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TRANSFORMING MANAGERIAL PRACTICE: BEYOND THE ACHIEVER STAGE

Dalmar Fisher and William R. Torbert

ABSTRACT

This paper provides new evidence to support the link between adult developmental theory and the capacities leaders need to transform organizations. Interviews with seventeen managers and professionals, ten of whom were measured in the relatively rare Strategist developmental stage, confirm that the personal capabilities associated with this stage are especially relevant to the exercise of transformational leadership, that is, leadership resulting in second order organizational change. Developmental theory is introduced in relation to the individual's readiness to undertake transformational leadership. Illustrations from the work experiences of the Strategists, compared with the others, are used as a basis for eleven hypotheses about the Strategists' work styles (1) in leading subordinates, (2) in working with their superiors, and (3) in forming and implementing action initiatives. Implications are suggested for managerial and organizational development.

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INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership, a concept developed by James McGregor Burns in his impressive book, *Leadership*, has become a focus for management researchers. Burns (1978, p. 20) defines transformational leadership as a process where “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation.” He sees this process as both an interpersonal one between individuals and a macrolevel mobilizing of power to change social systems and institutions. Later researchers have suggested that the transformational leader makes followers see value in their work that transcends their own self interest (Bass, 1985). Transformation involves developing commitment to a new vision along with increased trust and capacity for learning (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986). It is a process so comprehensive—affecting values, role modeling, reward systems, selection criteria, structure and spatial arrangements—that it should be understood as culture change (Schein, 1985). A sequence of several such changes are required if an institution is to be effective through successive levels of size and complexity beginning with the entrepreneurial stage, moving into one or more bureaucratic stages, followed in some cases by post-bureaucratic stages (Greiner, 1972; Torbert, 1987a). Such fundamental and recurring change is what Bartunek and Louis (1988) refer to as second order change, which means change in the underlying framework and assumptions of the organization; change that results in new ways of making meaning by the organization’s members.

There is evidence that organization development programs can succeed or fail depending on whether people in the organization are able to adopt new frames (Bartunek & Moch, 1987). Thus, a leader of second order change should be one who can help people set aside their habitual ways of understanding, who can “get into the head” of people who take a perspective different from their own (Bartunek, 1988). This ability to help others reframe requires a level of development that is uncommon even among senior managers. Very few MBA programs and management development programs have tried to teach this ability, with only limited success (Fisher, Merron, & Torbert, 1987). More must be learned about transformational leadership from a developmental point of view.

These insights produce two questions that are the focus of this paper. The first is what transformational leadership looks like in action, close-up. Most studies to date have been based on secondary sources or questionnaire data. Second is the question of what constitutes an individual’s capacity to be a transformational leader and what developmental preparation is required. Both questions can be pursued with the aid of available theory.

THEORY

Two bodies of theory and research address these questions. The first, relating to the operational specifics of transformational leadership, is the work of Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978), who distinguish between “Model I” behavior (action resulting in first order change) and “Model II” behavior (action resulting in second order transformation in persons and organizations). Model II behavior is managerial, consultative, or professional action where the task is controlled jointly, so that more than one person can be an autonomous cause of events. The actor recognizes differences in others’ frames of reference. Assertion is combined with inquiry to identify and correct discrepancies between one’s beliefs about how one behaves (“espoused theory”) and one’s actual behavior (“theory in use”). In Model I behavior, by contrast, tasks are controlled unilaterally rather than jointly, assertion is less often combined with inquiry that tests the actor’s assumptions, and the actor is less likely to reframe his or her perspective in a way that accommodates the diverse frames of others (Argyris, 1977). It is Model II behavior that produces second order change in organizations. It enables organizations to learn—to examine alternative policies and objectives from new perspectives rather than to simply improve ways of functioning within present perspectives (Argyris, 1976, 1982; Schön, 1983).

The second body of research, relating to the individual’s readiness to undertake transformational leadership, is constructive-developmental psychology. Developmental theory holds that individuals can evolve through an ordered series of developmental stages, each of which is governed by a unique logical and cognitive process, interpersonal orientation, and mode of ethical judgment. At each successive stage the individual builds on earlier capacities but transforms them into a reordered worldview that makes possible increased capacity for understanding and action (Kegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1969; Loevinger, 1976; Piaget, 1967). The sequence of stages at which most managers and professionals are found can be briefly described as follows:

Technician: People and events are treated as technical systems to be influenced by finding the right “key” to their inner workings. Multiple possibilities, contingencies and exceptions are seen in situations, but a single position is usually chosen and asserted as preferable. Feedback is usually not sought. The focus is on logically elegant ideas, and on doing things “the” right way.

Achiever: People at this stage perceive complexity and display complex thinking. For example, clear differentiation is made between social manners and personally held ethical standards, between outward behavior and underlying feelings. Emphasis is on competent execution of rationally interrelated steps leading from the presenting problem to a solution that works. This person strives toward excellence in terms of self-set standards, personally chosen roles and well-

articulated goals. One's own truth is usually to be defended as beyond question. Others' collaboration is enlisted, with recognition that team players can be people who see things differently.

Strategist: Integrated patternings are seen among disparate patterns. Ambiguity and paradox are not merely perceived and accepted, but are prized. The Strategist, like the Achiever, aims to get things done systematically and rationally, but with recognition that multiple frames (multiple realities) may initially be at play and that the presented problem may need to be reframed. Own and others' frames (perspectives) are seen as modifiable. Open exploration of differences is seen as essential in creating new shared meanings that motivate work and redefine goals. The new meanings sought are shared visions that encourage development, minimize coercion and conformity, and make room for the range of developmental differences (Cook-Greuter, 1985; Torbert, 1974, 1978). Choices are made on the basis of principles, such as social justice, rather than by adherence to rules.

These three stages correspond, respectively, to Loevinger's (1976) conformist/conscientious (3/4) transition, and to her conscientious (4) and autonomous (5) stages. The stage names have been changed to suggest more clearly the managerial style implications of each stage (Torbert, 1987a). Most managers (80% or more) are to be found at the Technician and Achiever stages, while fewer than 15% are at the Strategist stage (Gratch, 1985; Quinn & Torbert, 1987; Torbert, 1983). The Strategist's capabilities, however, seem crucial to highly effective managerial performance that exhibits leadership and executive qualities. (Indeed, 78% of all managers measured at the Strategist stage are found in senior management positions, as compared to much smaller proportions of managers measured at the Achiever stage (42%) and the Technician stage (35%) (Torbert, 1991). The three stages, as well as the Diplomat stage which precedes the Technician and the Magician and Ironist stages which follow the Strategist, are summarized in Table 1. All the developmental stages are described more fully by Torbert (1987a).

Constructive-developmental theory appears to disagree with Freudian psychoanalytic theory and other theories which hold that character is formed in early childhood. Jacques (1986), for example, argues that people are shaped early in life to follow certain developmental tracks and that very few can attain the higher developmental levels. Jacques' data, however, do show some cases of individuals who cross their track boundaries and move into higher tracks. These cases are rare, as are our Strategists. It is indeed because of the Strategists' rarity that we hope by studying them to learn more about later stage thought and action. This may reveal ways of helping more people attain the later developmental stages.¹

Developmental theory suggests that it is at the Strategist stage and still later stages that the person gains the capacity for integrative awareness needed to

Table 1. Adult Development Stages

<i>Developmental Stage</i>	<i>Cognitive Style</i>	<i>Interpersonal Style</i>	<i>Mode of Ethical Awareness</i>
Diplomat	Reality = others' perceptions, desires	Conflict avoidance	Right = the social norms
Technician	Generalized perceptions	Assertive, critical	Legalistic
Achiever	Complex patterns	Team captain, organizer-director	Internalized standards
Strategist	Integrates contradictions and paradoxes	Collaborative inquiry, mutual influence	Universal ethical principles
Magician	Aware of thought, feeling, action, effects interplay. Sees time and events as symbolic	Public, symbolic reframing action combined with inquiry	Responsibility for the whole
Ironist	Very wide frame from existant personal and outer to transcendent ideal	Wears a mask to expose others and self to new realities	Self as servant to a broad society

work with people holding different worldviews, to redefine presented problems and seek underlying issues and to foster managerial and organizational transformation, when appropriate (Torbert, 1989). In other words, developmental theory predicts that it is not until persons transform to the Strategist stage that they gain the capacity for what Argyris and Schön call "Model II" behavior and for leading second order change in organizations (Souvaine, 1985). To persons at the earlier stages, ambiguity, paradox and exploration of implied, underlying meanings are likely to seem vague and a waste of time rather than as clues to innovative agendas, genuine collaboration, and new stages of development.

Research has begun to confirm the proposition that managerial effectiveness is greater at the later developmental stages (Hall & Thompson, 1980; Smith, 1980). Our own research specifically indicates a link between the Strategist developmental stage and the manager's tendencies to reframe problems and to propose collaborative rather than unilateral action in responding to problems presented in an in-basket exercise (Merron, Fisher & Torbert, 1987). In the in-basket exercise, we placed 49 MBA graduates in a simulated management setting. They wrote responses to 34 letters, memos, reports, and phone messages similar to those found in a manager's incoming mail. Because each subject responded to the same set of 34 items, we were able to apply

statistical tests to show that subjects at later developmental stages made reframing responses to more of the items and proposed collaborative action in response to more of the items than did persons at earlier developmental stages.

The present study follows the in-basket study with three purposes in mind. The first is to further test the connection between the Strategist worldview and managerial excellence by using data drawn from managers' on-the-job experiences. The in-basket exercise, though realistic, was not the managers' actual work situation. The second purpose is to gather more vivid, fully developed illustrations than were possible in the in-basket study of the kinds of managerial thought and action produced at work by persons at the rather rare Strategist stage, compared with those who have not yet reached that stage. The third purpose is to generate hypotheses about these differences between the Strategists and the pre-Strategists.

Because this study focuses on differences between Achievers and Strategists, it should also throw light on a theoretical difference of interpretation between two streams of developmental research. Contrary to all that has been written above, Kuhnert and Lewis (1987, p. 653) claim that managers at the Achiever stage are capable of transformational leadership. They argue that Achievers:

have developed a subjective frame of reference that defines their selves, not in terms of their connections to others, but in terms of their goals and commitments... At this stage, leaders are able to take an objective view of their goals and commitments; they can operate from a personal value system that transcends their agendas and loyalties. In other words, they can operate as transformational leaders... (who) know the limitations, the defects and the strengths of all perspectives.

In our view, Kuhnert and Lewis have here mistaken the ability to be objective about what it takes to reach a goal (their first sentence, which correctly characterizes the victory of the Achiever stage) with the ability to be objective about the goal itself and about whole perspectives (their second and third sentences, which characterize capabilities that, in our view, emerge only at the Strategist and later stages). The data that follow should throw further light on this significant difference of interpretation.

METHOD

Semistructured interviews were conducted with 9 men and 8 women. As Table 2 shows, 10 of the 17 were at or beyond the Strategist developmental stage, 5 at the Achiever stage, and 2 at the Technician stage, as measured by the Loewinger Sentence Completion Test, administered a few weeks prior to the time of the interview. Fifteen of the 17 were in their 30's, with median age 36, and a median 10 years of full-time work experience. Nine held managerial

Table 2. Subjects

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Years of Full-Time Work Experience</i>	<i>Developmental Position</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Position</i>
Linda	39	14	Technician	Investment Firm	Vice President for Asset Planning
Bill	35	10	Technician	Marketing Research Firm	Product Line Manager
Denise	36	13	Achiever	Hospital	Program Manager
Ed	32	9	Achiever	Insurance Company	Investment Fund Developer
Ellen	39	13	Achiever	Manufacturer	Market Analysis Manager
Frank	65	40	Achiever	University	Professor/Consultant
Tom	37	13	Achiever	Computer Manufacturer	Marketing and Financial Planner
Joe	36	10	Strategist	Bank	Loan Officer
Karen	32	9	Strategist	Insurance Company	Information Svcs Planning Officer
Mary	38	12	Strategist	Marketing Research Firm	Independent Marketing Consultant
Mike	35	12	Strategist	Manufacturing Firm	Information Services Manager
Peter	30	7	Strategist	Mutual Fund	Chief Operating Officer
Roger	38	16	Strategist	Manufacturing Firm	Divisional Director of Operations
Sharon	31	8	Strategist	Accounting/Consulting Firm	Consultant
Steven	43	21	Strategist	Research and Data Services Firm	Manager of Administrative Svcs
Susan	34	6	Strategist	Hospital	Assistant Director of Marketing
Lisa	31	8	Ironist	Consulting/Training Firm	Consultant

positions, including one chief operating officer and 3 functional area heads, 4 were in specialist or individual contributor positions (e.g., financial planner, loan officer), and 4 were consultants. Most (13) were in service industry firms, including 5 financial institutions, 2 research firms, 2 hospitals, and 2 consulting firms. Four were in manufacturing firms. Fifteen of the 17 held MBAs. The other 2 also held advanced degrees.

Most studies using the Loevinger test find 10% or less of the sample at the Strategist stage. We wished to develop (not to test) hypotheses about differences between Achievers and Strategists, as well as about how Achievers transitioned to the Strategist stage. Consequently, we constructed our sample to be able to study these questions. To provide the greatest likelihood of obtaining a group of subjects at the relatively rare Strategist stage, the subjects were selected from a body of MBA alumni who had taken the Loevinger test as students 4-8 years previously and had scored at the Achiever or Strategist stage then. In addition, within the cohort of Achievers, the researchers used whatever prior knowledge they had to choose subjects who might have evolved beyond the Achiever stage. Obviously, the result is anything but a random sample and the proportion of Strategists in no way reflects the wider population.

The Loevinger test showed two of the 17 to be at the Technician stage, a stage earlier than they had been measured previously. This could be measurement error, or could mean they had “regressed” in developmental terms. Their surroundings, organizational and otherwise, since receiving their graduate degrees, may have offered more rewards for the thought and action of the Technician stage than for any other. One of these subjects, Linda, spoke of her organization as “very political [and] competitive,” one where “...the only way to be effective is to be the best informed, the brightest person in the room.” Linda may have been complying with an organizational norm by being a Technician in this setting. The other, Bill, had been in his current job only four months, but described his previous organization as one which “creates superstars, people with opinions who get quoted.” Here again, the valued mode seemed to be that of the expert—the Technician who has *the* answer.

The authors conducted most of the interviews together. Interviewees were first asked to describe their current position. Next, they were asked to select two recent incidents to describe in detail, one where they felt they had been effective, the other where they felt they had been less effective. Then they were asked to characterize, in general and in terms of the most significant events, their experience since completing graduate study. The interviewers occasionally asked questions for clarification, but mainly left it to the interviewees to organize their responses.

The transcribed interviews were separated into two categories: pre-Strategists and Strategists. A different research assistant analyzed the transcripts in each category, locating themes and exploring how common each theme was within that category. Then, the research assistants traded transcripts

and each searched for the previously identified common themes (themes clearly illustrated in more than half of the transcripts in that category) among the transcripts in the other category. As it turned out, no themes that were common among the Strategists were also common among the Achievers and vice versa.

In the three sections that follow, the interviews are summarized in terms of contrasting approaches to three important areas of managerial involvement: (1) leadership of subordinates, (2) relationships with superiors, and (3) action initiatives in which the individual is proposing or implementing ideas or programs. The study concludes with a series of hypotheses that these illustrations suggest for future research. Because our primary focus is on how the Strategist stage managers differ from those who have not yet reached that stage, we will refer for simplicity to all 7 of the pre-Strategists as “Achievers,” but will point out separately when a Technician is being quoted.

LEADERSHIP OF SUBORDINATES

When Achievers and Strategists spoke about their work with subordinates, their contrasting perspectives showed clearly. Achievers tended to see the leadership task as being to cultivate and mold subordinates to their own understanding. In some cases, they acted as mentor, in others as law enforcer or watchdog representing their own bosses. By contrast, Strategists saw the possibility of reaching a new understanding with a subordinate, one that synthesized their own way of thinking with that of the subordinate. Instead of imposing their own preexisting frame on the subordinate, the Strategists sought to create a shared frame with the subordinate.

Bill, a Technician, showed the first of these modes in describing his relationship with a member of his staff who “did not do a lot of work, tried to coast, and this was obvious to everybody in the group.”

It was a series of specific conversations where I'd bring him aside and tell him, “You're missing the boat here. You've got a job to do and I want to make sure you get the job done....an opportunity to make a name for yourself, and I'd like to see you do that. I don't think it's fair to the others, who are working very hard and aren't being rewarded any more than you are.” I said there was a fairness issue here and he said he understood.

Then we went back and forth, and at various times we would come to a head and I'd threaten to fire him. Then he would buckle down and get it done for a little while. I would give him specific objectives and certain reward systems for him.

He had a good relationship with my boss. I made it clear to him I thought he was taking advantage of that, and I told my boss the same thing. My boss agreed and said he would stay out of it, but he never really was. This went on for six months, and that guy is now in my position.

Bill subsequently left for a job in another firm.

That was a very disappointing situation. I think I could have taken greater control; just fired him. I had plenty of ammunition to do so. I was trying to be too accommodating and too optimistic that I could engender a sense of motivation, but I see it as a failure that I just didn't take a stronger stand.

Bill lamented here his lack of success as both law enforcer and watchdog. He knew what was wrong and warned his boss, perhaps expecting him to do something, and also tried to enforce his own standards on his subordinate, without following through on his threats. He said his problem lay in not taking a stronger stand and, in retrospect, this may be true. But at the time he could only have known this to be true if he could have taken a wider perspective, encompassing the points of view of all three actors. Only if he had understood that his boss was not really going to act and that the subordinate did not really share the productivity objectives would "a stronger stand" have made sense at the time. Although Bill's perspective evidently had not embraced these realities, he demonstrated great internal consistency in applying his own goal-achieving perspective to himself. He forthrightly blames himself for failing, rather than casting off responsibility for the outcome on either of the other two players.

The tendency of Achievers to think in dichotomous terms often appeared in their references to their dealings with subordinates. Their point of view was right and the subordinate's should change to match it. The subordinate should be viewed professionally, and not personally; intellectually and not emotionally. Denise, an Achiever who was accreditation program manager for a major hospital, stressed the need to "be clear" with a poorly performing subordinate whom previous bosses had "insulated, because she was so young...the kind of person that people want to take care of because she is so cute." She described her efforts to "be a model" for this subordinate, "mold her into shape," and saw a real bright spot the fact that when Denise's boss had recently asked the subordinate what her goals were, she replied that she wanted to be like Denise.

By contrast, the Strategists' interviews provided several examples of much more patient efforts to work *with* a subordinate's point of view, questioning it rather than dismissing it, neither approving it as is, nor trying to mold it into that of the superior. Susan, a hospital marketing manager, described a conversation with a subordinate whose performance had recently slipped:

I wanted to crack her shell, because she is real tough. You can see the strain behind her eyes, but she says, "I'm fine." I attempted to approach her by really sharing my feelings about the situation, not so much demanding that she open up, but saying I'm feeling concerned, I'm concerned about you. And I said, "I

need you to know that a lot of people are wondering what's wrong. Is something wrong?" That kind of conversation. It wasn't the first time we had had it.

She finally said in a very matter-of-fact way, "It really upsets me that everyone came to you to tell you they were bothered by my behavior, and not to me." So I said, "Well, they were concerned about you and were not sure how to approach you, so they came to me, and in the future, I promise you, if people come to me I will tell them to go to you, that you don't want people tiptoeing around if they have an issue with you, that you request them to go to you. So she said, "Thank you." Anyway, it may not sound like it was successful, but her behavior has changed drastically.

Rather than enforcing or molding, Susan offered her own and others' points of view ("a lot of people are wondering what's wrong ") as points of departure for inquiry. In Argyris and Schön's terms, Susan manifests a Model II theory of action by designing a situation where the other person can be the origin of causation, in which the task is controlled jointly and where the other has room to make choices and take risks.

Another example of a Strategist's creating a framework for autonomous action by others was a description by Mike, who was information services manager in a manufacturing organization, of his work to computerize the company's accounting system. Rather than forcing the adoption of the whole system, Mike carefully set the stage by his thorough work in the early stages of implementation. He then deliberately drew back and let his subordinate take the initiative:

One of the most gratifying things is to see somebody take some responsibility—an individual who is not accustomed to doing so—for something that before I joined, they had no concept of.

I put the machine in. If anything, I probably laid off enough for that person to get comfortable with it at her own pace and then be able to do things with it. I was trying to minimize my own involvement. "Here is a machine, and this is what it does." And all of a sudden, something else got done on it. That was my breakthrough. After that, all I did was make sure the other programs and information were there, and just stayed away.

I know she hasn't used the manual, because I have the manual. It's not the kind of thing you could have planned six months ago, but looking back I can say, with the new applications on, I have somebody who not only can carry out instructions that I give, and I am working on a tolerable relationship, but one who is thinking about it well enough that they can take things a step further.

Mike acted in accordance with his principle of allowing others to take responsibility. His theory-in-use was consistent with his espoused theory. This was not always the case, even for Strategists, but when such discrepancies did occur, Strategists were more likely to notice them and learn from them. For

example, Roger, who was director of operations in a manufacturing organization, discussed a case where he felt he had relied more on his subordinates than he should have. A customer had placed an order that, contrary to the usual practice, was to be held at the plant for pickup rather than shipped.

He wanted to pick it up personally. I usually don't get involved in that kind of detail, but in this case it bothers me that I didn't. What happened was they shipped the product out, and it got shipped to the wrong address. UPS is going to return it, but it's going to take four days, and he's going to miss his shipment to Japan. That's my fault, because I was aware something was not quite right and I didn't dig into it deeply enough.

Operations is delivery, and I have to follow the same rules I give my people. If I felt something was going to affect the customer, I should have made sure things were OK. That's what I expect my people to do. So I didn't follow my own rules, my own credo.

On the one hand there's delegation. I have to constantly make sure I'm delegating properly and showing leadership and direction. The people want me to do that. But I have to recognize that sometimes you have to get your hands dirty and do some work.

Roger assumed that what he thought should happen would happen. His response to this faulty assumption was to reassess his attitude toward his own work in relation to the attitude he expected from his subordinates. He examined how he acted "in use" in relation to what he espoused.

If we contrast Roger's approach as a Strategist to the earlier example of Bill's approach as an Achiever, we see some distinct differences. Both took responsibility for failing, but whereas Bill wished he had taken a stronger stand toward his subordinate (wished he had done more of the same), Roger took a strong stand toward his own practice (wished he had adopted a different strategy on this occasion). Whereas Bill's attention was focused exclusively on the outcome and how to alter that, Roger's attention was also focused on a principle or process of management. Whereas Bill's attention was focused within his framing assumptions, Roger's critique of himself was precisely that he had not challenged his own framing assumptions, his credo-for-himself, to realize that it should include his credo-for-others, and that he had not sufficiently taken the customer's frame into account.

Most of our Strategist interviewees were not senior executives, but managers, professionals, or consultants at middle organizational levels. Nevertheless, they were willing to test the limits of their constraints rather than to assume their superior's frame dictated their own. Thus, they were able to create spheres of action for themselves and for their subordinates. Sharon, a consulting manager with a major accounting firm, put it this way:

The way I look at this is even though I'm in an organization, its way is not my way, and I operate my way. As I gain more and more influence, I run jobs my way. I mean I tell my staff things that other managers don't talk about, like what their hourly rate to the client is. I just decided, long ago, that the question was always how can you do things if you're the middle manager. It's okay if you're CEO and can push it down, but how do you do it in the middle?

Sharon's comment, like those of the other Strategists just quoted, suggested a fascination with varied, potentially opposing perspectives (her subordinates', other managers', the client's). Rather than choosing one among these perspectives as authoritative, she strove to find a way (her own) to operate effectively amidst this variety. This integrative awareness of apparent dichotomies also showed up in the earlier Strategist examples—in Susan's combination of rational problem solving with caring and concern in dealing with her subordinate and in Mike's simultaneous attention to the manual, his subordinate's growing autonomy and the effects of his degree of involvement. The Strategists differed from the Achievers, who spoke more as though they had opted for a choice among dichotomies, for example by taking the role of law enforcer or watchdog, or by undertaking to "mold" a subordinate.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH SUPERIORS

The data on relationships with superiors for both Achievers and Strategists are perhaps the most unexpected and counterintuitive of this study. The conventional view is that the boss has the power so you've got to do what your boss says. One might predict that Achievers and Strategists would interpret differently what the boss means and what latitude may be available in the implementation process. Nevertheless, one would probably assume ordinarily that all these differences would rest within the overall shared frame of doing as the boss says.

In fact, however, neither Achievers nor Strategists in our study accepted this frame or operated from it. Both Achievers and Strategists assumed that it is possible, legitimate, and practical—even necessary—to influence what the superior believes, wants, and does.

As unexpected as this assumption is—or as unrealistic as it may sound—in conventional terms, it is consistent with a developmental view of both of these stages. At the Achiever stage, the objective is to get things done systematically and effectively and one is confident of one's own competence to work in these ways. Consequently, one enlists peers, subordinates, and superiors primarily as equal team players in the work enterprise. One does not kow-tow to superior status unless one believes the superior is substantively correct, or unless one believes the kow-tow to be a necessary minor irrationality

in the service of a larger rationality of completing good work. More effective over a longer time period, however, would be to influence the boss to share an appreciation for the larger rationality.

At the Strategist stage, the objective is to get things done systematically and effectively, with recognition that this may require negotiation among initially diverse frames to create a common frame. Again, one enlists peers, subordinates, and superiors primarily as equal team players in the work enterprise, which now includes the process of discovering/creating a shared frame.

For Achievers, important dealings were frequently efforts to get the superior to accept the correct course of action. Strategists talked much more often in terms of the simultaneous validity of several points of view and the possibility that their own view of correctness could be open to being tested and modified or reversed. Frank, a consultant, showed the strength of the Achiever's urge to bring his "superior" (in this case a client who is a corporate CEO) to see his framework, which he did very successfully:

The CEO opened his mouth and I let him have it. He said, "Surely you don't mean so-and-so." He said, "That's absurd; you can't run a business that way." I said, "Let's explore it. How do we know we can't run a business that way." And he and I had a fifteen minute dialogue, and by the time that ended he began to see what I was talking about. The other people present told me they saw that I wasn't going to be intimidated ... nor would I get into his hip pocket.

In a less successful case, Tom, an Achiever who was Market and Financial Manager for a division of a large computer firm, tried to explain to this supervisors that there might not be enough room in the marketplace for the two similar computers the company had under development. He described his reaction to a meeting where he confronted his supervisors with the fact that plans for the two projects were too vague in terms of price and performance characteristics, and thus might in effect be forecasting combined sales of more than 100 percent of the same market. The bosses acknowledged that this was the right question, and instructed both project groups to "go away and study" the matter. Tom expressed his frustration:

I didn't think so. I thought that going away was not the appropriate course of action. It was, I think, a very simple question. What number is it? The hard part is getting the two groups to agree on what the number is. Going away, they would each just come back and reiterate their arguments.

I remember thinking that nothing was going to happen. I was somewhat relieved that management had started to take control because it could not be resolved at my level or at my manager's level! The vice president's eventual response was, "We should keep these numbers quiet as long as possible."

Tom was, of course, much less assertive than Frank. He does not push his preference—dialogue between the two groups. Frank, on the other hand, “wasn’t going to be intimidated.” The common thread, typical of Achievers, was that both Frank and Tom saw clearly the difference between their own view and that of the superiors, that both advocated their view to their superiors, and that for both, the rationality and effectuality of their own view remained beyond question.

A Technician, Bill, who was second in command in a small marketing research firm, spoke of his association with his boss in somewhat different terms. Rather than a push to gain acceptance of his view, Bill saw his relationship more as a fit between his and his boss’s different frames.

I came to the company to get some business management skills and more product development and strategic management skills than I had. This company is in a position where it can be flexible, and my boss has given me *carte blanche* to try new things. He’s already approved a number of things I’ve suggested, and I’ve had impact not only in terms of research but in the operations in the company, little things and big things, and that’s been a nice experience. I’m in a position now where I can help build a company.

This company is led by an older man who owns the company and therefore takes it much more seriously. He also has a generation gap issue here because the people who work for him are younger than myself by about ten years. I’m one of the more senior people in age. They try to lighten up a little so work can be fun, but they are realizing they have sort of a heads down approach to things which worked well initially, but the pace and pressures are growing. One reason my boss brought me in was because of my easy-going style. He wanted to inject that. He didn’t want a corporate environment. He wants us to dress casually, to enjoy ourselves, and he also wants us to take the business seriously. He is grappling with the delicate balances.

Bill expressed his understanding of the difference between his supervisor’s frame of reference and his own (as well as that of the younger employees), and saw these as making a good fit with one another. He discussed why he was brought in, what he provided and what he thought he could gain. All of these were viewed as external realities, as absolutes. Though clearly effective, Bill’s thinking about his position and his relationship with his boss is different from the relativistic adaptive mode of thought of the Strategists, as we will see. We can wonder whether Bill would have been as effective had the fit not been as good.

Strategists were more likely than the others to speak in terms of their perceptions rather than in terms of immutable realities. Not uncommonly, Strategists would discuss how they had revised and sharpened their definitions of themselves by juxtaposing their perceptions of self against their perceptions of their superiors. Sharon, whose evolving definition of her role with

subordinates was shown above, provided a striking example as she discussed her differences with a boss who does not appear to be the type who is accustomed to candid discussions of differences with his subordinates:

Two years ago I thought there was an answer out there. Other people know it and I don't, and I'm frustrated not knowing how to act. Then I realized that's not it. It's not what you know, it's how you think about providing service to clients. It's like one switch goes off in your brain and another goes on.

I was working with a manager that I knew had a style very, very different from mine. And I knew if I was going to make manager this year, it was crucial that I get this guy on my side, that I make him see I was ready to be manager. He was very task-oriented. He wants to look at budget analyses and all this sort of junk, and I keep telling him, "Steve, there's six people on this project. I don't need to look at a written report to tell you what's going on." I think that was the pivotal point for me in changing because I realized we had two different styles. His had worked for him for a number of years. I could learn from him, but I could never be that way. And that's when I realized my style was no less valid. My way was not the wrong way. I don't need to continue looking for "the" answer.

I had several conversations with him about our differences. I don't think any staff person ever confronted him on his evaluations of them or his approach. I just kept pointing out to him, "Steve, we're different but trust me. I have delivered everything on time, haven't I?" And he would have to say, "Yes." "My project team is happy?" He said, "Yes." I said "Steve, it's not that I do it worse, it's that we're different, and it's not that I can't learn from you." And I think he got a lot from me. It was the first time I felt like I gave to somebody who was my superior. And everyone told me, "Sharon, what did you do to Steve? He gave you an 'Outstanding.' He stood up and supported you."

Significant here is the way Sharon addressed the difference between her boss's perspective and her own in conversations with him. She combined assertion of her views with explicit recognition of differences in frames and with inquiry in the process of testing and building her commitment to a style of working. She did this even with a subject previously considered unmentionable in her organization, her boss's evaluation of her:

He was called the assassin. He was known for picking people off in that critical year. I figured the only way I know how to approach this is to talk to him about it—be honest and get things out on the table that no one talks about. I said, "Steve, I am scared to death of working for you this year because I know you don't promote people. I know you think I'm screwing up because it's different from the way you do things, but trust me. It will work. I know it." And he bought it. So that made me feel a lot stronger about it—that my approach was valid.

Like Sharon, other Strategists used encounters with superiors as important occasions for focusing and developing their perceptions of themselves. Mary,

a market research manager, talked about a debate with a superior in which she had tried a new approach. Instead of assuming that he had the power and either leaving it to his discretion or else appealing to him, she presented her case well enough to win some concessions:

He started to argue, and then he backed off, and I felt really good about that conversation. What I learned was that when you appeal to higher authorities, you've given it up. You've given up control. It's really made me think a lot about authority and how I decide to use it when it's appropriate.

The Strategists often did as Mary did here. In Argyris and Schön's terms, they clarified to themselves their espoused theories—the principles they believed should guide their actions. In interaction with superiors, they either acted consistently with their principles or were alert to note discrepancies and to make appropriate adjustments. Susan, the hospital marketing manager quoted earlier, illustrated this point in discussing an incident with her boss where she exhibited consistency. A misunderstanding occurred in which Susan's boss had asked her to have a certain secretary trained in manual record keeping. Susan heard it incorrectly and started training the secretary on the office computer system:

My boss blew up. I said, "That's not the way I heard it," and she said, "How can you say that's not the way you heard it, that's the way I said it."

My day was basically ruined because I felt I was inept. "I don't hear. I can't deal." So I did all the "what am I doing on this job, am I bright enough for this?" I did all of that and then finally said to myself, "But this is okay. This has happened lots of times before, and we get through it." By the end of the day we were interacting.

Susan assumed incorrectly that she had understood her boss, but was immediately able to work through the problem and admit she was at fault, and maintain the relationship. Her theory in use and espoused theory were essentially the same, so she was able to question and correct her assumption. By the same token, the Strategists who acted inconsistently with their principles typically recognized that this had happened and were unlikely to let the matter rest. Sharon provided an example when she described a meeting with a vice president of her client's organization whom she was asking to have a certain number of the client's staff assigned to her project, a meeting she characterized as "a very unsuccessful interview":

When I went into his office, I think I was a little bit too much into the power play of it all. I knew we were going to get this person anyway, and I was subtly trying to get this VP to see if he didn't approve, it was going to come from the chief operating officer, and he was going to look like an idiot, like he wasn't a team player. But I think I bought too much into the power play myself.

I did that based on other people's advice, and based on my boss's attitude. And when I look back I remember feeling very uneasy about going in and being confrontational with this VP. If I'd gone in with my gut feeling, I might have gotten along better with him. I would have said, "Look, this is what I know is going on right now," instead of pretending ignorance.

Out of that experience, I think I've learned to trust my instincts more. I just don't feel like playing the game gets you as far as just being honest. I made a mistake based on listening to other people. It's not that I don't want to listen to other people, it's that I don't want to do anything that I don't feel is natural for me.

Even though Sharon got what she wanted, she felt ineffective. Her theory-in-use diverged from her espoused theory, and she was not able to get away with it as far as her own evaluation was concerned. It is noteworthy that she located the whole problem in her own mistaken assumption. There was no assigning of blame to her boss, the VP, or anyone else. As developmental theory predicts for the Strategist, she conveyed her feelings vividly. She also distinguished among and found a way of integrating the diverse realities of psychological causation of behavior, role conception, social context, and self-fulfillment.

According to developmental theory, the Strategist will recognize the importance of principle over rules in deciding how to act. Thus principle becomes the integrative force providing central meaning among diverse realities. Principled choice sometimes meant explicitly violating conventional rules, even ones established by the person's superior. This was illustrated by Roger, the newly-appointed director of operations for a manufacturing firm who was quoted earlier. Operations was to be a new unit, formed by consolidating two existing departments. Roger felt he had to call his new staff together and begin working with them despite the fact that his boss had said to wait and not tell the new staff members that they had been selected:

While I knew these people were going to be on my staff, my boss's process and the process defined by the company was don't tell an individual for sure, for definite, that they're going to be here. So I had to play games. In reality, what I did was I violated rules all over the place. I couldn't handle it. I had to lie to my boss and the human resources manager and say to them that I didn't inform people when I really did. I couldn't do it any other way.

We will see how this situation evolved in the next section, as we discuss the different ways in which Achievers and Strategists were effective in taking action.

ACTION INITIATIVES: PROPOSING AND IMPLEMENTING IDEAS AND PROGRAMS

All of our subjects were effective. Our Achievers as well as our Strategists got things done, met objectives, and were making career progress. They came up with new ideas and moved them forward. As our examples have suggested, however, there were differences. In working with subordinates, Achievers typically taught or enforced their own point of view, while Strategists sustained and developed subordinates' points of view in order to produce a blend or synthesis with their own. With superiors, Achievers seemed to see themselves and their bosses as possessing certain established bonding characteristics. They either agreed, and fit, with their bosses, disagreed with them and didn't fit, or disagreed but existed in a state of reciprocal compatibility. Strategists were more likely to describe their superior's frame of reference, and their own, as relative and fluid, in the process of formation and change, and to be prompting such change through their own inquiries and assertions with their bosses.

It was generally true of Strategists that when they described taking action initiatives they conveyed a sense of the simultaneous validity of others' ways of looking at things and a sense of the uniqueness of the situation. The process of action was not generalizable, meaning that one often could not go according to the book. Roger provided an example as he continued discussing his work in forming his new management team:

I got everyone together off site and said, "You're going to be on my staff." My boss didn't like that. He found out afterward that I had talked to these people. I was going to fail one way or the other. I was going to fail if I didn't talk to them, so I figured I'd be able to deal with my boss.

I had a team building meeting two days ago, all of these people in a meeting with a facilitator, again off site. The purpose was to form a mission, a strategy, and also to dump. There were so many issues they were dealing with that I couldn't move forward because they were constantly second guessing what was happening. Why certain things had been done.

So for the first two hours we opened the meeting. I made an opening statement. I said, "OK, what I'd like you to do, because we're now a team, we're in this mess together, I want you to ask me any questions you want about the consolidation. You're the consultants. I've just hired you. I want you, as consultants, to satisfy your needs for information so that you can recommend to me a future business strategy."

What did that was it opened the floodgates. I got asked every question. We got every issue exposed. I said at the end of this, "I do not want any hidden agendas between me and you." So I'm finding things out. They told me about the pressures I applied. They thought my boss or my boss's boss told me what to do. I said, "No, they don't. It is my decision and I am expecting you to push back on me." They said that they hadn't because they felt if they had pushed back it wasn't going to do any good.

Roger went well beyond the task as defined by the organization in order to achieve his own goal of forming an effective team. He showed the acceptance of paradox and contradiction, which characterizes the later development stages, by his deliberate choice between “failing” with his boss and “failing” with his team, while intending to fail with neither. He did not limit himself to a single process. After finding he couldn’t move forward in the team building meeting using a by-the-book approach, he discarded it, “opening the floodgates.” His remarks made it clear he saw his effectiveness as relating to stage setting—developing a new type of frame for an interaction or process to take place in which his own aims could be expressed, but which would also accommodate those of others.

The contrasting perspective of the Achievers was provided by Ellen, a market analysis manager at a major computer manufacturer. Ellen described her efforts, which she viewed as quite successful, at bringing together and leading a cross-functional team to design and market a new software package.

It involved at least a half dozen organizations’ representatives who sat around the table on a weekly basis designing this program and coming up with something that both they and the customer who was piloting it were very happy with. I felt very good about that because none of those people reported to me, but they all saw the advantages of doing business this way. The customer benefited, their goals were met. We channelled it from a lot of people to a single organization and the single organization dealt with our point of contact for support and service. Administratively it just became a much cleaner and tighter way of doing business for us. It was one of the major achievements I’ve accomplished inside the corporation. It had a lot of impact inside and a lot of impact competitively on the industry.

As in Roger’s case, Ellen was effective in putting together a team, but she saw it differently. While Roger stressed the importance of “opening the flood gates” to learn things he hadn’t known—“the hidden agendas”—Ellen emphasized that the team members “all saw the advantages and benefits of doing business this way.” What Ellen saw as important was that it was her solution, her way of doing business that was adopted. She set up and monitored a “a clean, tight way of doing business.” In other words, she followed the rules. Roger, on the other hand, relied on principles of fairness and valid information, since “the rules,” as defined by his boss and his subordinates, were in conflict. Ellen’s effectiveness, like Roger’s, involved coordinating the efforts of many different individuals, but did not, as she described it, involve looking at or questioning her own frame of reference, process or ideology. She was interested in results and felt effective because she had led an effort which gave her high visibility, solved a corporate problem, and would be good for her career. The same may be said of Roger’s initiative, but it is not what he emphasized in reporting on it.

Achievers did not lack skill in hearing and responding to others' points of view in the process of furthering their goals. Ed, for example, who was a marketing manager for an investment firm, described his success, as a project manager of a new fund, in selling the fund to an institutional investor:

These people get probably ten or more calls a week from people like me saying, "Hey, I've got this fund; are you interested?" And they all sound the same. But you've got to somehow get them to meet with you and believe in what you're doing and be interested in it. I think we understand this person's mind-set well enough so that we knew what features to highlight. We weren't lying to the person, we just did a good job of presenting the right things and didn't just give this person a canned presentation. Instead, we were aware of their needs and tailored it to make it attractive to them.

This example illustrates, confirming developmental theory, that the Achiever may be aware of another person's point of view, and may tailor his own approach to be acceptable to that point of view—only his approach, however, not his point of view. Here Ed "sold" his belief that the fund was good for the client, partly by believing in the process he was employing with the client. Our Achievers did believe strongly in their processes and were frequently superb at moving their agendas forward. Obstacles that got in their way were often dealt with vigorously and quickly as an investment banking vice president, Linda, demonstrated in discussing how she responded when one of the firm's lawyers raised a last minute objection to her project.

I wouldn't dump on anybody to get something done, unless somebody stepped in my way and tried to do something which I thought was uncalled for and could have been done in a better way. I would make sure that it didn't happen again.

On this one fund, the lawyer decided to make a big issue about something not to help me or help the fund move forward, but to make this other lawyer look bad.

There is no way that I am going to let that person screw up a project I'm working on for his political future. I made sure this situation was made known to people who could change it. I didn't come out and blame and say why this person was doing this, but anybody who was smart could put two and two together. I did make sure that this person had nothing else to do with this project. In this company, to get a lawyer taken off a project that is as important as this one is pretty significant. It doesn't happen often. I would do something like that.

In this example, a less formal dimension of process came into play. For Linda, it was appropriate to operate indirectly, politically, to make sure her project was defended. The lawyer was "someone who stepped in my way and tried to do something which I thought was uncalled for and could have been done in a better way." For "better way," could be substituted, "my way" or "the

appropriate way,” suggesting that for this Achiever the informal political process of the organization is as much a set of rules as the grievance handbook. The straight-line, no detour focus on results, characteristic of the Technician developmental stage, where Linda had been measured on one of her two Loevinger tests, is also apparent.

Strategists often described their initiatives in less linear terms. Implementation, as they conceived it, was a slower, more tortuous, iterative process. This can be seen in a description by Steven, who was manager of administrative services for an R&D firm, of his efforts to computerize the purchasing function:

We gathered up our purchasing group and drove to the vendor sites and sat through the whole thing. I took the role of being Silent Sam. I didn't advocate anything. I just wanted to sit back and let the people who were going to be ultimate beneficiaries or victims of all this, nitpick this thing to death, which is exactly what they did. They didn't like this screen; they didn't like this menu. Basically, what I did was put the vendor on the hot seat to defend his product.

So they saw everything there was to see, and the general consensus was, yup, we have to have automation. While we're not quite sure yet which vendor we like, we have seen a lot of interesting things, and have narrowed it down to two. I have charged the two to come back with better proposals, more specific proposals.

Rather than steering a predetermined course, Steven set the stage—prepared a place where a process would unfold. He went on to express the importance he attached to this process, which he saw as “building the meaning” of what the system will look like and how it will come about:

Watching that process of building the meaning to me was very, very exciting. It was also exciting to see the proof of the pudding. Had I not entered into that type of process, what I may have ended up with was what happens every day in a lot of places: something that is about 60% correct which would have then meant a lot more homework.

I felt this was a very, very time consuming process that many people probably would not have bothered with. But when I saw the work product, I said that was the most valuable time I ever spent, no question in my mind, absolutely priceless, priceless time

Now what we have seen is a very positive ripple effect rolling out throughout the organization. We're looking at the organization as a system as opposed to a Steven Smith world.

Apparent here is Steven's integrated attention to process and content. He set in motion a process where the meaning that was built could be a new meaning brought about from several perspectives, not just from the perspective of “Steven Smith's world.”

Steven's interview provided another example of how he prompted meaning to unfold. A young subordinate came to him in tears complaining that her salary increase was half what she thought it should be. Steven explained she had been rated very highly, that her raise was double the average in the industry, and had been very carefully considered. She remained dissatisfied, and was still upset after Steven offered careful explanations of the inflation rates, regional differences, and other factors involved. She was still unhappy. At this point (a point when Achievers might well have called an end to the matter), Steven sent the case back to the compensation department for a review. For Steven, truth was not simply objective. Despite the fact that a larger pay increase *would* be too much, Steven was not satisfied that the answer was right except in terms of principles he applied relating to a fully attentive and open communication process. He went on to describe the ensuing conversation:

I called her in a second time, and what fell out the bottom of the basket was a bunch of hidden agendas, none of which I had expected. One, for example, had to do with the profit sharing program—something she had understood to be true of it, but was not.

After they discussed these new matters, Steven felt the situation was largely put to rest, except that, as he put it, "Having to deal with these hidden agendas that are totally clouded, had made our earlier communication unsuccessful, leaving some ill will." Steven reflected that she had other communication problems, ones that didn't affect her present work, but could limit her in the future, and that he planned to send her to communication seminars, as well as help her himself by discussing "critical incidents" with her. He concluded by saying of his own performance in this matter, "If you ask me how successful I feel so far, I'd say not very." The interviewer suggested it might be useful for Steven to let her know the impact her actions were having on him.

Despite his feelings of ineffectiveness and the omission mentioned by the interviewer, Steven demonstrated double loop learning through his successive reframings of the problem, from the pay increase computation to the hidden agendas to communication style, enabling both persons to address more problems, more significant problems, and ultimately, to develop their working relationship.

Reframing was further illustrated by Lisa, a managerial effectiveness consultant, who was measured at the Ironist stage (a later stage than Strategist). Lisa discussed a recent engagement with a client, the director of training and development for an industrial company, which had undergone a series of changes: "It was sort of three steps forward, two steps back. We would work together on the task that was at hand and gradually, little by little, I would try to get beneath that." Lisa went on to describe how she began to realize that the "steps back" were the result of a fear her client had, which he didn't

recognize, about undertaking new projects on his own, ones not defined for him by others in the company. Having seen this, Lisa described the “next phase” as working at helping the client see that it was his fear, not external conditions, that was driving his choices about new projects. Next came a “phase” in which Lisa spent several sessions talking with the client about a training program he was planning that was prescribed by the company, but one that enabled him to add his own touch:

Things shifted when he and I went off to look at this program. The way you look at this program is to participate in it. During these four days he got clearer and clearer about what he was going to end up teaching people back at the company. That’s the point where it began to feel like a real success, because not only was there an opening in our relationship, but it was turning into a feeling of empowerment that he had of what he wanted to be achieving, and how to achieve it. I could see his own confidence in his work and his delight.

During further work on this project, a new phase emerged where the client began to view Lisa more as a collaborator in doing the training program than as a consultant. Lisa clarified this to the client and the program moved forward successfully with the client taking much more initiative in new directions than he had in the past.

Lisa noted that she felt less than fully effective, however:

There’s the dark side of me as a consultant as well as the brilliant, wonderful side. With all his feelings of powerlessness, it was very easy to be someone who would just take him at his word—to hold the marionette strings myself—and that is the dark side.

Lisa showed several of the characteristics of the post-Achiever. Her openness to reframing was apparent in her several redefinitions of the nature of the engagement, from helping the client identify his fear, to consulting with him about the training program, to becoming a collaborator rather than a consultant. She showed integrated awareness of her client’s worldview, her own, and of the tasks—hers as consultant and her client’s as training director. In addition, she revealed other characteristics typical of the later stages of adult development, including her respect for her client’s autonomy (“I could see his own confidence in his work and his delight”) and her attention to the paradox of having both a “brilliant, wonderful side” and a “dark side.”

Lisa’s awareness of her dark side can introduce a brief consideration of the ethical ambiguity of development to later managerial stages, before we conclude by offering the hypotheses that emerge from this exploratory study. The reader may recall the earlier, somewhat shocking example where Roger

straightforwardly reports that he lied to his boss that he would *not* tell his subordinates that they were going to be retained on staff, and then in fact proceeded *to* tell them at a two-day retreat. As Lisa's comment and Roger's example indicate, *if* managers are more ethical at later stages of development, it is not in any simple sense of becoming increasingly pure and lily white.

Theoretically, the contention is that Strategists and still later stage managers are more ethical in several complex and problematic respects. First, their primary loyalty is to principles, not rules or policies. (After all, Roger's corporation's policy was, in effect, to lie to the subordinates, and his approach may have come closer to the principle of maximizing valid information.) Second, they are more aware of and willing to acknowledge, reflect on and correct the ethical ambiguities and costs of their actions; thus less likely to be hypocritical and blindly unethical. Third, they are more likely to enact intentional "noble lies" than unintentional, self-interested lies.

The highly paradoxical idea of a "noble lie" comes from Plato's *Republic*, where Socrates argues that the truly rational ruler will recognize that most people are so irrational (not so much with regard to their own short-term self-interest, as with regard to the long-term common good) that it is necessary for the achievement of the common good to create various fictions to enlist people's intermediate commitment. Like Plato's and Socrates' conception of true rationality in *The Republic*, developmental theory suggests that there is an enormous distance between the various 'minor' forms of rationality at the early stages of development and forms of rationality that more nearly comprehend the human world as a whole (and hence something approaching a 'common good') at the later stages of development. This idea that some people are "more rational" than others is obviously distinctly unpalatable to most people's taste in a democratic, market society, not to mention distinctly dangerous. (Does it encourage monstrosities such as Hitler's myth of Aryan superiority?) As stated above, developmental theory holds that late stage managers will be the most capable of accounting for and correcting this danger. We leave this issue to the reader's reflection and further research.

HYPOTHESES

The interviews, as summarized above, provide a basis for several hypotheses about the implications for an individual's managerial practice of movement beyond the Achiever stage to the Strategist stage. They address the three areas illuminated in the interviews: leadership practice in working with subordinates, relationships with superiors and the taking of action initiatives.

Leadership Practice

- H1.** Strategists are more likely than Achievers to articulate principles that they espouse as bases for their own leadership practice and to notice and learn from discrepancies between their action and these principles.
- H2.** Strategists make more frequent and more conscientious efforts than Achievers to understand subordinate's frames, inquiring about them rather than dismissing them, to form an integrative awareness of these frames, including discrepant frames, and to use them as a basis for synthesizing new shared meanings.
- H3.** Strategists are more likely than Achievers to test the limits of their organizations' and their superiors' constraints and to create new spheres of action for their subordinates and for themselves.

Relationships with Superiors

- H4.** Both Strategists and Achievers see it as appropriate to influence their superiors' beliefs, goals and actions.
- H5.** Strategists, in influencing superiors, are more likely than Achievers to undertake a negotiation among initially diverse frames to create a new shared frame, while Achievers are more likely to assert their own view as beyond question.
- H6.** Strategists are more likely than Achievers to identify their perceptions as perceptions, rather than as immutable realities, and to discuss differences in perceptions explicitly with their superiors.
- H7.** Strategists, more than Achievers, base their actions on principles rather than rules, even when those principles are at odds with rules established by their superiors.

Action Initiatives

- H8.** When their actions are inconsistent with their own principles, strategists are more likely than Achievers to notice the discrepancy and act to reduce it.
- H9.** Strategists are more likely than Achievers to view their action processes as unique rather than generalizable and rule governed.

- H10.** Strategists are more likely than Achievers to define their effectiveness as consisting in setting a sage—a frame in which their own as well as others' aims can be expressed—rather than in getting their own solutions and processes adopted.
- H11.** Achievers use their awareness of others' points of view to design ways of gaining acceptance by others of their own goals. They see implementation as a linear move toward the goal. Strategists use their awareness of others' points of view to question and revise their goals. They see implementation as an iterative process involving creation of new shared meanings, leading to the reframing of problems.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS AND TRANSFORMING ORGANIZATIONS

If further confirmed, these hypotheses urge strongly that the capacities managers need in order to create settings wherein they themselves, their colleagues and the organization as a whole can transform require personal development beyond the Achiever stage to the Strategist stage. Certainly, all the illustrations and hypotheses provided above seem to disconfirm the position of Kuhnert and Lewis, reviewed at the outset, that Achievers can “operate as transformational leaders...[who] know the limitations, the defects and the strengths of all perspectives.”

To date, there has been little experience with the process of bringing about development beyond the Achiever stage to the Strategist stage, but there are indications of what is involved. Unlike much of the practice of management training and organization development, which involves teaching people new knowledge and skills, fostering the movement of adults along the developmental ladder requires building a wider vision enabling them to increase their own skill and knowledge generating capacity.

We know of just two managerial training efforts built explicitly around developmental theory. Bartunek, Gordon, and Weathersby (1982) designed a program for teaching “complicated understanding” to administrators in a women’s religious order. Participants attended a 10-day conference where they practiced concurrent use of several conceptions of a problem (a characteristic of the Strategist stage). Solutions to problems were developed with consideration given to multiple frames of reference. Pre- and Post-tests indicated participants framed problems differently after the training than they had before. (The Loevinger test was not administered, however, so we do not know whether the training fostered developmental change). The conference was preceded by 9 months of preparation. Participants were sent readings and kept logs of their applicability to issues they were confronting in their work

and lives. This, plus the 10-day, full-time duration of the conference, suggests the commitment and resources needed to promote developmental movement. This suggestion is reinforced by the experience of the second managerial training effort that is built around developmental theory (and that has measured participants at entry and exit using the Loevinger test). This is an MBA program that constructs a wide variety of action settings and feedback mechanisms that foster developmental change. Yet it reports that only about 10% of its students register one full developmental transformation over an intensive 18 month fulltime program (Torbert, 1987b). This evidence shows either how challenging is the process of fostering development in managers, or how little we know about doing so, or both.

We are convinced that the fostering of human development is crucial not only to helping individuals become leaders but also in changing organizations. Individual development, as we have seen, includes change in conceptual frame. Organizations as a whole, and subgroups within them, frequently share frames in common that tend to persist (Gray, Bougon, & Donnellon, 1985; Shrivastva & Schneider, 1984). Organization development can succeed or fail depending on whether shared frames change. Bartunek and Moch (1990) describe in detail a QWL intervention in which successes during the project, when they occurred, were explained by the ability of people in the organization to replace an old shared frame, where management was seen as paternalistic, with a new frame, where the relationship with management was seen as collaborative. Ultimately, the program failed because the new shared frame never fully developed and the organization slipped back into the old frame.

We are aware of one case where organizational reframing was undertaken from an explicitly developmental perspective (Krim, 1986). The interventionist used developmental theory to understand himself, the other key players, and to form an agenda for a QWL program. The interventionist was a senior city manager in a highly politicized municipal government. A Strategist, he used his ability to understand others' frames, as well as to understand the limited validity of his own perspective, to realize that he regularly "deauthorized" himself in critical situations. Perhaps because his perspective was relatively rare, major players criticized him as "lacking political instincts." However, he made effective use of others' frames that differed from his own and saw as well the possibility of reframing deteriorating situations. He also struggled to overcome his "self-deauthorizing" tendency. After two years, the program had grown in size and appeared successful. None of the other six municipal QWL programs in that state survived more than a year. Nationally, fewer than one-third have survived as long as two years.

This case supports the proposition that the developmental position of the leader of change is central to the success of the change effort. It presents further evidence that it is the leader at the Strategist stage who brings to the arena of action a realization that persons and organizations differ from one another

in the frames through which they interpret events, an ability to examine his or her own, as well as others' frames, and a willingness to set a stage where new shared ways of making meaning can develop.

As research continues to show a relationship between heightened leadership effectiveness and the later stages of adult development, managers, those who educate and train managers, as well as those who practice in the field of organization change and development are afforded a compelling new perspective. It is our view that most of management education and most organization development efforts have aimed at building people's knowledge and skills rather than at helping them to attain developmentally the wider vision that enables personal autonomy as well as the kind of collaboration with others that produces an adaptive, self-renewing organization. The nurturing of later stage adult development is vital to the process of transforming individuals and organizations.

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NOTES

1. Freud's own method, psychoanalysis, demonstrates that people can overcome the constraints of compulsions established in childhood. Later writers argue strongly that the healthy ego can enable the individual to engage in successively more and more complex developmental tasks (Erikson, 1959; Hartman, 1958; White, 1963).

Another body of theory and research that may seem at odds with constructive-developmental theory is McClelland's work on achievement motivation. McClelland (1961) found the need for achievement to be associated with economic growth. Active entrepreneurs who created growing business firms scored high on McClelland's measure of achievement motivation. Based on this and other related findings, McClelland saw achievement motivation as a key to leadership. Later, however, McClelland was surprised to discover the achievement motive to be entirely unrelated to leadership. In one extreme case, he found the chief executive of one of America's most successful corporations scored zero on achievement motivation. Instead, leadership was related to a motive McClelland referred to as the need to exercise socialized power. The socialized power motive was characterized by a concern for group goals, finding goals that would move the group, helping the group to formulate them, taking the initiative in finding the means to achieve them, and giving the group members the feeling of competence they will need to work hard for them. Socialized power stood in contrast to personal power, a motive characterized by win-lose objectives, the desire to conquer and dominate opponents, and to treat other people as pawns rather than enhancing their performance. Significantly, for our purposes, McClelland found a developmental difference between the two power motives. The socialized power motive was associated with a later stage of social-emotional maturity than the motive for personal power (McClelland, 1975).

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