

Section 3

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Key Points

- 1 Applying the Army Leadership Requirements Model
- 2 Elements of Leadership
- 3 Transactional Leadership
- 4 Transformational Leadership

We never lost sight of the reality that people, particularly gifted commanders, are what make units succeed. The way I like to put it, leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible.

GEN Colin Powell

From P. G. Tsouras, ed., *The Greenhill Book of Military Quotations*

Introduction

To become truly effective leaders, an Army officer must be more than a “one-trick pony” who can apply only one leadership model. Army leaders lead more intensively than most of their counterparts in civilian life do, in situations where a lack of effective leadership will have catastrophic results.

Different situations, different missions, and different organizations will require different leadership styles as you progress from Cadet to second lieutenant to increasingly more demanding positions. To succeed in the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) as a small-unit leader or more senior officer, you must be able to adapt your leadership style to these variables.

As you have learned, the Army Leadership Requirements Model represents decades of research in leadership theory, tempered with the collective experiences of officers who have successfully led in combat and other challenging situations.

This section will examine two proven leadership styles: One, *transactional leadership*, is a “Get it done, now!” model that works in many types of situations. Its strength—a focus on the self-interests of those led—is also a limitation, because it does not address the need for shared values that motivate people to sacrifice over the long term for the greater good. *Transformational leadership*, a higher order of leadership, does address this need, but requires more time and effort to be effective. This section compares these two leadership styles and encourages you to develop your ability to use both, as the situation demands.

GEN Douglas MacArthur must have understood how a transformational leadership style builds trust and loyalty in your subordinates, judging from the following vignette.

How MacArthur Expected the Best

In 1936, when MacArthur was creating the Philippine military, Sid Huff accepted the job of naval adviser. In his first meeting on the job, MacArthur told Huff that he wanted a fleet of motor torpedo boats, forerunners of the PT boat, and asked how many Huff could deliver in ten years. When Huff replied that he had never even seen a torpedo boat, MacArthur told him, “That’s all right. You will. . . . You’re a Navy man and you know what to do. . . .”

MacArthur’s expectation of followers also became a motivation in and of itself. William Ganoe, MacArthur’s chief of staff at West Point, explained:

[MacArthur] made you a driving force with the fewest words of concentrated inspiration. He stretched your talents to the elastic limits. He did not hold back, or give you the slightest hint of uncertainty. There was no cautioning, “Now I’d look out for this,” or “If this situation should happen, try this.” There was no nervousness, anticipation of a situation, or implied reservation that he really ought to be handling the matter himself. There was just the plain *what*, without any *hows*, *whys*, *ifs* or *maybes*. You were freed of any cluttering side issues.

To a subordinate who had served under commanders who loaded him down with details, cautions, hesitations, hamperings, and meddlings, it was an emancipation and delight to serve under MacArthur. For him there seemed to be no fear that his agent might not be up to par and no temptation to arrogate everything to himself. He would send his athletics representative away with full powers to make contracts with universities, and his Quartermaster to deal with architects in projects involving millions.

Theodore Kinni and Donna Kinni, *No Substitute for Victory*

Applying the Army Leadership Requirements Model

The Army devotes significant resources to studying and promoting in-depth discussion of many leadership theories. Its aim is to help develop leaders who can succeed in a wide variety of challenging situations. That's because in Army operations, *leadership must embody theory*. Remember that the Army is people. The Army Leadership Requirements Model, shown in Figure 3.1, summarizes the Army's view of how the elements of successful leadership are interrelated.

The Army Leadership Requirements Model can be a powerful tool for your growth today and a constant guide as you lead in the future. Apply this model to all of your actions and decisions—whether personal or professional—and you will gain competence and confidence in your critical role as a small-unit leader.



Figure 3.1 The Army Leadership Requirements Model

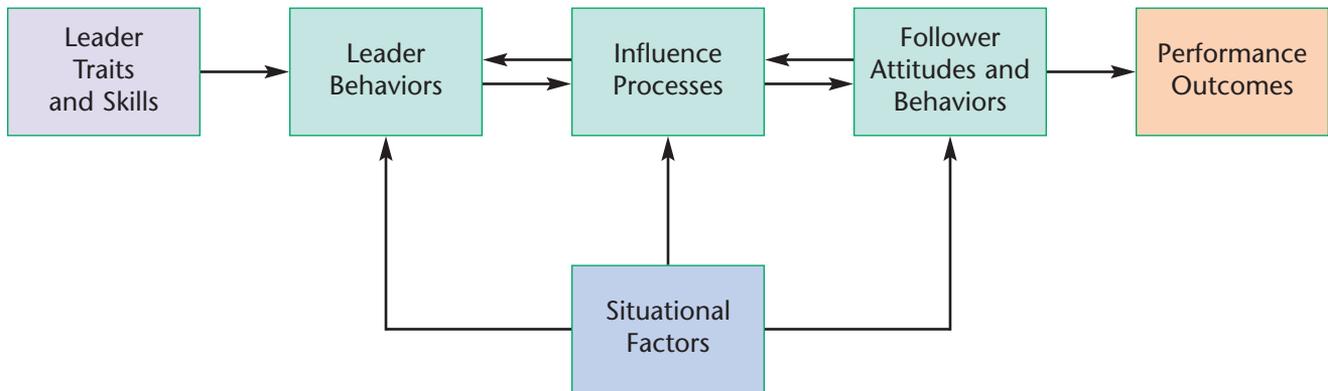


Figure 3.2 Relationships Among Leadership Variables

Taken from Yukl, 2006

The phrase *Be, Know, Do*, used to describe Army leadership in Chapter 1 of FM 6-22, continues to be an enduring expression to define the qualities that make a leader. The attributes from the Army Leadership Requirements Model include the *Be* and *Know* of leadership—what an Army leader is and knows. The core leader competencies include the *Do*—what an Army leader does.

Be focuses on the Army’s seven core values, which leaders must develop in themselves and subordinates. Army leaders must put the seven values (loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, personal courage—LDRSHIP) into practice in their own daily lives. In addition, attributes—those talents or traits you have naturally—are also part of *Be*. Good leaders know how to improve their own mental, physical, and emotional attributes.

Know focuses on training for all types of situations you may encounter. Army training aims to develop your key skills. As someone who leads by example and models Army standards, you must be adept at more than one type of skill to be successful.

Do highlights the Army’s measurement of its leaders’ success by their behaviors or actions. Your actions influence those around you. Your subordinates will take their cue from how you live out the Army Values and your officer’s oath.

Elements of Leadership

In Section 2, you studied two key theories of how leaders do their jobs and cultivate their own leadership styles. *Trait theory* holds that you are born with specific characteristics that make you a leader. *Behavioral theory* says that you become an effective leader by learning how to behave in certain ways. Behavioral theory includes two key behavioral aspects of leaders—an orientation toward task versus an orientation toward people. Depending on the circumstances, both of these theories may apply in varying degrees to different leaders.

Transactional and transformational leadership theories involve the broad categories of behavior, influence, and follower attitudes and behavior found in Gary Yukl’s leadership model (Figure 3.2), covered in Section 2, Leadership Traits and Behaviors.

Transactional Leadership

A transaction is a communication or activity involving two or more parties or things that *reciprocally influence* each other. *Transactional leadership*, therefore, focuses on leaders' and followers' self-interests. Transactional leadership involves an exchange in which followers work to receive benefits or to avoid penalty or punishment. A transactional leader influences subordinates through a “this for that” (*quid pro quo*) exchange, such as one of the following:

- Contingent reward: the leader uses rewards or incentives to achieve results when Soldiers meet expectations
- Passive management by exception: the leader uses correction or punishment as a response to Soldiers' unacceptable performance or deviation from the accepted standards
- Active management by exception: the leader *actively* monitors subordinates' work and uses corrective methods to ensure that the work meets accepted standards
- Laissez-faire leadership: the leader has a “hands-off” approach toward workers and their performance.

A significant strength of transactional leadership is its *focus on the here and now*. It's the “Do it because I said so” style of leading. Transactional leadership can get things done in the short term, in the absence of the time needed to build lasting bonds between the leader and those led. For example, in World War II, when the Army assigned replacements to the front lines to strengthen combat units, unit leaders were often compelled—under the limited time and resource pressures of battle—to use transactional leadership.

But the goal of Army leadership today is to create bonds between Soldiers with the strength to motivate even when the leader is not present. To build the kind of lasting bonds that enhance unit cohesion, morale, and performance, you must apply a higher order of leadership: *transformational leadership*.

Critical Thinking

Consider some of the leadership challenges you encountered during your last semester. Which ones might you have effectively met using a transactional leadership style?

Critical Thinking

Think about the pros and cons of transactional leadership. When would it be ineffective?



President George Bush

Transformational Leadership

Leaders who practice transformational leadership motivate Soldiers to share a vision of success. Transformational leaders reject self-interest for the greater good. Thus, they are able to shape the organization's strategies and tactics until their presence is felt even when they are not physically there: the leader's "spirit is with us," in the words of one Soldier. As you have seen in your study of operations and tactics so far, understanding the *leader's* or *commander's intent* is a critical component of successfully maneuvering in combat.

Transformational leadership is built on several key assumptions:

- Soldiers are most willing to follow a leader who inspires them
- Soldiers are motivated when they understand the importance of the task
- Collaboration and teamwork are better than working individually, especially in the long term
- Working towards a "greater good" strongly bonds individuals in organizations together with a sense of pride that makes material rewards seem trivial.

Elements of Transformational Leadership

You sometimes hear people talk about a particularly effective leader or public figure as *charismatic*. Transformational leadership theory uses the Greek word *charisma*, which can be interpreted "special gift or favor." Charisma is that rare personal quality in a leader that inspires followers to follow enthusiastically. "Transformational" refers to the changes your personal charisma creates in your Soldiers' goals, visions, and sense of purpose. The four main elements of transformational leadership are *idealized influence* (attributed and behavioral), *inspirational motivation*, *individualized consideration*, and *intellectual stimulation*.

Idealized influence (attributed) involves your charisma as a leader—whether Soldiers perceive you as competent, self-confident, and committed to higher ideals and ethics.

Idealized influence (behavioral) involves your charismatic actions related to your values, beliefs, and missions.

Inspirational motivation includes such behaviors as expressing appealing visions, focusing Soldiers' efforts, and behaving in ways that energize your subordinates.

Individualized consideration refers to your supportive behavior toward your Soldiers, such as showing concern for their needs, giving encouragement, and assisting their development.

Intellectual stimulation includes helping your followers by inspiring their creativity of thought. The professor who helps students realize that their outlook on life will change for the better if they put effort into learning demonstrates transformational leadership. The commander who helps Soldiers realize that if they train hard they will help the American people remain free also demonstrates transformational leadership.

Critical Thinking

In what ways is transformational leadership more difficult to achieve than transactional leadership?

Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.

President John F. Kennedy

TABLE 3.1

Comparison of Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Categories	Transactional	Transformational
Leader's source of power	Rank, position	Character, competence
Follower reaction	Compliance	Commitment
Time frame	Short-term	Long-term
Rewards	Pay, promotion, etc.	Pride, self-esteem, etc.
Supervision	Important	Less important
Counseling focus	Evaluation	Development
Where change occurs	Follower behavior	Follower attitude, values
Where "leadership" found	Leader's behavior	Follower's heart

Which Style Is Best?

Table 3.1 compares transactional and transformational leadership. Each has its advantages and its limitations. In choosing the appropriate style for a given situation, you must consider the time you have to accomplish your objective, your abilities and those of your Soldiers, and the nature of your objective itself.

In other words, how you influence others to achieve your mission, goal, or objectives is affected not only by the leadership style you choose but also by the situation, your followers, and your own skills and abilities. Transactional leadership tends to have an operational or "here and now" focus. Transformational leadership runs deeper and focuses on a strategic and fundamental change in your Soldiers' professional character.

But transactional and transformational leadership are not opposing approaches to getting things done. Rather, think of transformational leadership as growing out of transactional leadership. It produces levels of effort and performance on your subordinates' part that go beyond what you can help them achieve using the transactional approach. The two styles can even complement each other—and frequently do.

Critical Thinking

Think of some leaders you know of—perhaps teachers, coaches, members of the clergy, politicians. Would you classify them as transactional or transformational leaders? Why?



CONCLUSION

To build your skills in leading Soldiers, you must practice both transactional and transformational leadership. While these styles may seem to be very different in their approaches, they do not directly contradict each other. Both grow out of your integrity as an Army leader. In transactional leadership, you must demonstrate unwavering integrity by making realistic promises and then keeping those promises. In transformational leadership, you must embody—not simply preach—the vision and selflessness that will transform an organization into a team that relishes success and avoids failure.

In this sense, transformational leadership rises on the foundation of transactional leadership. It produces levels of effort, perseverance, and performance from your team that actually enhance those associated with a transactional approach.

The way to successfully develop both of these leadership styles is to start now to apply them in ordinary situations on campus and elsewhere. Seek opportunities to lead and guide others, so you can build the experience and strength of character to lead effectively when lives are at stake and the only acceptable result is victory.

Learning Assessment

1. Describe the transactional leadership theory and give an example of transactional leadership. What are its strengths and its limitations?
2. Describe the transformational leadership theory and give an example of transformational leadership. What are its strengths and its limitations?

References

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