

NewThinking about LEADERSHIP



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What are we talking about?

- . Americans tend to think more about leaders than about leadership. We alternately love and hate our leaders. We imagine we know them. We judge them. We have expectations of them. They charm us. They disappoint us. They entertain us. Above all, they capture our imagination. But what do we need leaders to *do*?



“Rather than define leadership either as a position of authority in a social structure or as a personal set of characteristics, we may find it a great deal more useful to define leadership as an activity.”

Heifetz, Ronald (1994). Leadership Without Easy Answers (p. 20).
Cambridge: Harvard University Press.



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**Leadership is an activity
rather than a state or
condition, and it exists
precisely because
individuals are
“in – relation”**



Leadership involves the establishment of an integrity-based relationship between individuals who agree to help move an organization toward a goal not yet achieved, but clearly articulated, in a way that validates and enhances the expressed purposes of the organization and of its members. The leader is the individual or group of individuals who accept the responsibility to set the course for the journey toward achieving the goal, as well as for choosing among the competing goods that will present themselves as alternatives along the way.



Leadership involves
*taking an organization
someplace else* **in a
qualitative way.**



There are as many possible interpretations of the **qualitative nature** of leadership as there are definitions of leadership. The **qualitative nature** of leadership refers to the **effectiveness** of that leadership.



Effectiveness, in turn, refers to the degree to which the leader was able to (a) **comprehend** organizational needs, (b) **articulate** those needs in the form of organizational goals, (c) **convince** key individuals to participate in

the leadership activity of meeting those goals (d) **choose** among competing goods as the goals are being pursued, (e) maintain **flexibility** en route, (f) **acknowledge** the contributions of others in meeting the goals, (g) **relinquish** his/her leadership role when the goals for which his/her leadership is uniquely suited have been met.



Unique Realities of Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations are those that exist to serve some expressed mission, usually having to do with meeting the needs of human beings – either individually or in groups – within a context in which “serving the mission” replaces “making a profit” as the organization’s primary purpose.



Leadership in a nonprofit organization, then, entails *taking the organization someplace else on the way toward fulfilling its mission*



Unique Realities of For-profit Organizations

For-profit organizations are those that exist to serve some expressed mission within a context in which **“serving the mission”** leads to **“making a profit”** as the organization’s primary purpose.



Leadership in a for-profit organization, then, entails *taking the organization someplace else on the way toward fulfilling its mission while making a profit.*

