

# CONNECTIVE LEADERSHIP:

## Female Leadership Styles in the 21st-Century Workplace

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper describes an integrative leadership model, "connective leadership," which combines the traditional masculine American ego-ideal with additional female role behaviors more appropriate for an interdependent world. Based on the L-BL Achieving Styles Model, connective leadership emphasizes connecting individuals to their own, as well as others', tasks and ego drives. Achieving styles are defined as the characteristic behaviors individuals use to achieve their goals. The Achieving Styles Model includes three sets of achieving styles (direct, instrumental, and relational), each subsuming three individual styles, resulting in a full complement of nine distinct achieving styles. Gender differences in achieving styles are reported and related to the connective leadership paradigm.

American cultural traditions define personality, achievement, and the purpose of human life in ways that leave the individual suspended in glorious, but terrifying, isolation.

Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton  
1985:6

## CONNECTIVE LEADERSHIP: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL FOR THE 21st CENTURY

Contrary to traditional beliefs, female leadership is no longer an oxymoron. Viewed from the perspective of global interdependence, it contains the seeds of connective leadership, a new, integrative model of leadership more suited to the dramatically changing workplace of the twenty-first century. Inevitably, the workplace will reflect

the increasingly interdependent, external environment, shaped by new realities and demands emanating from global political and economic trends (Starr 1988; Drucker 1989). Internally, the backgrounds, talents, and interests of a highly diverse work force will foster additional, yet consonant transformations in the workplace (Pfeffer 1983; Gutek, Larwood, and Stromberg 1996). To address the complex demands of the twenty-first-century workplace, organizational and political leadership will need to reflect certain behaviors to which females traditionally have been socialized, but which many women are being urged to abandon to ensure their occupational success.

"Connective leadership" derives its label from its character of connecting individuals not only to their own tasks and ego drives, but also to those of the group and community that depend upon the accomplishment of mutual goals. It is leadership that connects individuals to others and others' goals, using a broad spectrum of behavioral strategies. It is leadership that "proceed(s) from a premise of connection" (Gilligan 1982:38) and a recognition of networks of relationships that bind society in a web of mutual responsibilities. It shares responsibility, takes unthreatened pride in the accomplishments of colleagues and proteges, and experiences success without the compulsion to outdo others.

Connective leadership reaches out beyond its own traditional constituencies to presumed adversaries, using mutual goals, rather than mutual enemies, to create group cohesion and community membership (Gardner 1990). It is leadership able to resolve the tension between agency and communion (Bakan 1966), comfortable in integrating others' diverse needs, able to take pride in others' success that may even surpass one's own. This new, integrative form of leadership not only encompasses both transactional and transformational behaviors (Burns 1978; Tichy and Devanna 1986; Doig and Hargrove 1987; Bass 1990; Gardner 1990), but also stretches its practitioners beyond individualism and charisma (Gerth and Mills 1946; Kouzes and Posner 1987; Conger 1989), even beyond competition and collaboration (Gray 1989; Badaracco 1991).

## **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ROOTS: GENDER DIFFERENCES**

The components of connective leadership are familiar to women, but more worrisome to men. Gilligan (1982), Miller (1976), and Chodorow (1974) concur that the psychosocial trajectories of women and men are differentially characterized by their respective needs for connection and separation. For males, separation from the maternal figure is the path to individuation and maturity. Competitively moving out beyond others, in ways delineated by rule-bound, hierarchical structures, becomes the mark of mature male success. According to post-Freudian interpretations, only under highly structured conditions can adult males feel comfortable acknowledging their connections to others. According to Gilligan (1982:44), "Rule-bound competitive achievement situations, which for women threaten the web of connection, for men provide a mode of connection that establishes clear boundaries

and limits aggression, and thus appears comparatively safe."

For many females, connecting to, caring for, and taking responsibility for mediating the conflicting needs of others indicate adult success and provide a sense of safety. Females commonly interpret the various stages in hierarchies as problematical way stations of separation, positions dangerously poised at the far reaches of the social web (Chodorow 1974; Miller 1976; Gilligan 1982). Females' definition of self involves altruistically helping and caring for others (Fowlkes 1983), a self-definition historically reflected in traditional female occupations.

The traditional American concept of leadership is a pastiche based upon a masculine ego-ideal glorifying the competitive, combative, controlling, creative, aggressive, self-reliant individualist. It describes a leadership form better suited to a frontier society than to the interdependent global and organizational environments that will characterize the twenty-first century. This standard leadership image is dominated by behaviors focussed on task mastery, competition, and power, and encapsulated in a limited set of achieving styles, labeled "direct achieving styles."

### **THE AMERICAN EGO-IDEAL AND ACHIEVING STYLES**

"Achieving styles," central to this discussion, are simply the characteristic ways in which individuals go about getting things done--the learned behaviors people use for achieving goals regardless of their substantive nature. One might conceptualize achieving styles as personal technologies or methods of attacking problems, or even implementation strategies. Achieving styles are divided into three sets, "direct," "instrumental," and "relational," each with three associated styles, which are described in detail below. Each individual uses a unique combination of these learned behaviors, ordinarily relying on styles associated with previous success, perhaps shifting emphases, to accomplish his or her current goals (Lipman-Blumen 1991). Occasionally, under crisis conditions, individuals may move to a somewhat different configuration; however, if the crisis is easily circumscribed and resolved, individuals subsequently revert to their former achieving styles.

The central argument of this paper presents five main points, in which achieving styles play a key role.

- First, American leadership images represent a masculine ego-ideal, that is, an ideal image of what we all would be, if only we could.
- Second, that ego-ideal draws on a very limited set of achieving styles, which we shall call "direct" styles, that emphasize individualism, self-reliance, and belief in one's own abilities, as well as power, competition, and creativity.
- Third, we reject two other sets of learned behaviors -- "instrumental" and "relational" achieving styles--ordinarily associated with more traditional female behavior.

The set we dismiss as weak are the "relational" achieving styles, which focus on collaborating with, contributing to, and deriving a vicarious sense of accomplishment from others' success. They are the helpful, nurturant, vicarious role behaviors associated with the traditional female role. An ongoing study of achieving styles (Lipman-Blumen, Handley-Isaksen, and Leavitt 1983; Lipman-Blumen 1991) confirms that women engaged in full-time homemaker roles favor these achieving styles above all others. So do many women in the workplace, although they experience difficulty maintaining these styles in the absence of a critical mass of like-minded, usually female, coworkers.

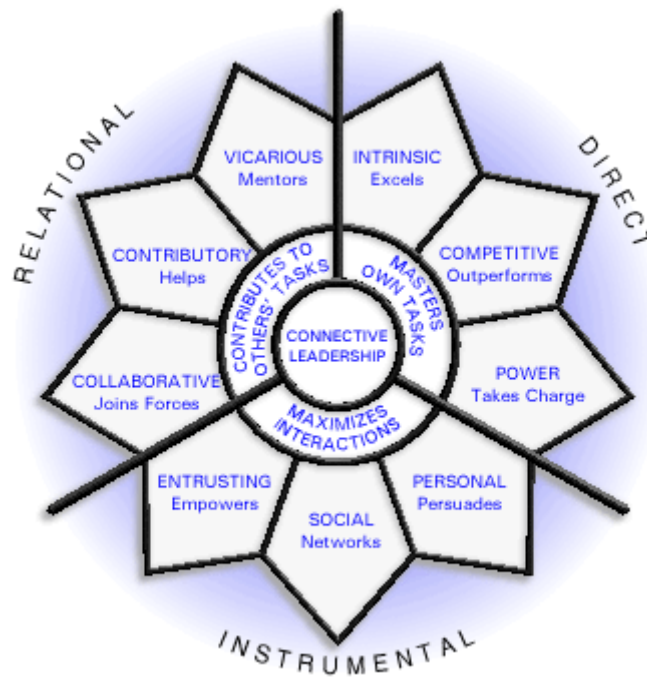


Figure 1  
L-BL Achieving Styles Model

Americans also reject a second set of learned achievement behaviors, the "instrumental" achieving styles, which, until recently, they perceived as manipulative and slightly unsavory behaviors. The instrumental styles take their name from the propensity to use the self and others as instruments for accomplishment.

Instrumental styles involve complex, subtle strategies. Individuals who prefer the instrumental styles use many aspects of the self, including intelligence, skill, wit, charm, family background, and previous accomplishments, to engage others in their tasks. They enjoy attracting followers by projecting and dramatizing themselves and their goals, through symbols and dramatic behavior, as well as counterintuitive, and therefore unexpected and unforgettable, gestures. For example, Indian independence leader Mohandas Gandhi was much enamored of instrumental styles, which also

emphasize human interaction, group process, and informal systems (more recently understood as "networks"). Instrumental achieving styles involve accomplishing tasks through networks of relationships, believing in and entrusting one's vision to others, and thereby empowering others through one's confidence in them.

From pre-Biblical days, these styles have been attributed to women; however, the denigration associated with these styles generally prompts American women, not to mention men, to deny them. Earlier research (Lipman-Blumen et al. 1983) suggests that American women tend to rank two styles in the instrumental set much lower than the remaining seven achieving styles that complete the achieving styles spectrum.

- Fourth, the networked world in which all nations now live calls for new forms of leadership that connect people to each other, to their own and others' tasks and dreams, to their families, colleagues, institutions, and networks, as well as to their nations and global neighbors. The two rejected sets of behavior--"relational" and "instrumental" achieving styles--one accepted by, the other attributed to women--provide these important aspects of connective leadership.

To meet the leadership challenge of the 1990s and beyond, it will be necessary to integrate these two under utilized sets of achieving styles with our currently faltering masculine ego-ideal. In fact, to meet this need, female achieving styles--both actual and attributed--probably must predominate. Connective leadership, which connects individuals creatively to their tasks and visions, to one another, to the immediate group and the larger network, empowering others and instilling confidence, represents a crucial set of strategies for success, not only in the workplace, but in our interdependent world community.

- Fifth, connective leadership also integrates and creatively revitalizes individualism with a crucial female perspective, that is, seeing the world as a total system of interconnected, uniquely important parts, rather than as independent, competitive, isolated, and unequal entities. This perspective leads to an emphasis on external goals that all human groups can unite to accomplish, rather than on more internal objectives that set individuals, groups, and nations apart and often against one another.

Connective leadership repudiates the traditional use of external enemies to unite constituents behind their own parochial leaders. It also deconstructs hierarchies in which workers are urged to compete for the pinnacle positions, where many ostensibly successful individuals find themselves "suspended in glorious, but terrifying, isolation" (Bellah et al. 1985:6).

## **THE AMERICAN EGO-IDEAL: THE DIRECT ACHIEVER IN RUGGED**

## **INDIVIDUALIST'S CLOTHING**

From our earliest national origins, the rugged individualist has served as the ultimate emblem of American leadership. This essentially masculine symbol melds the images, sounds, and smells of the early Western frontier (Taylor 1972): the cowboy's corral, the battlefield, the mine, the factory, the political back room, and the corporate boardroom.

The fierce individualist personifies the manner in which Americans are taught to achieve their goals, as well as define themselves, their most cherished dreams, and their values. These individualistic qualities also characterize the most admired American leaders. Because they confront tasks directly through their own efforts, we shall call these leaders "direct achievers." As direct achievers, they tend to use three "direct" styles, all of which focus on realizing their own visions, whether through individualistic ("intrinsic direct"), competitive ("competitive direct"), or controlling ("power direct") behaviors.

Individuals who prefer the first "direct" style--the "intrinsic direct"--determinedly seek challenges and measure their visionary goals against personal, internalized standards of excellence that demand an exacting performance--perhaps a performance one can only count on oneself to deliver. Their stubborn pursuit of a dream is often associated with self-reliant creativity. Intrinsic direct achievers' passionate devotion to the vision or goal they have identified seeks only one reward: the intrinsic satisfaction derived from doing something well (much like McClelland's [1961] high-need achiever). Earlier research (Lipman-Blumen et al. 1983; Lipman-Blumen 1991) indicates that women, as well as men, endorse this behavior.

The second "direct" achieving style--the "competitive direct"--characterizes the rugged individualist who competes unrelentingly, determined to overcome all contenders, monumental odds, and immeasurable hardships. Perhaps, the most robust gender-linked finding in the achieving styles literature is the consistently lower valuation that women assign to competitive behavior (Axline, Billings, and VanderHorst 1991). Across virtually all age, occupational, and cultural groups, women consistently are less likely than men of their own group to report that they use competitive strategies to accomplish their goals.

The third "direct" style--the "power direct" achieving style--describes the "take charge" behavior of traditional American heroes. These independent heroes strive to be in total control of all resources, from people and situations to institutions and global events. Although leaders who prefer the "power direct" achieving style may delegate tasks to others, they retain strict control over both the targeted goals and the means to their accomplishment.

The second, but less pronounced, gender difference our research (Lipman-Blumen 1991) reveals is the predilection for power. According to these data, men also tend to

prefer power more intensely than women. With respect to power, however, many female executives are beginning to imitate their male colleagues, a strategy that threatens to undermine their connective leadership advantage.

These three "direct" achieving styles are the hallmarks of the self-reliant American hero. Americans perceive the "direct" achieving styles as the well-springs of their unique admixture of pragmatism, innovation, creativity, and vision. Americans also associate these styles with determination and masculinity. That John Wayne's image is alive and well, not only in TV reruns and commercials, but also in the American psyche, is evidence from popular culture of "direct" achievers' enduring appeal.

"Direct" achieving leaders do not attract and unite their followers simply by the creativity and worthiness of their own dreams and goals. They also commonly draw constituents or followers to their cause by defining an external enemy, sometimes exaggerating that enemy's potential threat, and even creating enemies when none exist. This strategy brings internal cohesion to the leader's group, inflating both the leader's strength and the group's need for the leader's protection and guidance. Identifying an external enemy is an important strategy for the power-oriented, competitive leader.

Although many Western societies share this individualistic ideal, the American scene has provided the quintessential historical stage for the exploits of the rugged solo hero, the "direct achiever." For example, George Washington, Henry David Thoreau, Andrew Carnegie, Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt, John Wayne, Steve Jobs, Lee Iacocca, and Ronald Reagan all share to some degree this characteristic stance. Their examples encourage us to believe that we, as individuals, can make an important difference, should "go for it," can compete fiercely and win. These heroes embody the American ego-ideal: rugged individuals, with creative, visionary dreams, taking control, pitting themselves against impossible odds and winning.

American history texts depict archetypal American characters as individualistic, "direct" achievers, doing it all by themselves. Still, a healthy skepticism is warranted lest these allegedly "individual" exploits are taken as the whole, rather than the tip, of the human collaboration iceberg.

Despite historical accounts, the scope of their accomplishments suggests that these industrial and military leaders did not accomplish their feats single-handedly. Nevertheless, American mythology bathes them in an isolating spotlight, obscuring the many others whose contributions helped create their astounding successes--their aides-de-camp, their coaches or mentors, their assistants, their teammates, their parents, their wives and children. This misperception only encourages us to believe leaders succeed single-handedly powerfully, and competitively.

If the heroes who exemplify the American ego-ideal appear larger than life or accomplish tasks that seem beyond the capabilities of a single individual, that is



probably exactly the case. These are the makings of mythical figures, embodying cultural myths and images. Mythologized heroes serve as ego-ideals precisely because they inspire--and even goad--believers to reach beyond themselves to almost superhuman goals.

The cultural heroes Americans understand best speak to them of individual dreams, individual efforts, individual rights, individual property, individual problems. American culture encourages a profound, if irrational, faith that a nation of rugged individuals, working separately, often competing against one another, can produce a totality that miraculously will result in a successful collective effort.

The recent resurgence of the American entrepreneur (Gevirtz 1984; Drucker 1985) is consistent with this ego-idea). The daring entrepreneur who starts a new business in his garage and takes on the industrial megagiants is the late-20thcentury American hero. Still, that hero inevitably falters when success enlarges the task beyond the capabilities of one even larger-than-life individual. At that point, these self-reliant individuals have trouble sharing the challenge with peers, entrusting others with their dream, believing others can do it as well as they, collaborating, getting others to feel the task belongs to them, negotiating, helping others to fulfill their own dreams, making the group work synergistically, avoiding the pitfalls of team activities, and taking pride in others' success.

Individualistic leaders rarely embody these important aspects of connective leadership. More often than not, they fail to unite people and nations through their mutual needs. In fact, they commonly tend to set people in opposition to one another. They lack the skills of connective leaders who draw people to one another's goals, reach out to bring others into the process, and experience a sense of accomplishment when colleagues and proteges succeed. Connective leadership replaces egocentrism with mutuality.

When the task grows patently beyond the capabilities of one larger-than-life leader, the hero leaves, or is driven out, and starts again, as the lone hero. The "Lone Ranger rides again," or maybe now it is the lonely ranger--American images, all.

### **A SCHIZOID LOVE AFFAIR WITH TEAMWORK**

American culture partially tempers its devotion to individualism with a schizoid love affair with teamwork. Americans experience a deep-seated tension between the pursuit of individualism and a reflexive response to teamwork. Teamwork is a national shibboleth, deeply embedded in the core of democracy. In theory, at least, the team has an apparent leveling or democratizing effect. Everyone can try out for the team. All team members are equal. Still, Americans confront an abiding ambivalence that hobbles their unequivocal commitment to team effort. Even within teams, individualism remains their true love.



It is no accident that Americans anoint baseball the "all-American" sport. Baseball also serves as national metaphor. As the late Baseball Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti (1985) suggested,

Baseball fits America so well because it embodies the interplay of individual and group that we so love, and because it expresses our longing for the rule of law while licensing our resentment of law givers ... What each individual must do (is) obvious to all, and each player's initiative, poise, and skill are highlighted.

Baseball permits us the illusion of promoting teamwork, while simultaneously keeping a detailed scorecard on each player's hits, runs, and errors. The player's scorecard is tallied without acknowledging his teammates' contributions to that performance.

Periodically, of course, the "communal choreography" of the team takes over, fusing the individual players into a cohesive group, muting the loneliness, terror, and ecstasy of stardom (Giamatti 1985). Moreover, baseball enables team members to cooperate with one another while simultaneously competing with another team.

### **MISMATCH BETWEEN EGO-IDEAL AND INSTITUTIONAL NEEDS**

To complicate matters, there is a growing lack of fit among (1) the American egoideal, (2) the needs of our increasingly large and complex institutions, and (3) the demands of an interdependent world. As previously noted, the American egoideal reifies individualistic, competitive, controlling behavior. Yet, as organizations grow in size and complexity, the tasks involved outstrip the capabilities of single-handed action. They require cooperation and coordination. Paradoxically, as the world shrinks through interdependence, that need increases. Still, the formal structure of large-scale institutions, from corporations to governments, makes it difficult to ensure quick and easy cooperation. Bureaucratic rules, reflecting an individualistic ego-ideal, present serious barriers.

According to Weber (Gerth and Mills 19-16), formal hierarchies are designed to facilitate the coordination of complex tasks. In reality, however, the formal structure frequently inhibits goal attainment. As Weber (Gerth and Mills 1946) indicated, the informal system arises in the service of the formal structure. It offsets the barriers to cooperation within formal organizations and bureaucracies. One example of the informal system, the traditional "old boy network," stretched within and across institutions. It functioned as an uncharted, largely invisible, homosocial system (Lipman-Blumen 1976), excluding from membership less powerful males and women. Non-isometric with the formal system, the "old boy network," nonetheless, ironically grafted the competition, power, and internal status differentials learned in the formal structure onto friendship patterns and alliances within the informal system. Within "the old boy network," resources moved to valued members in an

efficient distribution system, reinforcing a system of obligations and reciprocation's.

More recently, to offset their isolation, professional women have developed their own "old girl networks." It is my impression, based on observation, that these female networks commonly feature open, visible membership, even dues, with explicit criteria revolving around professional background and interests. As such, they are less like the traditional, covert, male informal networks and more reminiscent of the open, formal, but casual, associations described by de Toqueville ([1835] 1959) that included members from a broad range of backgrounds. Here, too, resources are distributed, but with seemingly less attention to power, competition, and internal status differentials. With some notable exceptions, these female professional networks thrive on inclusion and connection, potential models for the twenty-first-century workplace.

At its best, the informal system is a world Of relationships and emotionality; familiar territory to women, but rather uncomfortable terrain for many male leaders. Through human interaction composed of friendships, understandings, and mutual help, members distribute various resources, particularly those essential to goal attainment. To partake of these resources, one must demonstrate political, social, and organizational "savvy." At its best, the system operates through inclusiveness and connection, rather than by exclusiveness and separation.

In the coming decades, the navigational skills required by the informal system will be increasingly distinguishable from the individualism, competitiveness, and power that currently permeate the byways of male networks. The new informal systems will call for a revised understanding of "connections"-connections between the self and others, as well as between the self and task, be it one's own or another's. They will require expertise in dealing with connections among people within and between groups, from small teams to far-flung networks, sometimes even networks of nations. The informal system will necessitate knowledge of relationships, human interaction, emotionality, and group processes.

## **NEW ACHIEVING STYLES FOR AN INTERDEPENDENT GLOBAL ORDER**

Global interdependence increases the urgency of America's leadership problem. Fostering connective leadership demanded by the global environment requires integrating the other, more appropriate sets of achieving styles--more feminine behaviors--with the traditional American "direct" styles.

### **Instrumental Styles: Personal, Social, and Entrusting**

The first additional set of achieving styles required for success in an interdependent order is the "instrumental" set, whose label reflects the characteristic use of (1) the self, (2) the system, and (3) others as instruments for goal attainment. Like the other achieving styles sets, this one also includes three styles: "personal," "social," and

"entrusting."

### **Personal Instrumental**

The "personal instrumental" style is evident in the action of leaders skilled in projecting and utilizing all aspects of their persona. Leaders who prefer the "personal instrumental" style utilize their intelligence, wit, compassion, humor, family background, previous accomplishments and defeats, courage, physical appearance, and sexual appeal to connect themselves to those whose commitment and help they seek to engage. The admiration and affection of followers may serve as both motive and sustenance for "personal instrumental" achievers. They unabashedly pursue an emotional connection with their followers relationships based on compassion and inspiration, rather than competition and power. In 1987, a group of children attending an international women's peace conference in Moscow presented flowers to General Secretary Gorbachev. Touched by this gesture, Gorbachev turned his back to the audience to wipe his tears. Two thousand women in that audience wept openly in empathy.

Demonstrating and evoking compassion, even to the point of self-sacrifice (Miller 1976; Gilligan 1982), are traditional female behaviors. Connective leadership also draws on these instrumental strategies. Some examples include the following: (1) Mohandas Gandhi fasting to near-death to persuade Muslims and Hindus to work and live together in peace; (2) Corazon Aquino leading a national revolution without guns and bloodshed; (3) Gorbachev transforming traditional concepts of weakness into strength, by daring to unilaterally dismantle powerful weapons of war; (4) Martin Luther King linking arms with other activists marching for civil rights. Each of these leaders, however, raised doubts and fears among both followers and adversaries still attuned to traditional power-driven, competitive images of leadership. Moreover, Aquino and Gorbachev have been pushed back repeatedly to more traditional "direct" leadership forms by both constituents and other contenders for power.

Leaders who dare step beyond the limits of their own followers to reach out to a broader, even a global constituency, risk the ire of their traditional constituents while simultaneously stirring fear and confusion in the hearts of outsiders. They draw upon their own "personal instrumental" skills as negotiators and persuaders to bridge interpersonal schisms. They use their gifts of persuasion and negotiation, rather than aggression, power, and competition, to accomplish their goals. They display a keen sense of symbolism and dramatic gestures, often Creating counterintuitive gestures and symbols whose surprise and simplicity engrave their message upon the constituents' consciousness. For example, on his initial visit to Washington, Gorbachev unexpectedly stepped from his guarded limousine to shake the hands and touch the hearts of ordinary American citizens.

Leaders skilled in "personal instrumental" behavior understand the meaning, as well

as the denial, of ritual and costume. Assuming the presidency in the wake of a dictatorship, Corazon Aquino symbolized her quest for a modest, democratic government by wearing a plain yellow dress and refusing the trappings of palaces and limousines. Her deliberately simple gestures and costume symbolized reconciliation and equality. Gandhi's rejection of Western, custom tailored suits for a homespun *dhoti* symbolized his rejection of English rule, as well as his dedication to effecting Indian independence (Collins and Lapieire 1975).

With real genius, Gandhi could use a broad range of achieving styles in his nascent form of connective leadership (Gandhi 1957). Here, however, let us focus on Gandhi's use of the "personal instrumental" style. The Indian independence leader used dramatic, counterintuitive symbolism to draw people to his cause. He chose the spinning wheel, reflecting female and rural images, as a counterintuitive symbol of India's political independence through industrial self-reliance. This unforgettable symbol ignited an emotional connection between Gandhi and his followers. Commonplace now because his example has been followed by so many, Gandhi's "personal instrumental" fasts electrified the world, compelling both supporters and opponents to join hands, if only temporarily.

Charismatic leaders rely heavily on "personal instrumental" action. The drama of their behavior, from counterintuitive, symbolic gestures to their use of ritual, costume, and timing, telegraphs a magnetic message to potential followers. This "personal instrumental" style is part of the leadership repertoire exercised by many effective leaders, from Gandhi to Winnie Mandela at the height of her power.

### **Social Instrumental**

Leadership behaviors that characterize the second "instrumental" style--the "social instrumental"-involve a heightened appreciation for process, for how human relationships offset the rigidity of structure and task. Leaders who use the "social instrumental" style demonstrate system or political "savvy." They are comfortable with informal processes. They appreciate institutions based on relationships. More specifically, leaders who use "social instrumental" strategies understand relationships and networks as vital and legitimate conduits for accomplishing their ends within and between institutions. They do things through other people, selecting specific individuals for specific tasks. "Social instrumental" actors first draw upon certain segments of their network for one task, then reshuffle the group, replacing some members with other, more relevant parties from the larger network for the next task.

"Social instrumental" actors build and draw upon networks of parties who, themselves, may not be congenial to one another. Since the alliances they string together are not necessarily intended as permanent structures, "social instrumental" achievers rely on their own "social" and "personal instrumental" skills to maintain the alliance for the endurance of the task. During the Gulf War, George Bush's

masterful construction of an alliance of Gulf states, many of whom nursed long-standing enmities toward one another, was an exercise in "social instrumental" action.

### **Entrusting Instrumental**

Connective leaders who use the third "instrumental" style--the "entrusting instrumental"--comfortably rely on everyone, not just specifically chosen individuals, to accomplish their tasks. "Entrusting instrumental" actors are adept at attracting others over whom they have no formal authority to help them realize their goals. By contrast to the "power direct" style, which involves command, delegation, and control over implementation, the "entrusting instrumental" style is used by leaders who believe in and rely on others, and simply expect others to help perform their tasks. Relinquishing their control over execution, "social instrumental" leaders entrust others with their vision, expecting others to implement their goals as well as, maybe better than, they could themselves. This expressed confidence empowers those in whom it is placed to meet the "entrusting instrumental" leader's expectations. In the Gulf War, George Bush's use of the "entrusting instrumental" style with parties over whom he had no formal control offered a new model for international action.

### **THE REPOSITORIES OF INSTRUMENTAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

Where are the repositories of instrumental knowledge and skill? Who, by training and circumstance, already understands instrumental action? Who knows how to make things happen without formal authority?

From necessity, those denied access to the penthouses of institutional power--those who cannot simply command others to comply--become expert in the byways of the informal interpersonal system (Janeway 1980). Those without formal power learn to interpret nuance, to negotiate and persuade. The informal system demands understanding the processes that occur in all social systems, particularly the subtle processes of human interaction. The less powerful become adept at micromanipulation (Lipman-Blumen 1984), the art of influence at the interpersonal level. From necessity, the powerless use micromanipulation, while the powerful engage in macromanipulation (Lipman-Blumen 1984), the process of influence at the societal or social-policy level.

Those without direct access to resources learn to rely on, rather than command, others to carry out tasks. Women's socialization to the complexities of human interaction, their social and emotional roles within all groups, as well as their resource-poor historical position, have taught them a special expertise, well-suited to this difficult arena. From early on, females are trained in "instrumental" achieving styles.

Still, these three "instrumental" styles that allow us to accomplish our tasks through relationships or by projecting our persona remain suspect in American culture. They offend our traditional, self-reliant ego-ideal. Traditionally, we have maligned such leadership strategies as "manipulative social climbing" or "weak dependence." We have deeply mistrusted the motives of leaders, such as President Lyndon Johnson, who demonstrated such skills (Caro 1983), regardless of the results they achieved.

In traditional American culture, those who overwhelm followers with their persona find their intentions questioned. We suspect dishonesty, incompetence, and possibly malevolence in those who use personal relationships, invoking family or group membership. We criticize as weak those who depend upon others to accomplish their ends.

In many other traditional societies, however, "social instrumental" behavior, particularly, is stitched into the cultural fabric. In countries as diverse as Japan, China, and Italy, the relationships that form one's social network represent an important part of a person's identity. Rather than stirring suspicion and distrust, these behaviors assure others that the individual can be held to his/her group's norms. Relationships offer the keys to success in all aspects of life. Instrumental achieving styles strengthen not only individuals, but the groups and institutions to which they belong.

Discomfort with "instrumental" styles forces individuals to deny these abilities within themselves and to disguise them from others. In fact, despite women's early training and reputation for instrumentality, research on achieving styles (Lipman-Blumen et al. 1983; Lipman-Blumen 1991) indicates that females, just like males, tend to reject these instrumental styles as self-descriptors. Driven under cover, these sensitivities and skills inevitably become one-sided, fail to evoke reciprocity, and, consequently, meet a dead end. Without the nutrients of openness and legitimacy, these processes cannot blossom into productive reciprocity, which, as Axelrod's (1984) research suggests, is a basic ingredient in stable cooperative systems.

Perhaps, in an earlier era, when survival depended upon an aggressive ability to wrest one's sustenance from a strange and hostile environment, self-reliance shielded individuals against those who would use, parasitize, or otherwise abuse relationships to accomplish their goals. The stark frontier society is gone. In its place, we have a different, complex environment, transformed by technology and the threat of mutual annihilation into a global community, where all actions affect and are visible to all.

Intricate institutional arrangements link groups separated by continents into interdependent economic, industrial, and political networks. These new conditions demand a greater sensitivity to organizational and human processes. Without the instrumental component of connective leadership, which incorporates such



understanding, we shall have a difficult time adjusting to this new world community.

There is some indication that cultural attitudes are gradually changing. A new vocabulary is emerging to polish the image of these previously maligned styles. The positive connotations of "networking," "negotiating," and "consulting," provide preliminary lexical evidence of a budding awareness of "instrumental" behaviors' importance for the work environment of the 1990s and beyond.

### **Relational Achieving Styles: Contributory, Collaborative, and Vicarious**

The final connective leadership component required by an interdependent environment involves an orientation toward others and their special goals. The third, or "relational," set of achieving styles contains three styles—"contributory," "collaborative," and "vicarious"—that encompass such inclinations. Complex alliances and institutions within a global community necessitate authentic teamwork toward common goals. They also call for helping others to accomplish their goals, for "mentoring" successors, and altruistically taking pride in others' achievements. We immediately recognize the relational styles as part of the traditional female milieu.

Individuals who prefer the three styles of the "relational" achieving styles set approach their goals by (1) collaborating on group goals, (2) contributing to others' objectives, and/or (3) deriving a vicarious sense of achievement from the success of others with whom they identify. Societies trapped in the thrall of individualism historically disdained and undervalued these "relational styles," while simultaneously offering them lip service, perhaps because of their association with women and children. "Relational" achievers receive public accolades for their altruistic contributions and collaboration, along with private suspicion that they do so more out of weakness than of will.

Cultural definitions portray women and children as weak partly because they achieve respectively through helping others and seeking help to accomplish their ends, rather than acting independently. We do not hail them as our heroes and leaders, even if they kindle a sentimental glow in our hearts. These conflicts between disdaining and commending "relational" styles present serious obstacles for leaders in an interdependent environment. What remedies, if any, exist for resolving these draining conflicts?

### **COOPERATION/COLLABORATION "WRONGLY UNDERSTOOD"**

Organizational experts recommend cooperation and teamwork, but still have considerable difficulty explaining how to encourage these behaviors. The results from a recent study (Lefton and Buzzotta 1987) of 26 American executive teams,

composed of 275 CEOs, company presidents and vice presidents, many from the Fortune 500 companies, are instructive.

The researchers report that "while these teams came much closer to the ideal than most, the members of the teams themselves acknowledged that less than 40 percent of their interaction could be called teamwork." (Lefton and Buzzotta 1987:8). The rest of the time, these top executives reported, their interaction was marked by internal conflict and competition at worst and non-listening and hypocritical agreement at best.

Although cooperation in organizations has become a semantic touchstone, all our norms, as well as our child-rearing practices, even our adult socialization methods, still shape people into self-reliant, independent (rather than strong *interdependent*) individuals. Collaboration remains suspect. Even when people do successfully collaborate, society tends to single out a "leader," sometimes merely the most visible member of the group, and anoint that person the hero.

Most American leaders, like others worldwide, achieved their success with the help of others. Nonetheless, our cultural achieving styles spectacles only permit a vision of the leader, not the collaborators, nor the ones who relinquished their own dreams to help the leader succeed. The contributors are eclipsed in the shadow of the leader. For example, Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca is crowned the "Corporate Messiah," while the workers whose labor and sacrifice were midwife to the Chrysler miracle are ignored, or even worse, blamed as the root of the problem.

Despite repeated calls for teamwork, the reward structure of American institutions favors primarily individual achievers, that is, stars, not their helpers. Professional baseball provides a useful example. Star players receive multimillion dollar salaries, while their teammates must be satisfied with far less. In industry and government, reward systems offer assistants and collaborators less recognition, including lower salaries, smaller offices, and shorter vacations. Individuals, more often than groups, still receive the bonuses and awards, organizational slogans and academic treatises on teamwork notwithstanding. American organizations are caught in a circular dilemma. Because they prize individual achievement above all, American organizations barely reward cooperation and teamwork. Because rewards are lacking for cooperation and collaboration, it becomes virtually impossible to stimulate them in the workplace. This creates the classic case of "the Folly of Rewarding A, While Hoping for B" (Kerr 1989).

## **CREATING AND SUSTAINING COOPERATIVE SYSTEMS**

Some relevant work from game theory casts new light on cooperation. Axelrod (1984) examined the conditions under which individuals or nations should cooperate, as well as the optimal strategies for eliciting cooperation rather than hostile acts and

retaliation from others.

Axelrod invited various game theorists to write programs for a Computerized Prisoner's Dilemma Tournament. The Prisoner's Dilemma, a well-known laboratory game, allows players to seek their own self-interest or that of the group. Pursuing one's self-interest involves the risk of winning or losing "big" versus achieving slightly lower, but more dependable, mutual gains through cooperation. The game, rather than forcing cooperation, permits players to exploit or mutually resist cooperating with one another. The game also recognizes that, as in real life, players do not have totally opposing interests.

Game theorists in economics, psychology, sociology, political science, and mathematics submitted fourteen entries, which were run against each other in a round-robin tournament. Unexpectedly, the simplest program of all, Tit for Tat,

was the clear winner. Tit for Tat offers a simple strategy in which a player starts by cooperating and subsequently merely mimics the other player's behavior on the last move. A second round-robin, this one with 62 entries representing as many different strategies, yielded the same result: Tit for Tat won again.

This led Axelrod to ask three questions. Limitations of space permit only the following oversimplified summary:

First, how can a potentially cooperative strategy get an initial foothold in an environment which is predominantly noncooperative! (Translation: how can a female leadership perspective emerge in an essentially masculine environment!) Second, what type of strategy can thrive in a complex environment composed of other individuals using a wide diversity of more or less sophisticated strategies? Third, under what conditions can such a strategy, once fully established among a group of people, resist invasion by a less cooperative strategy? (1984:viii-ix).

First, "when there actually is a sufficiently high probability of continuing interaction between two individuals" (as in real life, long-term relationships within families, work groups and communities), cooperation is likely to emerge. The first tendrils of cooperative behavior are nourished by reciprocal cooperation on the second player's part. The expectation that cooperation will continue is important; however, so is the recognition that noncooperation breeds more noncooperation, to the detriment of all. (So, women, too, must also learn to use "direct" styles under certain conditions.)

Through a variety of computer simulations using all the submitted strategies, Axelrod (1984) demonstrated that, once established, cooperative efforts of a group can withstand the attack of a hostile, noncooperative group. A single individual trying to cooperate with a noncooperative party, however, has very little chance. Thus, for cooperation to take root, it is crucial to assemble a critical mass of

individuals with cooperative, collaborative, and contributory skills.

Axelrod's (1984) work sheds light on why female leaders isolated in a male leadership environment may find that their "relational" styles are ineffective, commonly meeting serious resistance. Faced with serious opposition, solo female leaders are forced to forego "relational" action and resort to more typically masculine leadership strategies. Corazon Aquino is just one example. Separated from other collaborative, contributory, and vicarious colleagues; aspiring female leaders make a disheartening discovery. Only "direct" achieving, masculine leadership strategies, marked by controlling, authoritarian, competitive, and strictly independent behavior, win their male colleagues' grudging respect. Female leaders, forced back into the classical male leadership model, find themselves in a Catch-22 situation: they now risk being seen as "aggressive" and unfeminine.

The second condition for fostering ongoing cooperation occurs when each party has a reputation for toughness, that is, noncooperation will be responded to in kind. "Direct" achieving styles are useful here. In fact, the combination of tough and tender, "direct" and "relational" achieving styles is important.

The third condition critical to sustaining cooperative systems involves an understanding of group processes, a willingness to rely on others, and a predilection to allow relationships to develop into a stable system of reciprocity. Here "instrumental" achieving styles play an important role, emphasizing group process, human interaction, system savvy, reliance on others, and action through relationships that blossom into enduring networks.

### **A FINAL NOTE ABOUT WOMEN AND CONNECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

The psychological literature (Miller 1976; Gilligan 1982) suggests that women take responsibility for keeping the group together, whether the group is the family or the work team. Females' need for connection, expressed in finely tuned interpersonal skills, are legendary, although recent manuals on executive leadership warn women with serious leadership aspirations to steer clear of roles demanding such "instrumental," as well as "relational," styles.

Despite abundant mythology about women's competitiveness vis-a-vis one another, there is convincing evidence that women excel in collaborative, contributory, and mentoring behavior, all important aspects of connective leadership. Collaborating, contributing to others' tasks, taking vicarious pride in others' accomplishments, of course, are central to traditional female role behavior. Women have been ridiculed for taking pride in their children's and spouse's achievements, even though most societies socialize females to sacrifice themselves, first for their brothers, next for their husbands, and then for their children. The association between female behavior and powerlessness undoubtedly stirs fears, making these "female" styles

suspect in societies dedicated to take charge, competitive individualism.

Research data confirm women's greater propensity for putting the needs of others above their own. Laboratory studies of men and women playing the Prisoner's Dilemma (Axelrod 1984) and the Pollution Game (Dana and Rubenstein 1970) have demonstrated that, on average, women are significantly more likely than men to set aside their narrow self-interests for the sake of others. They exhibit vicarious or altruistic behavior. Women's socialization has taught them the importance of contributing to the goals of others, of collaborating in a group. They nurture others, basking vicariously and altruistically in the success of those they value and love (Gilligan 1982). Gilligan's (1982) work suggests that women often experience guilt and depression when their behavior violates these norms.

In other research (Lipman-Blumen et al. 1983; Lipman-Blumen 1991), full-time homemakers rank collaborative, contributory, and mentoring behavior (i.e., "relational" achieving styles) higher than men do. As indicated above, women across the entire occupational spectrum consistently rank competitiveness lower than do males matched in age, education, and occupation. Women's reluctance to act competitively holds up across cultures with differing levels of competitiveness. More specifically, Taiwanese subjects of both sexes had substantially higher competitive scores than American subjects, from high school students to senior executives. For example, Taiwanese housewives had competitive scores commensurate with those of American male senior executives. Still, compared to Taiwanese men of their own age and educational level, Taiwanese women produced significantly lower competitive achieving scores (Lipman-Blumen 1988).

One male group that consistently approximates this female pattern of moderated competition and elevated contributory, collaborative, or mentoring behavior is senior executives. They are significantly less competitive and more "relational" than mid-level male managers, still vying for promotion. This leads to a special paradox commonly observed in many American firms: "less competitive" females are bypassed for promotion to senior managerial positions, to which their "more aggressive" male colleagues are appointed. Once promoted to senior positions, male senior executives confront an ironic reality of top management: the need to moderate their competitiveness and increase their relational skills. A second paradox is also noticeable in American corporations: many women are succumbing to advice that urges them to eliminate their "instrumental" and "relational" styles, instead of integrating them with "direct" leadership skills. In doing so, these women may be depriving themselves of their advantage as connective leaders.

Earlier researchers (Hennig and Jardim 1977) suggested women experienced difficulty achieving in organizations because, as children, they had not played on teams. A clearer understanding of women's psychosocial development (Chodorow 1974; Miller 1976; and Gilligan 1982), not to mention baseball, prompts us to reconsider that assessment. Perhaps, a clarification of institutional processes and

the conditions of cooperation and altruism will further legitimate both "instrumental" and "relational" achieving styles to which women traditionally were socialized. In turn, a revised interpretation of "relational" and "instrumental" styles will foster their dynamic integration with "direct" achieving styles that, together, provide the basis for connective leadership. Further research is needed to resolve a central paradox of the twenty-first-century American workplace: to regain their competitive edge in world markets, American organizations confront the necessity of de-emphasizing competition and developing connective leaders who can give them the connective edge.

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### **NOTES:**

1. Fowlkes (1983) reminds us that the professionalization of these care taking behaviors, however, commonly reduces and transforms them into impersonal, "interpersonal support" (Fowlkes 1983). We might speculate that this transformation from personal to impersonal is designed to demonstrate that these traditional female occupations genuinely meet the "affective neutrality" and "functional specificity" standards (Parsons 1951, 1968) embedded in the traditional/masculine definition of "professions." 2. Achieving styles described in this paper are based on the L-BL Achieving Styles Model (1983, 1991). Individual achieving styles are measured by the L-BL Achieving Styles Inventory (ASI), a 45-item Likert-style instrument. Organizational achieving styles, the achieving styles that a particular organization rewards, as perceived by knowledgeable observers or participants, are measured by the L-BL Organizational Achieving Styles Inventory (OASI).

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