of this style as “Charismatic Authority”, but in essence was no different in sentiment.

My take: This theory should be placed in the dustbin of history.

Kurt Lewin
Kurt Lewin in his 1939 manuscript – Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created “Social Climates”, was the first to describe various Leadership styles. He described the two extremes of Leadership – Autocratic (where the leader makes all the decisions without consultation) and Laissez Faire (where the followers make all the decisions, and the leader abdicates any responsibility) – as well as an in-between ideal category he termed Democratic, where the leader seeks opinions from and includes team members in the decision-making process.

My take: This was a step in the right direction.
**Contingency Leadership**
The first situational theory of leadership was advocated by Fred Fiedler⁵. Fiedler believed that an individual’s leadership style is the result of their experiences throughout their lifespan, and thus extremely difficult to change. Thus, rather than teaching people a particular leadership style, one should concentrate on helping people understand the leader’s style and learn how to match that style to the particular situation.

In order to help followers understand their leader’s style, he developed the Least-Preferred Coworker Scale⁶. This scale asks a leader to think of all the people with whom they have ever worked and then describe the person with whom they have worked least well with. According to Fiedler, as the leadership style is fixed, effectiveness can only be improved by either restructuring tasks, or changing the amount of power the leader had over factors such as salary, disciplinary action, and promotions.

My take: Assessing what environment/types of people a leader works well with is a good thing. Thinking that a leader’s style is fixed for all time means that a leader can never obtain new skills – which I fundamentally disagree with.

**Modern era**
There are 2 Leadership Theories that are present in some form or other in the remaining Leadership Styles. They describe the interactions between leaders and followers. They are:
- Leader-Member Exchange Theory
- Path-Goal Theory

We will explore both in the following paragraphs.

**Leader-Member Exchange Theory**
The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory emerged in the 1970s⁷ and focuses on the two-way relationship between a leader and followers. At its core is the quality of the leader-member relationship and discussions⁸. Keep in mind that this theory was revolutionary when it was introduced, as the premise that relationships are built on respect and trust hadn’t been articulated before.

According to the theory, leaders form strong trust with some followers, but not all. The work-related attitudes and behaviors of those workers depend on how they are treated by their leader.

There are 3 phases⁹ that the leader does an assessment:
1. Role-Taking: When an employee joins an organization, the leader assesses their skills and abilities
2. Role-Making: New team members then begin to work on projects and tasks as a team. During this stage, the leader sorts the team members into one of two groups: In-Group (loyal, trustworthy) and Out-Group (unmotivated or incompetent). The leader then places more resources on the In-Group.
3. Routinization: Routines between team members and their leaders are established.
Leader-Member Exchange Theory

- Focuses on quality of relationships and interactions between leaders and followers
- Leader develops separate exchange relationships with each subordinate, and each party defines the subordinates role

My take: Main disadvantage of this theory is that it doesn’t really delve into what specific leader behaviors promote high quality relationships. But it does emphasize trust, emotions and relationship-building, and that the leader has the flexibility to focus on those who are committed to the organization (efficient use of resources).

Path-Goal Theory
This theory was developed first by Martin Evans and then refined by Robert House, and had as its core principle that the people you lead will be motivated if:
   a) they think they are capable of the work (high-level of self-efficacy);
   b) believe their efforts will result in certain outcome or reward; and
   c) believe the outcome or reward will be worthwhile

The theory thus emphasizes the relationship between the leader’s style, the follower’s personality characteristics and the work environment.

Leaders choose between four primary leadership behaviors when they are interacting with their subordinates, including:
1. Directive
2. Supportive
3. Participative
4. Achievement-oriented (wherein the leader sets high standards and seeks continuous improvement)

In this theory, leaders are successful in motivating followers when they can make the path to the goal as clear as possible through coaching and direction. Leaders are active in removing obstacles and road blocks, and thus make the work satisfying.
Path-Goal Theory

- Emphasizes relationship between the leader’s style, the follower’s personality and the work environment

- 4 Behaviors
  - Directive
  - Supportive
  - Participative
  - Achievement-Oriented

My take: Love that in this theory, leadership is active and dynamic. The 4th behavior (achievement-oriented) is used for the employee with the most potential.

With the above 2 theories in mind, let’s now explore the most commonly cited Leadership theories.

**Participative Leadership**

A participative leader is one who invites input from all employees under their charge for their decisions. The team members are given the pertinent information regarding organizational issues, and a majority vote determines the course of action.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is an authoritative leader who seeks almost no input and makes decisions on their own. The in-between categories are the benevolent authoritative leader who though concerned about their team members with rewards for quality performance, still makes decisions on their own; and the consultative leader who makes a genuine effort to listen to the team members’ ideas, but decisions are still centralized.

In participative leadership the assumptions are:

- Involvement in decision-making improves the understanding the issues involved by those who must carry out the decisions
- People are more committed to actions where they have been involved in the decision-making
- People are less competitive and more collaborative when they are working on joint goals
My take: Though the highly participative method takes time to develop, this framework is easy to implement, as you are going through 4 choices of action. I thus like to use the framework in time-constrained or stressful situations.

**Situational Leadership**
This model was proposed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, initially named the “life cycle theory of leadership” that got changed in the mid-1970s to “Situational Leadership”.

The fundamental principle in Situational Leadership is that there is no single “best” style of leadership. Effective leadership is task-relevant, and most successful leaders are those who adapt their leadership style to the performance readiness (ability and willingness) of the individual or group they are attempting to lead or influence.

Effective leadership varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the task, job or function that needs to be accomplished.

Situational Leadership curve visualizes 4 leadership styles

- **S1 Telling:** One-Way Communication (The Leader Decides)
- **S2 Selling:** Leader shows the approach to use for the task making and convince people to buy into this process (Let’s talk, but the Leader Decides)
- **S3 Participating:** The task-maker and the leader share opinions about the process of task doing (Let’s Talk, and the Team Member Decides)
- **S4 Delegating:** The entire responsibility for the task making is passed to the assigned person or team, the leader only monitors the progress and accepts/rejects the results
My take: I discovered Ken Blanchard as a result of reading ‘One-Minute Manager’, and the concepts of ‘One-Minute Goals’, One-Minute Praisings’, and ‘One-Minute Redirects’ were eloquent in their simplicity. Hence this style of leadership was the one I explored first. The major drawback to this style is that some feel that it is manipulative or coercive. Thus easier to do if your team members are already motivated.

**Servant Leadership**

Robert Greenleaf’s work on Servant Leadership\(^{17}\) emphasized the choice of certain leaders to “serve” their followers, empowering them to live and work to their full potential. The servant leader’s deliberate choice is to serve others.

This concept\(^{18}\) is different from traditional leadership where the focus is the thriving of their company or organizations. A servant leader shares power, puts needs of the employees first, and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.

Founder, Robert Greenleaf, said that the servant leader should be focused on:
- Do those served grow as persons?
- Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?

My take: The servant leadership model is a long-term model, and thus needs time for application. It can serve as a mechanism to transform culture, but it is difficult to do. However, if you are able to do it, the return on investment is substantial as leaders who empower and respect their staff get better performance, and are able to groom the leaders of the future.

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is a style in which leaders encourage, inspire and motivate employees to innovate and create change that will help grow and shape the future.
success of the company. James Burns first introduced this concept during his descriptive work on political leaders. In it, he attempted to differentiate the terms leaders and managers, and claimed that the differences are in their behaviors.

Burns theorized that the two ends of the spectrum are transactional leaders (those who do not strive for culture change, but work in the existing culture) and transformational leaders (work for the benefit of the team, articulate an energizing vision and challenging goals, and thus facilitate culture change).

Bernard Bass extended the work of Burns by explaining the psychology behind transactional and transformational leadership. One of the biggest differences between Bass' theory and Burns' is that Bass believed that a leader can exhibit both transactional and transformational behaviors at the same time. In fact, he emphasized that the most effective often do.

Transformational leadership is accomplished by setting an example at the executive level through a strong sense of corporate culture, employee ownership and independence in the workplace.

Key – leaders do NOT micromanage.

They trust trained employees to take authority over decisions in their assigned jobs. Employees have more room to be creative, look to the future and find new solutions to old problems. Additionally, employees on the leadership track will also be prepared to become transformational leaders themselves through mentorship and training.

The full range of transformational leadership introduced four elements:

- **Inspirational Motivation**: one who provides an appealing vision that brings the group out of their comfort zone and into high productivity
- **Individual Consideration**: Leaders take on a mentor role with their group
- **Idealized Influence**: Leader serves as a role model on their team
- **Intellectual Stimulation**: Leaders facilitate innovation and creativity for a group. They provide opportunities for people to challenge themselves and make the most of their talents.

To facilitate research in this area, the most frequently used survey is the “Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire” also known as the MLQ form 5X. The current version includes 36 items that are broken down into 9 scales with 4 items measuring each scale.
A great proponent of the transformative leadership style is John Maxwell\textsuperscript{23}. In his words: “Most teams don’t naturally get better on their own. Left alone, they don’t grow, improve, or reach championship caliber. Instead, they tend to wind down…The good news is that your leadership style can build a winning team, or transform the one that you have.” His most well-known work is ‘The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership’.

My take: Nice concept that I like to use when building a team or program, as the key first step is developing a challenging and attractive vision. A vision of course remains just a dream unless action steps and goals are enacted.

**Authentic Leadership**
This theory has been raised from time to time in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, but really became more popular after the publication of the former Chairman and CEO of Medtronic, Bill George’s book in 2003\textsuperscript{24}.

Some key concepts:
- Authentic leaders are self-aware and genuine: Leaders are aware of their strengths, limitations and their emotions. They do not act one way in private and another in public; they don’t hide their mistakes or weaknesses out of fear of looking weak. They also realize that being self-actualized is an endless journey, never complete.
- Authentic leaders are mission driven and focused on results: Leaders put missions and goals of the organization ahead of their own self-interest.
- Authentic leaders lead with their heart, not just their minds. They communicate in a direct manner, but WITH empathy. (Directness without empathy is cruel).

Authentic leaders hence focus on the long-term.

**Examples of Authentic Leadership**
**John Kotter**
John P. Kotter is a best-selling author on leadership and change, business entrepreneur and Harvard professor\textsuperscript{25}. His view is that we have a leadership problem in this world because we limit our definition of leadership to positions or titles, and that we don’t have
enough people who have been given the opportunity or take the opportunity, no matter what their job, to lead. Leadership is not just “making the trains run on time, it's changing systems to take advantage of the opportunities that come with a rapidly changing world – to make a difference in people’s lives”.

His biggest focus was on differentiating between leadership and management.
- Management is fundamentally a set of processes, the most core of which are planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing and controlling in problem solving. What management does is take a system, an organization of people and technology, and make it function producing a good or a service, on-time, on-budget – the way it was designed to work
- Leadership on the other hand, is a set of processes involving creating a vision of the future, a strategy for getting there, and communicating that out to people in a way that gets them to buy into the vision. Additionally, one needs to create an environment that motivates those people, inspires them to make that vision a reality. Leadership in essence creates the system that managers manage.

In his best-selling book ‘Leading Change’, Kotter outlined the 8-step change model as the prescriptive framework for leading change in an “ever-changing world”.
- Step 1: Establishing a sense of urgency
- Step 2: Creating the guiding coalition
- Step 3: Developing a change vision
- Step 4: Communicating the vision for buy-in
- Step 5: Empowering broad-based action
- Step 6: Generating short-term wins
- Step 7: Never letting up
- Step 8: Incorporating changes into the culture

Another best-selling book was ‘Our Iceberg is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions’.

Drawbacks to the model:
- If everything is urgent, is anything really urgent?
- If we can’t establish “true urgency” and a sustainable “guiding coalition”, and are not empowered to develop an organizational vision, how do you do a change model in your day to day activities?

My take: Kotter's change model is effective when you are leading from a position of uncertainty, or leading through a crisis. It gets old as you mature into a leadership role (your followers will stop following if being constantly told that all of the issues are urgent).

Jon Gordon
Jon Gordon’s main focus is on building what he calls ‘a culture of greatness’26. In his words: “It's the most important thing a leader can do because culture drives behavior, behavior drives habits and habits create the future... When you create a culture of greatness you create a collective mindset in your organization that expects great things to happen—even during challenging times. You expect your people to be their best, you make it a priority to coach them to be their best and most of all you create a work environment that fuels them to be their best.”
However, one can only do this effectively is there is a culture of positivity. “As part of this process you develop positive leaders who share positive energy throughout the organization because positive energy flows from the top down. You also don’t allow negativity to sabotage the moral, performance and success or your organization” His best known work is ‘The Energy Bus’.

My Take: I love his concept of building a positive culture. My belief is that whatever leadership style you choose, you can infuse it with a positive mindset – believe that all of us in healthcare are motivated to help others, and seek those attributes and skills that can help those you lead become positive leaders themselves.

Brené Brown
A recent version of Authentic Leadership is the ‘Courageous Leadership’ principles promoted by Dr. Brené Brown27. In her book, ‘Daring Greatly’, her Leadership manifesto came about when she was trying to find the best way to answer the question:

“What do we want people to know about us, and what do we need from them?”

Her manifesto is as follows:

“To the CEOs and teachers. To the principals and the managers. To the politicians, community leaders and decision-makers:
- We want to show up, we want to learn, and we want to inspire.
- We are hardwired for connection, curiosity and engagement
- We crave purpose, and we have a deep desire to create and continue
- We want to take risks, embrace our vulnerabilities and be courageous
- When learning and working are dehumanized, when you no longer see us and no longer encourage our daring, or when you only see what we produce or how we perform – we disengage and turn away from the very things the world needs from us: our talent, our ideas, and our passion
- What we ask is that you engage with us, show up beside us, and learn from us.
- Feedback is a function of respect: when you don't have honest conversations with us about our strengths and our opportunities for growth, we question our contributions and your commitment.
- Above all else, we ask you to show up, let yourself be seen, and be courageous. Dare Greatly with us.” (p.211 of Daring Greatly book)

In summary, Dr. Brown states that the key to being successful as a leader is the ability to be vulnerable. The courage to be vulnerable is not about winning or losing. It’s about the courage to show up when you can’t predict or control the outcome.

Her latest book, Dare to Lead, is a compilation of her two decades of research into an actionable book about what it takes to be a daring leader.

My take: I’m a big fan of Brené Brown. However showing vulnerability isn’t considered a strength at the present time, especially in the field of Medicine. My gut instinct is that as more and more success is achieved with authentic leadership, the concept and study of the concept will continue to grow.
Now what?
With the above Leadership styles and principles in mind, there are 2 approaches you can use:
- pick one, and as you get comfortable in its use, then start exploring others
- learn the principles of the most recent ones, and then use a pragmatic approach according to the situation

As previously mentioned, I first deep-dived into the Situational Leadership style as I’m a big fan of the Ken Blanchard books such as One-Minute Manager. The more experience I’ve gained, I’ve evolved to the pragmatic approach.

The key to Leadership: there is no “one size fits all” theory, there is no one type of Leadership that works in every situation.

The journey is personal. It starts with you. What I’ve found is as follows (with the caveat, that this is reflective of my own leadership journey):

Personalized Strategy

- Participative
  ➢ Use This Style ➔ During stressful times

- Situational
  ➢ Easier to do when team is already motivated

- Servant
  ➢ Use This Style ➔ With a diverse team in the beginning
Case Examples
- Tom’s experience building a center of excellence at the University of Utah
- Response to citations for the Training program that Tom inherited
- Building the American College of Surgeons Strong for Surgery national quality progra^28,29

Summary
Across the centuries and decades, a large number of leadership theories arose. In the 21st century, there is only one area of agreement: there is no consensus definition, theory or style of leadership. In the years ahead, there will continue to arise debate and emergence of new theories.

Human beings are complex. Behaviors can be routine, but human beings will continue to change and adapt their behaviors to the world around them.

In this complex world, I believe that Leadership skill acquisition, refinement and continuous improvement to be a dynamic and personal process. Embrace the process. The three principles I leave with you are:

- Transformational
  - Use This Style → Building long-term relationships

- Authentic
  - Use This Style → You have tremendous expertise + ability to motivate
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27. Dr. Brené Brown website: https://brenebrown.com/

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