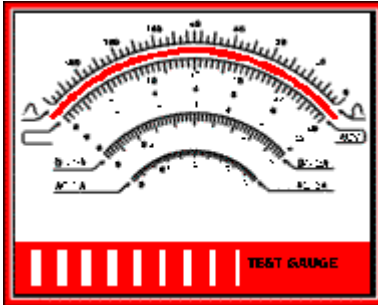


What is “Transformational Leadership”?



In most areas of the world electrical energy is provided by a power transformer. This boxy device is designed for a simple purpose. It takes the existing energy coming into it and *transforms* it to a different level. Electrical power is transported on a grid system at one voltage and when it arrives at residential neighborhoods it is transformed into a different and useful voltage. Within organizations, the right leadership behaviors can also *transform* the

company and individuals from one level to another, and produce positive significant change! In the 1970's, researcher James McGregor Burns wrote a significant book entitled, Leadership. He sought to define the processes or behaviors used by leaders to motivate or influence followers. Burns described leadership behavior as falling within *two* broad categories of influence. One category is called *transformational* leadership. This behavior is founded on the belief that leaders and followers can raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality. The other category is called *Transactional* leadership and is discussed in the [January 2003 weLEAD](#) “Leadership Tips of the Month”.

The heart of transformational leadership is the leader's desire and ability to raise the consciousness of others by appealing to powerful moral values and ideals. The leader is able to transform followers beyond the dishonorable emotions of jealousy, greed and fear to higher principles of liberty, justice and humanitarianism. As Burns would say, the followers are raised from their “everyday selves” to become “better selves.” Transformational leaders influence followers by serving as a teacher, mentor and coach. They seek to elevate and empower others to a higher level. Transformational leaders can be found within any organization and at any level in the organization. This is a leader that can influence superiors, peers or subordinates.

Bernard Bass expanded upon the earlier ideas of Burns with his own theory of transformational leadership. He defines this supervision in terms of the leader's motivational effect on followers. They feel loyalty, trust, admiration and respect toward the transformational leader. The followers are motivated to serve and achieve more than they originally were expected to. They are inspired to achieve *higher-order* needs and are made more aware of the organization's needs for their unique skills and talents. Today it is acknowledged that there are *four* various types of transformational leadership behavior. These are as follows...

1. **Idealized Influence** – This is a behavior that arouses followers to feel a powerful identification and strong emotions toward the leader.

2. **Inspirational Motivation** – A leadership behavior that models high values as an example, and includes communication of an inspiring *vision*. It also promotes powerful *symbols* to arouse greater effort and a feeling of belonging.
3. **Individualized Consideration** – This behavior provides coaching, support and encouragement of specific followers.
4. **Intellectual Stimulation** – A behavior that influences followers to view problems from a fresh perspective and with a new increased awareness.

The end result of transformational leadership is empowering others to take more initiative in their work, inspiring them to be more committed and building their self-confidence. Of course, these activities can't take place in a vacuum. Transformational leaders nurture an organizational culture by giving attention to priorities and concerns, maturely reacting to crisis situations, role modeling, wise allocation of rewards, and by *defining* the criteria for success.

For **weLEAD**, this is Greg Thomas reminding you that it was *Steven Covey* who once wrote, "*The goal of transformational leadership is to “transform” people and organizations in a literal sense – to change them in mind and heart; enlarge vision, insight, and understanding; clarify purposes; make behavior congruent with beliefs, principles, or values; and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum building.*"