The role of spirituality in women's leadership at community colleges

Carol L. Hedberg

University of Northern Iowa

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THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP
AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A Dissertation
Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
Approved:

_________________________________
Dr. Victoria Robinson, Chair

_________________________________
Dr. Fred Besthorn, Committee Member

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Dr. John Henning, Committee Member

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Dr. Geraldine Perreault, Committee Member

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Dr. Michael Waggoner, Committee Member

Carol L. Hedberg
University of Northern Iowa
May 2007
UMI Number: 3268636

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Dr. Sue A. Joseph
Dean of the Graduate College

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study examined the role of women's leadership in Iowa community colleges. Administrative leaders from community college settings, recommended by their presidents, wrote narratives about effective leadership traits and from these narratives, four women leaders were selected and later interviewed. Key thematic categories were developed from the written and verbal narratives. The resulting data set was then analyzed by a comparative case study approach. Emerging thematic categories were interpreted through the lens of four primary research questions addressing the relationship between gender, spirituality, and authentic leadership.

A plethora of issues surfaced from the data. Issues of gender and gender equality rose immediately to the surface. Awareness of gendered issues allowed women leaders to develop a gender literacy that informed their decision-making and their development towards more authentic leadership. Women leaders' knowledge of and sensitivity to hegemonic leadership and historical gender biases as well as their awareness of their own gender-specific leadership traits and qualities enabled women leaders to understand more clearly and contribute more effectively to an emerging sense of authentic leadership. This assisted them in being better members of leadership teams as well as being more prepared to meet the unique needs of their employees.

Spirituality and its role in personal and professional leadership development was another important idea that arose from the data. Spirituality, defined as a search for meaning, purpose and connection, was the cyclical process of inner reflection and
transcendence to the outer world of life's experiences, reflections, realizations, and choices. As women constructed and refined the meaning and purpose of their life and began to forge more rewarding inter-connections with themselves and others, they felt the corresponding pull to deeper levels of authenticity in themselves and in their leadership roles.

The emergence of this authenticity in themselves and their leadership roles was important to these women leaders because in finding themselves they connected to their deeper purpose. These connections were not just internal cognitive and affective patterns but also had an external relational and behavioral dimension to them. Women living these connections as they evolve towards more authentic leadership discover richer personal lives and more effective decision-making.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fifty-two years ago, Reverend Fred Hedberg wrote for the *Elgin Courier*, Elgin, Texas, announcing the arrival of a baby daughter, Professor Hedberg, who would head the Domestic Relations Department at the New Sweden Lutheran Church parsonage. While this author, my father, passed away over 30 years ago, his play on words resounds with a prophetic tone which moves me profoundly. I am struck by the impact our words and our lives can have on those we encounter.

Five key people have greatly impacted my life and especially this project. My deepest appreciation goes to my wonderful dissertation committee for generously providing their time and talents to guide me through this process. Dr. Geraldine Perreault’s commitment to leadership curriculum as well as her contribution to my committee were foundational tenets to my perspective of women’s leadership. Dr. Michael Waggoner will forever represent a spiritual beacon of light to all educators and leaders alike; but most critically for me, he modeled his personal commitment to authentic spiritual leadership. Dr. John Henning was my extraordinary methodologist who patiently and consistently nurtured my pure joy of learning about qualitative research and critical thinking. Dr. Fred Besthorn will always be my rock: the quintessential educator and mentor who believed in me, instilling in me the beliefs that authentic living and parsimonious writing are truly labors of love. And finally, Dr. Victoria Robinson who graciously added “another mouth to her already-full table” of other doctoral students, demonstrating her commitment to this demanding educational
endeavor. Her inspirational *hawk* metaphor gave me the wings I needed to fly, and as a fellow woman educator, she allowed me to soar like an eagle.

I also wish to acknowledge the significant contributions of the four women leaders who openly and honestly shared with me their spiritual journeys towards authentic leadership. They were extraordinary women whose collective courage and tenacity kindled in me a passion to share their stories with other leaders.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my family. My husband and life-long partner Dan Buenz contributed his wisdom of leadership and offered a patient ear as I repeatedly grappled with this challenging process. My precious, talented daughter Sarah regularly brought me back to humanity with her delightful stories of high school escapades, and yet I appreciate the sacrifices she patiently made for me during her senior year. My beautiful, intuitive daughter Rachel, who knows me best, offered passionate affirmations at critical junctures in my journey, as a kindred spirit. My charismatic son Adam probably best understood the academic rigor I faced, and will soon be a doctor himself, even though I won the academic competition. Last, but not least, my cherished mother, Betty Hedberg, loved and supported me as only a mother can love.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Traditional models of higher education administration have historically emphasized patriarchal and strongly masculine language and interpretations to understand administrative theory and praxis (Amey & Twombly, 1992; Astin & Leland, 1991; Winderman-Sheely, 1998). In practice, this typically meant a very hierarchical, authoritarian, informal, and closed style of management and decision making. Most men in these higher education administrative positions were forced to sacrifice important interpersonal, social, and individual goals to the demands of a seemingly all-encompassing managerial perspective. Familial relationships were marginalized as many administrators came to unconsciously view their homes as branch offices where they could complete additional work (Mintzberg, 1973). This administrative model appeared to work well for many years, as male administrators seemed to find relative comfort and continuity in its unwritten and highly prescriptive dictates.

However, beginning in the early 1970s, important theoretical and philosophical frameworks began to change how higher educational administration understood itself and how it went about its work of managing institutions of higher learning (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Covey, 1991; Gabelnick, 1998; Greenleaf, 1991; Miller, 1998). Traditional models of higher education administration began to lose their appeal (Gabelnick, 1998; Lawrence, 1998; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Covey, 1991; Greenleaf, 1991). Even the terms for conducting the business of higher education began to change as administrators came to increasingly see themselves as educational leaders rather than simply managers.
(Bolman & Deal; Fullan, 2001; Klein, Gabelnick & Herr, 1998). As these changes progressed, other members of the higher educational community began taking on administrative positions and thus began to define even further how the theory and practice of higher educational administration would evolve.

In the late 1960s, women increasingly began entering the administrative ranks of higher education (Eaton, 1981). These early pioneers struggled to fit the traditional masculine administration models into their gender specific and uniquely socio-cultural experiences of inter-relationship, shared power, decision making, and leadership. From these women’s perspectives, clearly, one size did not fit all. As early women administrators attempted to accommodate the androcentric model into work tasks, they began to discover the price was high in terms of emotional, physical, and social costs (Astin & Leland, 1991; Coughlin, Wingard & Hollihan, 2005; Grogan, 1996; Winderman & Sheely, 1998). Much like the proverbial attempt to insert a square peg into a round hole, some women administrators would discover that distinctive feminine qualities of self-transcendence, intuition, relatedness, and care were not always compatible with traditional administrative models (Grogan, 1996; Haring-Hidore, Freeman, S., Phelps, S., Spann, N.G., & Wooten, H.R., 1990; Simmons, 1996).

Women began to discover the square peg phenomenon masked gender disparities that impacted their ability to be not only successful but also authentic leaders—those ways in which they could be both effective administrators while at the same time maintain their unique qualities as women (Winderman-Sheely, 1998). For some, this process of becoming authentic took the form of a transformative journey that recognized
and honored the importance of spirituality and transcendency to their finding authenticity in their leadership responsibilities (Naddaff, 2005). This spiritual dimension for many was as important to their becoming authentic leaders as was any dimension of their emotional, social, or intellectual development (Hackney & Runnestrand, 2003).

Research Problem

Given their unique perspectives on life, relationships, and leadership, women administrators discovered that finding authenticity created many challenges. They were challenged with social isolation, gender discrimination, lack of openness, emotional ambiguity, inter-relational conflict, and self-doubt (Chapman Walsh, 1999; Grogan, 1996; Hackney & Runnestrand, 2003). These created severe barriers to their development into authentic leaders. They began seeking means to address these challenges. One of the means was seeking out spirituality and self-transcendency as a means to understanding their own emerging leadership development (Chapman Walsh).

Thus, this dissertation will begin by reviewing the historical progression of women into leadership and the barriers they encountered. Following the historical review, this dissertation will then review the means by which women’s spirituality and authentic leadership development follow a parallel path to self-transcendence. These parallels will then drive the study of the factors which contribute to perceptions of leadership among women leaders in community colleges.

Provisional Definition of Terms

For clarity, a number of terms will be defined for this study: religion, spirituality, leader, authentic leadership, feminist, ecstatic, and enstatic.
Religion and Spirituality

While historically the terms *religion* and *spirituality* have sometimes had a synonymous connotation, critical distinctions will be applied for this study. Some authors suggest that people’s spiritually has nothing to do with their religious affiliations (Beatty Stevens, 1995; Southern, 1996). However, others, like Buddhist leader Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche (1999), disagree. Rinpoche points out that seeking spirituality without a religious framework is like asking for water, without having the vessel in which to hold it.

Anthropologist Paul Byers defined spirituality as “the universal human questions about the creation and meaning of life” (1992, p. 6), and he defines religion as particular answers to those questions. Roof (1999) and Stamm (2006) suggest that America’s historical identity with religion and spirituality suggests that religion is becoming an eclectic search for group identity and social location while spirituality is becoming a personal quest for an authentic inner identity.

Tisdell (2003) defines spirituality as an awareness of the interconnectivity of all things, the construction of personal meaning from this awareness, and a self-transcendence toward wholeness. Similarly, Sheridan (personal communication, September 19, 2005) defines spirituality as “the human search for meaning, purpose, and connection with self, others, the universe, and ultimate reality, however one understands it. This may or may not be expressed through religious forms or institutions.”

Thus, while religion can be foundational for many spiritual people, and people may be socialized into a particular religious faith, the term *religion* most often refers to
an organized faith community with doctrines, creedal formulations, rituals, and codes of behavior (Palmer, 2000; Tisdell, 2003). Sheridan’s (personal communication, September 19, 2005) definition of religion again parallels Tisdell’s: “An organized, structured set of beliefs and practices shared by a community that is related to spirituality.”

The distinction between religion and spirituality is critical to this study because women have differing views of both constructs and the importance of these to their lives (as will be repeatedly noted in this study). For example, despite religion’s often liberating qualities, some women have experienced oppression by religious institutions (Southern, 1996; Winter, Lummis & Stokes, 1994). Many Western institutions, much like educational institutions, have their foundation in patriarchal, hierarchical systems that have often rejected women as leaders (Southern; Winter et al.). The four major religions of the world—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism—all tend to identify male figureheads positively while identifying most females in a more negative vein (Spretnak, 1982). The role of women in leadership has also conflicted with certain religious denominations (Tisdell, 2003; Winter et al.).

Higher education is another institution that makes a distinction between religion and spirituality. Historically, public higher education continues its stance on avoiding any connection to religion (Chickering et al., 2006). Constitutional law separating practices of church and state creates one rationale for this stance. In addition, higher education’s adherence to a scientific, research-based method of learning and teaching had diminished any holistic models of learning and teaching.
Leader

While the term leader can be considered anyone others look to for direction, this study will focus on those leaders in business and education who have positional leadership roles (Astin & Leland, 1991), analogous to administrators. Specifically, in community colleges, these leaders are generally considered department chairs, deans, directors, managers, vice presidents, and presidents.

Authenticity

For purposes of this study, authenticity will be defined as an agreement between one’s inner cognition and one’s outer actions. Authenticity refers not only to knowing one’s self but also expressing that self with integrity (Naddaff, 2005). For leaders to know themselves requires them to take time for introspection, to identify their core desires and needs, and to identify feelings and beliefs. Authenticity arises as women can express themselves fully in their environments and in their personal relationships and professional lives (Naddaff).

The duality of authentic leadership repeats the patterns of self-knowledge and self-expression but is placed in the context of leaders who seek self-discovery and self-expansion so they can live, lead, and be true to these concepts of discovery and expansion (Chickering et al., 2006). It also encompasses the express thyself concept. It is the place where someone’s inner quest is reflected in their outer interconnectedness (Palmer, 2000).
Feminism

Feminism, another important term for this study, addresses the roles of women’s awareness and action when faced with barriers and challenges. Feminism oftentimes refers to the belief in equality for all people and the practice of advocating or action towards this goal. However, some women may not label themselves as feminist because of their political and economic ideological perspectives (Astin & Leland, 1991). Spender (1985) suggests that feminism is the awareness of the oppressive perspective that patriarchal knowledge defines only half of the population when, in fact, the experience of all people must be acknowledged as valid and true.

Enstatic and Ecstatic

The terms *enstatic* and *ecstatic* are also pertinent to this study. *Enstatic* refers to an internal state of being or awareness. Enstatic’s root word *enstasis* has its origins in Buddhist, Hindu, and Taoist rigorous religious practices for a reasoned, felt, and intuitive knowledge and wisdom (Kohn, 1990; Mills, 2004). Enstasis often describes a religion’s meditative or ritualistic practice, or patterned behaviors such as the martial arts (Mills). This definition suggests a process or practice of constructing an internal state of cognitive and emotive awareness, referenced by Vaughan (1995). Similarly, *ecstatic*, much like *enstatic*, also has a religious origin meaning *external*. And so for purposes of this dissertation, it will be used to refer to an external system that is relational and behavioral, as referenced by Vaughan (1995).
Summary of Research Problem and Goals

Previous empirical research has identified important attempts by administrators to manage their many leadership challenges. However, this research has failed to fully incorporate women leaders' innate, authentic, personal, relational, and psychosocial skills, often enhanced by their individual spiritual constructs. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide clarity and depth of understanding to how women administrators in community colleges perceive factors that contribute to leadership among women leaders in community colleges and how spirituality impacts their roles as leaders.

Perspectives, Rationale, and Assumptions for Dissertation

Professional Perspectives

This research began as a quest to explore the emerging constructs of spirituality and authentic leadership with respect to higher education theory, knowledge, and practice. Specifically, I have been influenced by the developmental approaches of women's voice by Gilligan (1982); leadership and social change studies from Astin & Leland (1991); and women's ways of knowing scholarship by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997). Equally significant have been the spiritual influences of Vaughan (1995) and higher education leaders Parker Palmer (1991; 2000; 2004) and Arthur Chickering et al. (2006). These approaches and influences will be reviewed more extensively in Chapter 2.

Research Rationale

Given the uncertainty and incomplete knowledge of women's authentic leadership qualities, it is timely and important to evaluate and reconceptualize the significance of
women's authentic leadership and how spirituality impacts this development for women leaders in the community college.

Foremost, education must be committed to knowledge beyond the abstract and theoretical. Education is more than the ability to construct "an edifice of knowledge, brick by brick, that would provide information to practitioners with the same kind of precision that the laws of physics provide for engineers" (Eisner, 1998, p. 207). Education must also encompass the contextual, constructed expertise of these women leaders, contributing to a vast new body of knowledge.

Traditional scholarly discourse on leadership focused on management in action, discounting the individual leader's psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. Leadership study must be supplemented by a cogent study of leaders as persons (Greenfield, 1984; Van der Mescht, 2004), and especially the authentic dimensions of women's leadership.

Finally, educational institutions are typically the "bastions of rationality" (Chickering et al., 2006, p. 14) which encourage the application of knowledge. Educational leaders can model this by exploring and adapting this important body of research on spirituality and authenticity to their own leadership.

Research Assumptions

Four assumptions form the foundation of this study. First, this dissertation assumes that:

1. Without clarity concerning (a) the meaning of authenticity, leadership, and spirituality in administrative discourse; (b) the extent to which these constructs
have been contextualized by historical and hegemonic influences, and (c) how these constructs may be reconceptualized, women leaders will continue to perceive leadership in the more traditional genre, ignoring the personal, transcendent constructs of their authentic leadership.

2. Each woman leader would construct her personal and professional perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Each woman leader did, indeed, identify her distinct perceptions, with underpinnings from divergent lifestyles, mentors, personal and professional experiences, and educational backgrounds.

3. Characteristics of women’s leadership and women’s spirituality would reveal significant parallels. Subsequently, women leaders could potentially represent a spiritual leadership perspective without ascribing to a spiritual affiliation. This assumption was also validated.

4. Critical awareness of the constructs of spirituality and authentic leadership will contribute to more authentic theory and practice in higher education.

Research Questions and Structure

Research Questions

Four research questions were used to guide this study:

1. What beliefs and/or practices contribute to the participants’ conception of spirituality?

2. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of authenticity?
3. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of leadership?

4. What role does gender play in the participants’ conception of spirituality?

Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation contains five chapters, beginning with this introductory Chapter 1. Chapter 2 summarizes the major historical and developmental contributions to women’s current positions in authentic leadership and spirituality. Chapter 3 introduces the methodological considerations. Chapter 4 examines the qualitative data analysis of the five case studies. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions of the data analysis through a discussion of the implications for women in community college leadership. Chapter 5 concludes with suggested recommendations for future studies.

Limitations and Anticipated Outcomes

Limitations

This dissertation included a data set of women leaders with four primary attributes. First, only female participants currently in community college leadership roles were considered. The second qualification is women developers, a phrase coined by Erkut (Astin & Leland, 1991) which suggests women who have been in leadership for nearly a decade and have reached the peak of their careers. Third is the rarely researched population of women in middle to upper middle management including managers, directors, deans, and vice presidents. And finally, the first round of women leaders were selected by each of the 15 community college presidents. The presidents were asked to select one women leader based on the following four criteria:
1. A woman administrator at their institution—manager, dean, director, vice president

2. Someone who has served approximately eight years in management/administrative experience in community colleges and/or higher education

3. An effective leader

4. Someone considered approachable by students, faculty, staff, and community

5. Someone considered reflective and articulate in expressing her views

The study will also attempt to include a diverse group of women leaders. First, the study will attempt to include at least one woman of color. The literature suggests that women of color may face greater challenges and also may tend to have stronger spiritual bases for dealing with these challenges (Robinson, 1996; Watt, 1996). Second, the study will attempt to include one woman leader who is not heterosexual. This study will not directly seek out information regarding sexual orientation because of confidentiality concerns. However, if the issue is introduced by one or more participants, this participant will be given additional consideration. The literature suggests that, much like women of color, women leaders who are not heterosexual may also face greater challenges to their leadership.

**Anticipated Outcomes**

1. Development of a reconceptualized perspective on women leaders based on the ideas discovered through the analytic literature review.

2. Refinement of the concepts of women’s leadership and spirituality applicable to enhancing leadership models and methods.
3. Alerting higher education leaders to the influence of historical and socio-cultural factors on leadership development.

4. Informing higher education leadership of a different kind of awareness with relevance to the epistemological perspective of women’s leadership and spirituality.

5. Cultivating a collaborative base that will increase alliances and dialogues with diverse individuals in a consideration of alternative systems of meaning.

6. Engendering implications for women leadership’s knowledge, theory, practice, and research activities.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the literature on women's leadership generally and then to review the parallels of women's spirituality and authenticity for women leaders in community colleges. The historical, sociological, and contextual evolution of women's leadership is critical to the understanding of authentic leadership constructs. Once a foundational framework is established around these constructs, an exploration of the parallel literature on women and spirituality and authentic women's leadership will be reviewed.

This literature review spans the years 1960 to 2006. It will highlight key women's identity development studies from Gilligan (1982); Astin and Leland (1991); and Belenky, Clinch, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997). This review will also highlight women's leadership studies including Helgesen (1990); Curry (2002); Faulconer (1995); Grogan (1996); Hackney & Runnestrand (2003); and Reynolds and Young (1995). A review of studies on spirituality and especially women's spirituality will include Fowler (1981); Vaughan (1995); Harris (1989); Winter et al. (1994); and Borysenko (1999). Finally, more recent studies on spirituality and leadership will be reviewed, especially Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006); Tisdell (2003); and the edited work of Coughlin, Wingard, and Hollihan (2005).
Table 1

*Literature Studies and Authors*

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This review of the literature will begin by dividing what is known about women’s leadership into four sections: the Early Leadership Years, the Collective Leadership Years, the Transformative Leadership Years, and the Millennial Leadership Years. These sections will contextualize how women leaders adapted to the historical and social implications of each era. The next section will include a brief review on women as barriers to other women. This topic, while rarely cited, is a minor but nevertheless significant dimension of women’s barriers.

The next section will contain a review of the literature on spirituality and authentic leadership. This section will review the two concepts into two distinct yet parallel systems of enstatic (internal) and ecstatic (external) development. The parallel
construction of this section will present commonalities between spirituality in women and authenticity in leadership.

While this dissertation will focus on the spiritual and authentic leadership dimensions of women administrators of community colleges, little expert literature exists on this target group. The literature will thus draw upon what is known about women leaders in the community college generally and make logical inferential connections from the population of this current research. This chapter will also draw extensively from literature about leaders, especially women leaders in religious organizations, businesses, public schools, and higher education to help provide a more finely nuanced description of women’s leadership and the spiritual dimensions of authentic leadership.

The Early Leadership Years

In the 1960s and early 1970s, a small number of women began acquiring visible (i.e., middle and upper level administrative) leadership positions in an administrative world largely dominated by men. During these years, leadership theory often reflected powerful masculine images characterized by such descriptions as potency and hardness (Astin & Leland, 1991); authoritativeness, manliness, ambitious (Wilson, 2004); and powerful, thick-skinned, and dominant (Kram & McCollom Hampton, 1998). Kouzes and Posner (1987) metaphorically described this type of leader as “prescient visionaries with Merlin-like powers” (p. xvi).

In this early leadership era, women often found themselves in isolated leadership positions and were to soon discover their entrance into this patriarchal administrative world was often unwelcome. This exacted a high emotional cost on women. While
determined to remain in administrative positions, these early female administrators felt
estranged—having few, if any, female role models and colleagues (Astin & Leland,
1991; Reynolds & Sheely, 1995). They often felt devalued, isolated, undermined,
ashamed, and traumatized (Winderman & Sheely, 1998).

A few of these early female administrators or predecessors (Astin & Leland,
1991) attempted to authentically confront this unwelcome culture, only to discover that
"the risks that go with confrontation strategies are high. Labeled as intolerant,
aggressive, domineering, even as castrators, women in administration who adopt [these
risks] may isolate themselves and thereby reduce their effectiveness as administrators"
(Reynolds & Young, 1995, p. 79).

These early female administrators had grown up during the post-World War I and
pre-Depression years (Astin & Leland, 1991). And, rather than be silenced, the literature
suggests these bold, albeit, isolated women leaders changed the one factor they could
change: themselves (Reynolds & Young, 1995). To survive, they began constructing
coping styles which would help them to survive in this culture while dealing with the
gender inequity they experienced. Their efforts sometimes led to a melding of core
feminine values which many of them held as important to their well-being and
professional development in the area of administrative leadership (Curry, 2000; Grogan,
1996; Reynolds & Young; Winderman & Sheely, 1998).

One such coping strategy/adaptive style was known as the "instrumental
achieving style" (Winderman & Sheely, 1998, p. 259). Under this style, women leaders
objectified themselves to obtain professional goals. This style often involved using
stereotypical feminine traits as wit and charm. While considered objectionable and manipulative by many, it became an important survival strategy for some women administrators. Unfortunately, this objectified personal strategy exacerbated an already difficult situation because it further estranged women in their attempts to establish themselves as authentic leaders (Winderman & Sheely, 1998). This strategy would reify misperceptions of the coy, seductive, fiery temptress (Reynolds & Young, 1995: Winderman & Sheely) into popular cultural myths. It often compelled many other women administrators to confront a false stereotype, as it led to pejorative perceptions of hyper-emotionality, projected sexuality, and female ineptness (Grogan, 1996; Winderman & Sheely).

A second coping strategy/adaptive style some women adopted was to project a lady-like, virginal (Kanter, 1977), or “woman behind the throne” style (Winderman & Sheely, 1998, p. 259). These women leaders subverted their inherent power and deferred to their male colleagues in hopes of garnering favor. By letting men speak first and then supporting whatever they said, women hoped to appear competently associated with preferred masculine styles (Reynolds & Young, 1995). For example, using this lady-like strategy, women leaders might experience male colleagues apologizing for swearing, as though the women had never done so themselves (Grogan, 1996). In another example, one male administrator admonished his colleagues, “You have to behave; we’re going to have a woman in here” (Grogan, p. 92). Unfortunately, this strategy, much like the previous one, also failed to allow women to develop as authentic leaders.
Some women administrators discovered that a third coping strategy/adaptive style, the *mother* strategy, worked in some circumstances (Grogan, 1996; Winderman & Sheely, 1998). In this strategy, women became responsible for group harmony. Their actions, while potentially more comfortable than previously mentioned strategies, continued to reinforce the perspective that women could not be authentically themselves nor equal to male administrators.

A fourth coping strategy/adaptive style women adopted was to become more aggressive, competitive, and masculine in their leadership style (Grogan, 1996; Winderman & Sheely, 1998). Faulconer’s two decade study of women administrators found that the interviewees overwhelmingly struggled with male attitudes and the ever-present “good old boys network” (Grogan, 1996; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Reynolds & Young, 1995). One way to deal with the good old boys’ network, according to women leaders in Curry’s study (2000), was by exploring current leadership research which prescribed that women “rise above being a woman” (p. 3) by adopting masculine leadership traits. Heilbrun (1997) labeled these traits in women as *honorary men*. For most women leaders, this perspective implied a lack of inherent qualifications, suggesting their value in organizations was their “…ability to anticipate and mimic a masculine response” (Curry, p. 3).

Additional coping strategies were also utilized. These included using humor, denying the existence of the inequitable culture to negate its impact on them personally (Gupton & Slick, 1996; Reynolds & Young, 1995), remaining silent (Astin & Leland, ...
1991) and targeting themselves as the ones who were sexist (Fahmy, 1992a, as quoted in Reynolds & Young).

Coping strategies such as those described above detracted from women’s attempts to live an authentic leadership style. Indeed, it often made their leadership less effective and helped to sustain a male-dominated cultural hierarchy already prejudiced towards women (Baker Miller, 1986; Reynolds & Young, 1995). Wilson (2004) speaks to women by suggesting, “In the process of negotiating authority, ambition and ability, we can sometimes lose the core of who we are—our authenticity, our genuine voice, our willingness to see the world differently and insist upon changing it” (p. 30).

The Collective Leadership Years

As previously discussed, women leaders in the 1960s and early 1970s had attempted multiple strategies to adapt to the unwelcome culture they had encountered. The period of the mid 1970s to late 1980s was marked by the emergence of two key paradigm shifts which would begin to more fully identify and address the complex cultural challenges these women leaders increasingly faced. While the two paradigm shifts appeared different, they shared similarities that would work to alter the traditional culture of administrative leadership forever.

The first paradigm shift was a growing cultural realization that administrative leadership needed to be less rigid, hierarchical, and detached (Helgesen, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 1987). Research during these years began challenging the traditional autocratic administrative style while suggesting new alternatives (Helgesen, 1990; Tripses, 2004). One new style advocated for a more democratic leadership style over more traditional
autocratic management approaches (Dyer & Carothers, 2000; Helgesen). Another style developed by Robert Greenleaf (1991) proposed a servant leadership style, projecting a service-based, holistic approach to leadership. A third style, transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989), dealt with visionary aspects of leadership and the importance of nurturing a relationship with followers (i.e. those who report to the leader).

This first paradigm shift embraced new styles moving towards a more feminine style of authentic leadership; however, women were clearly not the focus (Tripses, 2004). The concept of beaurocratic change remained oxymoronic. A second, more profound paradigm shift impacting women’s leadership was the rise of the second wave of feminism (Astin, 2004; Astin & Leland, 1991; Winter et al., 1994). During this time, feminist writers identified not only higher education barriers but also gender-related issues that would impact the success of women administrators.

The first higher education barrier was that higher education supported androcentric leadership perspectives while negating women’s leadership styles as inferior (Epp, 1995). Baker Miller (1986) revealed how higher education programs routinely marginalized studies on women’s leadership to the periphery of scholarly endeavors.

The second higher education barrier to successful women administrators exposed by feminist writers was the unwelcoming climate women faced in higher education (Baker Miller, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1989). As women began to understand the negative implications of these barriers on leadership, they united politically and socially. In their unification, they raised awareness that gendered leadership was a social construct that
needed correcting (Astin & Leland, 1991). Women leaders began to understand that they were not just what they lived but also what they had inherited from a patriarchal social structure.

This new awareness further empowered women in education to rigorously research the gendered leadership construct. Baker Miller (1976) wrote that male domination determined the entire culture’s social outlook. This outlook on the inherent inferiority of women and ethnic groups was legitimized and incorporated into guiding social principles. While Baker Miller encouraged activism and authenticity for those in subordinate roles, she was also a realist. She acknowledged the difficulty of activism and authenticity, noting how subordinate groups often needed to focus solely on their basic survival.

Another leading activist during this second wave of feminism was researcher Carol Gilligan (1982). Her research revealed the differentiation between male and female identity development. She emphasized the need to educate women about the role responsibility and care had in their identity as women. Her research clarified for many women the inherent conflict between achievement and care and the struggles to be true to one self without sacrificing one’s authentic capacities.

Gilligan (1982) also identified women’s need for connection through intimacy and care as essential to their development. Josselson’s (1987) study on women’s identity development furthered this concept. She revealed how relational embeddedness and communion with others were inherent characteristics of women’s development. These
two foundational studies were beneficial to women leaders as they reaffirmed how problematic women's isolation could be to their leadership development.

These second-wave feminists also provided knowledge and voice to women's challenges to develop their authentic selves. As the collective consciousness of society was raised during this era of the Civil Rights movement and anti-Vietnam protests (Astin & Leland, 1991), a growing number of women leaders found their voice in the feminist women's movement. Astin & Leland called them instigators because they began a collective action to change the system of women's leadership. They began defining how damaging androcentricism had become for women leaders, and they began developing a voice which would begin to authentically articulate their experiences as women leaders (Astin & Leland, 1991).

These androcentric higher education barriers were necessary precursors to the plethora of other gender-related issues developed in the literature during this rise of second-wave feminism (American Association of University Women, 1992; Curry, 2000; Edson, 1987; Faulconer, 1995; Grogan, 1996; Kram & McCollom Hampton, 1998; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Martin & Grant, 1990; Mims, 1992; Sadker, Sadker, & Klein, 1991; Shakeshaft & Cowen, 1990). However, three key issues seemed dominant: first, the absence of a body of literature that addressed women's leadership; second, a lack of leadership preparation opportunities for women; and finally, systemic discrimination and sexual harassment in leadership positions held by women.

As women began exchanging ideas about leadership challenges, they discovered the first gender-related issues: a negligible body of research that addressed their particular
concerns. As previously mentioned, some research during this era began challenging traditional autocratic administrative styles (Birnbaum, 1988; Covey, 1989; Depree, 1989; Kouzes & Posner, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1999). Unfortunately, much of it failed to address core issues of women in leadership (Curry, 2000; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Frankel, 2004; Grogan, 1996; Hackney & Runnestrands, 2003; Koonce, 2004; Reynolds & Young, 1995; Southern, 1996). This posed a real challenge to women leaders who sought to understand how leadership related to them. The lack of research also cultivated an imbalanced view of diverse perspectives and experiences (Tripses, 2004).

Women leaders were discovering that traditional leadership theories often did not describe who they were as women or as leaders. Studying traditional leadership theory for these women became an exercise in futility: their authentic leadership styles were nonexistent. Erkut (2001) exemplified this perspective in the “implicit leadership theory” (p. 17). This theory reasoned that masculine characteristics embedded in descriptions of leaders failed to reflect women’s leadership styles. Erkut cited a Powell & Butterfield article written in 1984, “If Good Managers Are Masculine, What Are Bad Managers?” (1984) indicative of these underlying gender biases.

A further challenge was that research in higher education administrative leadership had also centered historically upon traditional male leadership, leaving women administrators little choice but to study these traditional male leadership models (Erkut, 2000). Despite an evolution of leadership theories, the traditional hierarchical male model remained the standard in many institutions of higher education where leadership generally continued to be both bureaucratic and hierarchical (Birnbaum, 1988). This had
also remained largely true in community college settings as well. And while this model suited many men in community college leadership, it did not reflect women's authentic leadership styles (Helgesen, 1990).

While the scarcity of literature about women's leadership proved to be a challenge, a second important issue loomed on the horizon. This challenging issue slowed women's progress towards authentic leadership and is described as a lack of opportunity, specifically educational opportunities and professional development training geared for women's leadership styles. Associated with this lack of training opportunities was the dearth of qualified leadership mentors to assist women. Research on gender differences supported the concept that women's access to training and mentorship was significantly less than men's during this time (Van Der Linden, 2004).

Educational and professional development training which targeted women's unique leadership styles were nearly nonexistent in the early 1970s and 1980s. Women at this time had dramatically lower levels of education than men (Epp, 1995). When these women were in the classroom, they sometimes faced challenges from their professors and their programs (Epp). One such challenge was the realization of sexism in scholarship selected for classroom study (Reinharz, 1992). The "Classroom Climate" study (Sandler, Silverberg, & Hall, 1984), showed the many ways women students were denigrated.

While the absence of women's training was one opportunity women lacked, a second opportunity dealt with positioning in the workforce. This second limitation was revealed in the pipeline theory (Erkut, 2001) which indicated that women were not
positioned for advancement to higher leadership levels because their access to lower administrative levels was limited (Erkut). Women needed to be in “the pipeline” to facilitate their movement through the administrative system.

Occasionally, advanced leadership training opportunities were offered to women. However, these also proved to be limiting. Women receiving these opportunities discovered the training content targeted solely men’s leadership styles. This training limited what women could learn about women’s authentic leadership styles. And while a small core of women’s leadership training was initiated via adult education classes (Astin & Leland, 1991), these were the exception to women learning about authentic women’s leadership.

A final essential but scarce opportunity for women’s leadership development was mentoring (Josselson, 1987; Van Der Linden, 2005). Literature attributes three reasons for this lack of mentoring opportunities: scarcity of women in these fields who could serve as mentors, societal taboos against men serving as mentors, and male leaders’ preference for male protégés (Cleveland, Stockdale & Murphy, 2000; McDonald & Hite, 1998). Additionally, in Gersick & Kram’s study (2002), few women predecessors in administration had the seniority or authority to mentor other women leaders in the early years.

In these solitary conditions, women administrators experienced a lack of connection, an essential component to many women’s lives (Gilligan, 1982). Lacking intimate connection as women leaders (Silverstein et al., 2001), and unable to find suitable mentors, women leaders turned to husbands, mothers, and close friends for
support (Josselson, 1987). Unfortunately, these supports provided little leadership knowledge for advancement towards their authentic leadership styles.

These gender-related issues of leadership knowledge and opportunities were significant for women leaders during the second wave of feminism. However, the third and potentially most damaging set of gender-related issues also occurred during this second wave of feminism: systemic discrimination and sexual harassment. Reynolds & Young (1995) suggest that institutionalized “…structures, policies, practices, customs, and attitudes which disadvantage individuals…” (p. 35), can be discriminatory and limit opportunities within an organization. Separate studies of women in secondary and higher educational administration (Faulconer, 1990; Hemming, 1981) reported that between 69% and 71% of women administrators had experienced systemic discrimination. The systemic discrimination these women reported included:

...prejudice against hiring a woman; being assigned ‘housekeeping’ details, such as planning retirement parties or arranging luncheons; subtle innuendoes; being excluded from the old boys’ network; having valuable information withheld from them; being ignored; being discouraged from applying for administrative positions; and experiencing the ‘there, there, little girl, just leave it to me and it will be fine’ approach. (Faulconer, p. 16)

Androcentric and heterosexist discrimination are also dimensions of systemic discrimination (Erkut, 2001). Work norms, regulations, and policies may initially appear gender-free, but these could disenfranchise women because women often shouldered different personal and home responsibilities than their male counterparts. For example, the highly-valued norm of leaders working long hours could discriminate against women with families who carry a disproportionate responsibility for childcare and family...
management (Hochschild, 1990; Southern, 1996). Some women felt compelled to choose between a career in administration or a family.

These types of systemic gender discrimination negatively impacted women's abilities to be effective, authentic leaders. Because this type of discrimination was often difficult to isolate, it proved difficult to rectify. However, women leaders faced another gendered bias: sexual harassment. While systemic discrimination occurs within an organization, sexual harassment can be perpetrated both systemically and individually.

Sexual harassment towards women administrators was prolific. In one study of women presidents, women respondents reported multiple issues. These women dealt with sexual jokes, "comments about clothes, caustic remarks about the kind of women who became presidents, whistles, jokes, put-downs, whispers, and invitations for weekend trips with images of women leaders as icy virgins, fiery temptresses, and silent martyrs" (Hill & Ragland, 1995, p. 7). Single women were especially targeted as "unmarried harsh prudes" (Hill & Ragland, 1995, p. 8) or as lesbians (Grogan, 1996). Even at home, women encountered sexual objectification when they turned on their televisions. Television also perpetuated the negative portrayal of women as "manipulative, adversarial, bitchy, and distasteful" (Hill & Ragland, p. 8). The consequence of these negative gendered experiences was women's continued struggle to be authentic leaders.

In one of the few community college women administrator studies, one-third of the women respondents identified gendered issues of systemic discrimination and sexual harassment as adversely affecting their careers (Faulconer, 1995). This type of sexism
dispirited not only the women leaders (Moxley, 2000), but also the person practicing sexist behaviors. Faced with this challenging climate, women leaders struggled to be effective, authentic, and professional. Coping with this barrage of discrimination and harassment, they were devalued: their personal power and leadership undermined. Eventually, some decided they needed to detach or leave such a toxic culture (Winderman & Sheely, 1998).

Despite this toxic culture, many women leaders persevered as had their predecessors in the 1960s and early 1970s. Falconer's (1995) study of women community college administrators in those years revealed a myriad of coping strategies. Some chose to ignore the behaviors while others left jobs to avoid the behaviors. Some women leaders, confronting the toxic culture directly, experienced dire consequences to their careers. One woman administrator said she coped with “…sleepless nights, aspirin, fantasies, tolerating it, staying underground, playing it safe” (p. 17). Another coped by gaining weight to stave off sexual advances (Faulconer).

While women leaders coped with this toxic, androcentric culture, new gendered leadership research was on the horizon. One groundbreaking study by Astin and Leland (1991) constructed a feminist perspective on women’s leadership from the 1960’s and 1970s. Astin and Leland contended that leadership had been socially, historically, and culturally constructed. They maintained that interdependence was an integral part of women’s leadership constructs. They also differentiated between gendered constructs of power and control in leadership. Traditional androcentric leadership identified control as power over someone. Women’s power, they asserted, mobilized and empowered others.
These new perspectives of gendered leadership empowered women leaders. This knowledge equipped them to understand why many of their coping techniques had been unsuccessful. Collectively, women leaders began identifying and fighting against the societal injustices against women and minorities. They had begun to focus on how they could collectively move towards a more authentic leadership for women (Astin, 2004).

**The Transformative Leadership Years**

Between the late 1980s and mid-1990s, women’s leadership transformed socially and politically. New leadership terms such as *vision, personal commitment, and empowerment* had become accepted language, more accurately reflecting women’s authentic leadership styles (Astin, 2004). Many women leaders had become advocates for a more just and equal society, and new legislation reflected this social action orientation (Astin & Leland, 1991).

Astin and Leland (1991) labeled these female political advocates *instigators*, reflecting their work in strongly advocating for the feminist vision and values of women leaders. These instigators acknowledged the dual challenge of understanding their leadership and sustaining this social movement within an unwelcoming culture (Astin, 2004). Astin & Leland’s 1991 study modeled the evolution of theory and practice that would define these transformative years in women’s educational leadership (Astin, 2004).

Concurrent with women’s leadership transformation was another movement taking place in higher education. Higher education was experiencing a 15-year span in institutional transformation (Astin & Leland, 1991) characterized by the recognition of gendered leadership research. Educational and training opportunities for women’s
leadership grew exponentially. Local, state, and national leadership programs were initiated to address women's leadership concerns (Haring-Hildore, Freeman, Phelps, Spann, & Wooten, 1990).

New leadership training initiatives also surfaced for women administrators in community colleges. Between 1983 and 1997, higher education had noted a 78% drop in advanced degrees for community college leadership (Shults, 2001). To offset this drop in numbers of trained leaders, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) received a $1.9 million Kellogg grant to train new leaders. Short-term leadership programs, conferences, internships, and seminars began focusing on women's leadership (Shults).

One such program began in Iowa in 1989. The Leadership Institute for a New Century (LINC; n.d.) was a year-long, grant-based initiative. LINC targeted key educational, social, and political skills needed by aspiring women leaders in Iowa's 15 community colleges.

Despite these advancements made towards equity in women's leadership, many of the barriers from the previous years remained. In the late 1980s, the phrase *glass ceiling* was coined, offering a visual representation of the invisible barriers women faced as they attempted to advance in upper management. These barriers included the isolation women experienced in leadership, the discriminatory practices of institutions, and the sexual harassment that was gaining attention in the media and the courts (Young & Skrla, 2003).
Much of the research thus far has targeted barriers both imposed on women and subsequently beyond their control. However, an exhaustive study may also examine women’s contributions to these barriers.

Eagly and Johnson (1990) suggested that society based its expectation about women and men’s leadership roles on their gender. Social role theorists proposed that leaders not only function within the confines of their positions in the hierarchy, but they also function within the parameters set by gender roles. The literature suggests four such examples.

The first barrier stemmed from the research on women’s caretaker, nurturer, and communicator roles which was extensive (Kram & McCollom Hampton, 1998; Naddaff, 2005; Winderman & Sheely, 1998). As a leadership quality, however, this dynamic challenged women’s goals to be completely authentic (Naddaff). As will be discussed later in this chapter, one fundamental principle of authentic leadership is self-discovery and self-expression which necessitates leaders focusing extensively on themselves. This became a barrier for women leaders who struggled with putting themselves before others (Naddaff).

A second potential barrier for women leaders arose from their communication styles. Kram & McCollom Hampton (1998) suggested women’s innate communication style was open, and they intuitively sensed others’ discomfort. With this open style of leadership comes visibility and vulnerability as women made these issues “discussable.” In contrast, male leaders revealed a more closed leadership style. This closed style
reinforced the perception that issues of their leadership remained unspoken (Kram & McCollom Hampton).

A third barrier to women’s authenticity is their response to “discussability” or scrutiny. Baker Miller’s (1976) research on women’s socialization suggested that women responded to strong scrutiny and criticism by self-denigration, further inhibiting authenticity in their leadership. Male leaders, in contrast, are socialized to deflect or ignore similar scrutiny, not allowing others’ views to impact their self-perceptions (Baker Miller). They also benefit from the respect not available for women as a group.

The fourth and final cultural barrier to authenticity suggested that women leaders should be superwomen who spend extended hours at work and still effectively fulfill their home and family roles (Young & Skrla, 2003). While losing influence, this erroneous mentality worked its way into the psyche of many women leaders who pushed themselves beyond extraordinary means to become these fictional superwomen. This barrier damaged women leaders’ authenticity as they struggled and failed to achieve this elusive dual role.

The Millennial Leadership Era

By the turn of the century, women had been in visible leadership roles for over 40 years. Research on women’s entrance into leadership roles erroneously suggested that time would diminish the rigidity of masculinized roles (Brunner & Costello, 2003; Rhode, 2003; Valian, 1998). Continuing research suggested this was not happening. The Wellesley College Center for Research on Women (Erkut, 2001) revealed that visible
leadership continued to be a man's domain. Over 90% of the women in their leadership study identified the continued presence of gendered barriers.

While earlier scholarly examination of leadership were defined in gendered terms of roles, styles, or traits (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), recent research suggests these views persist. Women's leadership traits of cooperativeness, submissiveness, and hesitancy continue conflicting with perceptions of leaders possessing traditional male attributes of competitiveness, dominance, and decisiveness (Black & Magnuson, 2005).

Women leaders also continued to confront unconscious biases and stereotypes as well as subtle workplace structures that covertly discriminate (Rhode, 2003). Some women leaders are still perceived as too abrasive or too soft when they attempt to adopt gender-specific leadership traits. Other women leaders do not fit the stereotypical "presumption of competence" (Rhode, p. 8), despite the growing literature that suggests that women perform as effectively as or more effectively than men (Rhode).

This gendered polarization continues to perpetuate conflict (Young & Skrla, 2003), and continued sexual harassment also puts strains on women leaders' authenticity (Ireland, 2003). When women leaders worry about where the next harassing act will emerge, they end up with stress-related illnesses, absenteeism, and lack of concentration (Ireland). This further impedes women from leading authentically.

Rhode (2003) further suggests women continue to face disincentives in acquiring leadership roles. They face the "shoot the messenger" mentality if they speak out against gender-related concerns. They also risk backlash, blackballing, and covert retaliation (Rhode). If women choose to have children, they may face the attitude that parenting
time conflicts with work or networking time. Some women struggle to find mentors among men because some men fear gender-related misperceptions.

This lack of mentorship availability and women role models continue to thwart authentic women's leadership (Duff, 1999). One participant in a women’s educational leadership study (Curry, 2000) said she felt compelled to follow her institution’s patriarchal leadership model. While she struggled to reconcile the duality in which she lived and worked, it did help her define her leadership style. At work, she followed masculine roles, and at home, she was herself as a mother and partner. To her and other women leaders, leadership means being male in a world where women leaders are not (Curry).

One barrier was especially noted in the state of Iowa. A mass retirement of Iowa administrators in recent years had caused the state to consider methods of recruiting new administrators for the state. While a myriad of methods were explored to fill the impending leadership void, these methods largely ignored women as a potential pool to fill this void, identifying it as a “nonissue” (Young & Skrla, 2003, p. 281).

Research also reveals the additional barriers of race and sexual orientation discrimination (Rhode, 2003). Women of color acknowledge discrimination in structure and biases (Rhode; Robinson, 1996; Watt, 1996). Hostile environments continue to exist for African-American women leaders (Lillie, 2003). When these and other diversity issues are not candidly acknowledged, authenticity can be stifled for these women leaders (Rhode, 2003).
Women as Barriers

This section briefly explores subtle and often covert barriers women encounter. Women themselves face scrutiny as unwitting collaborators to the barriers women encounter towards authenticity (Young & Skrla, 2003). This segment will review the literature on three areas where women self-perpetuate barriers. First, women unprepared for the rigors of leadership may struggle with self-esteem. Women leaders may also encounter challenges balancing family with the high demands of management. Thirdly, women leaders may face oppression from other women.

This first area of self-esteem can be critical. Some women inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes for women when their negative internalized beliefs diminish their confidence in obtaining leadership positions (Rhode, 2003; Young & Skrla, 2003). They may contend with personal issues of self-esteem, self-confidence, emotional maturity, or the need for approval which inhibits authentic leadership. Other women enter leadership positions without training or knowledge about gendered issues, and they find themselves embroiled in these issues. All of these issues can negatively impact women’s authentic leadership.

While having children is rarely a barrier for male leaders, women leaders who have children often face double standards and double binds regardless of choices they make (Rhode, 2003). In many families, women continue to carry primary responsibility for childcare and household management. Because of this, they may encounter the burden of the second shift (Ireland, 2003) where they put in an additional 15 hours to childcare and household management (Hochchild, 1987).
Finally, an often covert yet very real barrier for some women leaders is other women. While this area of the literature is scant and appears counterintuitive, this barrier further marginalizes some women leaders and is a “sad state of affairs” (Robinson, 2003, p. 6) when women fail to support other women. Funk (2004) describes this bullying or horizontal violence as the female-to-female harassment women leaders impose on other women. Leadership literature on women nurses (Blanton, Lybecker, & Spring, 1998) and women pastors explores horizontal violence. Parallel metaphors include: crabs in the bucket (Funk) who continuously inhibit other women’s opportunities for growth and success; iron maidens (Funk) who turn against women subordinates, and queen bees (Funk, Rhode, 2003) who attempt to subjugate women in less advanced positions. Regardless of how it is described, it is a sad state of affairs.

One 2003 study by the Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute (Nami) revealed that 81% of bullies are administrators who overwhelmingly target women. A gendered breakdown indicates that 84% of the women and 69% of the men bullies target women.

At the writing of this dissertation, the release of three new pop culture books revealed a societal perspective on the barriers women leaders may face in the workplace: *Tripping the Prom Queen* (Barash, 2006), *The Girl’s Guide to Being a Boss* (Friedman & Yorio, 2006), and Nan Mooney’s *I Can’t Believe She Did That!* (2005). This literature may reveal a disturbing trend of women bashing for future women leaders.

Woman-to-woman oppression poses a damaging dynamic and perpetuates a gendered hierarchy that further subordinates women (Brunner & Costello, 2002). These barriers also lead to diminished productivity, absenteeism, and a hostile work
environment. Additionally, woman-to-woman harassment is difficult to prove. It is not covered under current laws, and so protection is minimal (Brunner & Costello, 2003). While this literature is parsimonious, future studies may reveal the validity of further investigation.

This literature review thus far has covered the historical and sociological procession of women leaders in business and education. The barriers and development issues reviewed offer a unique perspective for current authentic women’s leadership. This study will now review concepts of authenticity and spirituality in leadership and subsequently address how these concepts impact women’s authentic leadership.

**Authentic Leadership**

Recent literature has begun linking leadership constructs to a number of synonymous terms such as *authentic, real, congruent, genuine, holistic,* and *transparent* (Jablonski, 2005; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Myran, Myran, & Galand, 2004). Leaders are said to behave *authentically* when their inward beliefs and outward actions are congruent (Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Palmer, 2000), and they are truthful with themselves (Moxley, 2000).

Paul Elsner, emeritus Chancellor of Maricopa Community College, reveals that “...much of administrative leadership is perfecting a dance, perhaps many disguises, or worse, adopting a persona for each occasion or interest group” (2001, p. 5). He suggests that these administrative adaptations negate authentic leadership. Inauthentic leadership can become damaging to the institutions, according to Palmer (2000, 2004). He suggests that disingenuous leaders distort relationships with others. Leaders trying to give what
they do not have or conform to what they do not believe, not only harm others but create burnout and personal inauthenticity (Palmer, 2000). Palmer suggests leaders must rejoin their “soul with their role” (2004, p. 20).

While authenticity appears to be a genderless term, it is noteworthy that 90% of literature about authenticity in written by men (Naddaff, 2005). Furthermore, literature on women’s leadership describes authenticity differently. Women leaders describe authenticity as “finding voice” (Belenky et al., 1997; Helgesen 1990), being at home with themselves (Harris, 1989), or seeing their work as meaningful (Silverstein, Slavitt, & Ruderman, 2001).

Women reflect authenticity in their leadership when their inner values and outward behaviors align (Silverstein et al., 2001). When they are not authentic, they may feel a disconnect from themselves as well as others (Palmer, 2004; Silverstein et al., 2001). This may be the case in institutions where wearing a mask is still a viable survival strategy for some women leadership (Blake-Beard, 2005).

Defining authentic leadership may be difficult for women. According to Curry (2000), the challenge is that women must first understand the phenomenological framework of women’s leadership such as the historical and psychosocial underpinnings previously discussed. Because literature on women’s leadership frequently cite Belenky et al. (1997) as a model of women’s authenticity, this framework described below will be applied to these women leaders.
Constructing Women's Authentic Leadership

This review thus far has detailed the last 45 years of women's historical, psychosocial, and political development in leadership roles. As mentioned previously, Astin (2004) asserted that much of women's early attempts at leadership were reactions to leadership barriers. As they realized this reactive leadership construction, women leaders began transitioning to a more feminized leadership (Frankel, 2004) which revealed a more proactive and more authentic leadership style for women.

Initially taking their cues from men's leadership, many women adapted and reconstructed leadership to their diverse styles. Women had gained valuable knowledge and experience from transformative educational opportunities targeting women. Most importantly, women pioneers (Astin & Leland, 1991) elucidated women's transformative leadership in the literature, as well as issues of gender changes in the law, role modeling, and mentoring.

One often cited study on women's constructed knowledge, Belenky et al. (1997), contended that women's epistemological assumptions were pivotal in how they perceived themselves and their worlds. The ranges of their epistemological perspectives suggested how women evolved from a belief that others possessed their knowledge into their own interdependent way of knowing.

This interdependent way of knowing for women was termed constructed knowledge (Belenky et al., 1997) and was characterized by a more authentic way of being for these women. Through this constructed development, women emerged reflective, self-questioning, self-aware, intuitive, pluralistic, and spiritual. They understood the
ever-changing nature of knowledge as situational and contextual (Belenky et al.), and they communicated this complexity in their cognitive and affective thinking as well as their objective/subjective knowing.

While no literature targets women's authentic leadership in the community college, Curry's (2000) study of women's educational leadership presents a synthesis of concepts depicting how women in the new millennium construct leadership. This study asserts women construct this leadership identity or persona based on characteristics of their ascendancy into leadership. Curry suggests this consists of their identity development, the balance between their socially constructed and normalized roles and responsibilities, and finally, how women's perception of marginality affected their personal and professional lives.

Curry's study (2000) typifies current research suggesting that a constructivist perspective on women's leadership would enable women to define their authentic leadership. Other literature also provides a spectrum of women's leadership qualities. Frankel (2004), for example, describes the way women lead: using praise, being inclusive, creating a climate for learning, being visionary, and being intuitive. Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin (2005) suggest feminist caring leadership supports a holistic approach towards communities that value and nurture one another.

**Spirituality in Leadership**

Historically, American higher education was a religious sectarian enterprise, promoting values formation and cultural education for religious and professional leaders (Chickering et al., 2006; Marsden, 1992). However, as rationalism and the scientific
method gained ascendancy in 19th century higher education, some argued that the influence of religion was displaced.

Within the last decade, however, spirituality, oftentimes an aspect of religion, has garnered increasing attention in higher education. Educational scholars began identifying spirituality as an essential component of a holistic educational experience for students, for faculty, and for educational leaders (Astin, 2004; Chickering et al., 2006; Nodding, 1992; Palmer, 2004; Rendon, 2005).

Recent studies on students (Astin & Astin, (n.d.; Rendon, 2005) and faculty (Chickering et al., 2006; Rendon, 2005; Palmer, 1998a) recognized the significance of spirituality to holistic growth and development (Chickering et al., 2006; Jablonski, 2005). Advocates for holistic education contended that spirituality was a constant yet unstated dimension of the learning environment (Tisdell, 2003). As colleges became more diverse, students and faculty recognized the need for an inclusive culture that honored authenticity and interrelatedness (Jones, 2005), integral components of spirituality. Chickering, et al., (2006) called for an institutional amplification of spirituality, authenticity, purpose, and meaning.

Research by Myran et al. (2004) also calls for this institutional amplification. This study revealed how students, faculty, staff, and board of trustees all desire leaders who project four conditions for promoting of spirituality: create a spiritual climate in which purpose and meaning can be sought; project a goal-oriented vision of the future; model a developed spiritual awareness, and uplift and unify campuses in a collective spirit that transcends individuals.
Links between Leadership and Spirituality

Historically, leadership literature focused on external, visible realities and action-oriented, tangible results of the ego such as accomplishments and appearances. The spirit or spirituality focused on internal, invisible insights and values. Traditional societal belief equated the external and measurable as more powerful and valuable than internal reality (Palmer, 2000; Scott, 1994; Vaughan, 1995).

Leaders following only an outward focus, however, may encounter ego issues involving compulsivity, despondency, disconnection, destructive behaviors, alienation, and misperceptions (Moxley, 2000; Vaughan, 1995). Palliative attempts to cope may include addictive behaviors, obsessive preoccupation, personality changes, and isolation (as women leaders had attempted previously). Leaders who develop a level of congruency between their inner values and their outer actions are seen as more authentic and balanced (Moxley; Vaughan).

Positional leaders in higher education are beginning to acknowledge the value of spirituality in their leadership. Some advocate for a culture with a more holistic perspective on knowledge and a more globally inclusive community (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Chickering et al., 2006; Palmer, 2000; Rendon, 2005; Tisdell, 2003). Former Chancellor of Maricopa Community College Paul Elsner (2001) suggested that one role of leaders was to help others in the organization integrate their work with their inner lives. Chickering et al. (2006) and Tisdell report that positional leaders modeling authenticity created a more multicultural, democratic environment.
Positional leaders were also discovering the value of spirituality in their own authentic growth and development (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Palmer, 2000). These leaders, championing the advancement of this spiritual context, were becoming models and advocates for the mission and culture of higher education (Jablonski, 2005). Wellesley College president Diana Chapman Walsh (1999) said that the core of leadership challenges is spiritual challenges: a leader’s primary role includes a spiritual dimension.

Myran et al. (2004) suggested that the spiritual dimension in leadership was found in the connection between a leader’s inner, personal beliefs and their outward actions and words as a leader. This connection becomes significant for educational leaders because some studies suggest a correlation between this type of self-development in leaders and organizational effectiveness (Bolman & Deal, 1994; Metzger, 2003).

The Spirituality Link for Women and Women Leaders

Spirituality is increasingly linked to leadership in higher education. Astin (2004) challenges women leaders to consider how transformative spirituality can be to their leadership. Numerous studies (Josselson, 1987; Myers et al., 1991; Tisdell, 2003) suggest spirituality is a natural link for women because spirituality contributes to women’s development and the construction of knowledge. However, as Josselson (1987) points out, this connection has often been overlooked in research on women’s leadership.

Literature on this link between spirituality and women does, however, exist in three distinct populations. The first is a medical population; the second, women leaders in religion; and the third, African-American women leaders.
A medical or health model perspective linking women and spirituality.

Considerable medical research supports the value of spiritual, holistic coping, and palliative care for both healthy and unhealthy women. Multiple studies (Somlai, et al., 1998; Walton, Craig, Derwinski-Robinson, & Weinert, 2004) suggest that women may use spiritual practices as a positive coping strategy for general life situations. For example, according to Somlai, Heckman, Hackl, Morgan & Welsh (1998), 90% of women regularly follow the spiritual practice of prayer, regardless of their health. These researchers and others (Tanyi, 2002) suggest that other spiritual beliefs and practices can become adaptive coping mechanisms for women facing stressful, difficult times. They suggest practicing spirituality can promote better physical and mental health.

According to one meta-analysis (Flannelly, Flannelly & Weaver, 2002), nearly 17% of all oncological research studies in nursing journals examined spirituality or religion. Studies demonstrate how spiritual coping mechanisms also assist unhealthy women. Research reveals the contribution spirituality makes to the physical and mental health of women patients with HIV, depression, drug and alcohol addition, and terminal illness (El-Khoury, Dutton, Goodman, Engel, Belamaric, & Murphy, 2004; Miles, 2003; Narayanasamy, 2002; Rossman, 2003; Walton, Craig, Derwinski-Robinson & Weinert, 2004). This research suggests that spirituality contributes to the holistic approach to coping with and healing from their illnesses as well as making meaning from their illnesses.

Linking women religious leaders’ and spirituality. One group of leaders who deal with discriminatory barriers using their spirituality is women religious leaders (Winter et
These women use spirituality to deal with the unjust treatment they experience from the male hierarchy. Winter et al. reveals the resemblance between the isolation and the oppression of women religious leaders to women educational leaders. This study also reveals how women religious leaders use spirituality to cope and lead authentically.

**African-American women's perspective to spirituality.** Considerable literature also documents the contribution spirituality makes to African-American women leaders (Edwards, 1998; Edwards-Wilson, 1998; Marshall & Gerstl-Pepin, 2005; Robinson, 1996; Southern 1996; Watt, 1996; Winter et al., 1994). Facing the duality of gender and race discrimination, these women leaders identify the necessity of spirituality in their lives. Edwards relates how despite this duality, African-American women leaders must project that tokenism, sexism, and racism are nonexistent. To cope, they rely heavily on their churches and spirituality to sustain them.

While these three areas discussed reflect the value of spirituality for women in various settings, no literature discusses the value of spirituality for women leaders in the community college. This gap provides an opportunity for community college women leaders to explore the value of spirituality in their authentic leadership and then to construct a leadership model that reflects their diverse thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

**Linking Spirituality to Women's Authentic Leadership**

Currently women leaders in the community college face a myriad of challenges. They must negotiate the maze of residual historic and current barriers for women. Yet
they must also negotiate the changing demands placed on all community college leaders. Literature proposes that facing such challenges from an authentic core may enable women leaders to be more effective (Naddaff, 2005). Women who lead from their authentic core may benefit from practice that enhances this authenticity. The literature reviewed above suggests spirituality may enable women community college leaders to navigate these challenges.

Research on the correlational nature of spiritual development and authentic leadership development is mounting (Chickering et al., 2006; Naddaff, 2005; Palmer, 2000; Tisdell, 2003; Scott, 1994; Vaughan, 1995). This portion of the literature review will suggest how the two correlated areas of development may enhance women leaders' abilities to navigate the historical challenges and changing demands placed upon them.

The literature on the correlation between spiritual and authentic leadership development will be organized within two cyclical systems as well as eight processes within these two systems. Both systems and their processes will then be discussed from the perspective of both spirituality and authentic leadership. For clarity, a visual representation of these systems and their various processes has been created. (see figure 1.) These systems not only cycle through the processes, but they also spiral forward and upward.

**The Enstatic Systems of Spirituality and Authentic Leadership**

Vaughan (1995) suggests people live in two worlds: the inner world of soul and the outer world of ego. To be authentic, they must learn to incorporate these two dimensions in a harmonious, interdependent union. Literature suggests this holistic union
of the two worlds can also be viewed as two evolving, cyclical systems that spiral forward. Women leaders pursuing spirituality as well as authentic leadership may collectively benefit from practicing various processes within these systems.

Considerable literature suggests the first system is enstatic (Vaughan, 1995) or internal (Borysenko, 1999; Duerk, 1999; Harris, 1989; Hoppe, 2005; Palmer, 1998b). In this enstatic system, women progress cognitively and affectively. This enstatic system is comprised of four processes (see Figure 1): (1) a willingness to risk, (2) a time of reflection towards self-knowledge; (3) a recognition of their intuitive nature; and (4) an identification of their character or values.

Women leaders may progress to an inward system based on some crises, a pivotal event in their lives, an epiphany, or a natural transition (Harris, 1989). However, they may find this process also enhances their ability to confront distinct women’s leadership challenges. Those who practice enstatic contemplation may discover themselves, their wisdom, and their potential (Chickering et al., 2006; Duerk, 1999; Harris; Palmer, 2000).

**Willingness to risk.** In the first enstatic level of spiritual development, women may cognitively and affectively experience a process entitled the *willingness to risk*. Numerous authors (Duerk 1999; Miller, 2003; Palmer, 1991; Vaughan, 1995) suggest the spiritual path begins as a solitary introspective journey, and women may experience this enstatic process as risky. It is a time of increased vulnerability and heightened awareness (Harris, 1989). Women must be willing to authentically face their fears (Vaughan, 1995) because this practice can cognitively and affectively deepen their spiritual awareness as it touches their pain. This self-examination is described as *confronting their shadow*.
(Vaughan, 1995), seeking the *dark soul of the night* (Moore, 1992), or the *places of darkness* (Duerk, 1999; Palmer, 2000).

Spirituality and authentic leadership both involve courage to venture into the unknown (Chapman Walsh, 1999). Leaders oftentimes find self-awareness difficult because traditional leadership is rational, in control, and careful. The journey to self-awareness takes courage and faith, however, because it is a journey into the heart (Bolman & Deal, 1995). Leaders are called to embody the ideals of the community, yet they often pay a price for these ideals unless they can persistently learn from life's challenges to discover their inner spiritual cores. As they conquer their inner fears, leaders find peace that consequently enables them to inspire others (Bolman & Deal).

Vaughan (1995) and Miller (2003) suggest the act of confronting fears and challenges forms a deeper inner strength and resiliency. Willingness to risk this exploration of one's inner self enables women leaders to increase their self-awareness and authenticity.

**Reflection toward self-knowledge.** Once women have entered the first process of courage and the willingness to go within themselves, they may begin the second enstatic process of self-reflection towards self-knowledge and wholeness. This enstatic process dually reflects a spiritual development and an authentic leadership process by delving deeply into the strengths and weaknesses of women and their culture.

Developmental theorists acknowledge the importance of this cognitive and affective search for self-knowledge or "true self" (Batson, Schoenrade & Ventis, 1993; Chickering et al., 2006; Erikson, 1959; Fowler, 1981; Goleman, 1995; Goleman, 2000;
Merton, 1960; Myers, 1988; Coughlin, Wingard & Hollihan, 2005). Chickering et al. (2006) proffers that while much of this quest for self-knowledge has not specifically addressed spiritual development, there are broad implications suggesting a connection. Spiritual development theorists such as Fowler, Parks, and Chickering et al. (2006) have predicated their work on theories from the cognitive and affective developmental theories of authors such as Kohlberg (1969), Perry (1970), and Gilligan (1982). In the same manner, women’s development theorists (Astin., 2004; Belenky et al., 1997; Josselson, 1987) often have posited similar constructs for women’s quest for authenticity.

Literature on women’s spiritual quest for self-knowledge also exists. One women’s spiritual model (Harris, 1989) identifies the second phase of women’s spirituality as discovering their voices and their authenticity. Duerk (1999) says women’s spirituality depends on women finding their authenticity by understanding how their experiences contribute to who they are. For women to become spiritual, they must trust their internal wisdom and learn to speak as themselves and not as men (Duerk, 1999; Winter et al., 1994).

According to Harris (1989) and Palmer (2000) people who know and listen to themselves can live more authentic lives, finding their own truths. One dimension of the spiritual quest for self-knowledge involves reflecting on one’s strengths and weaknesses. Embracing their opposites and honoring their limitations enables women to identify a more authentic self while accessing their spiritual resources. Palmer (1998c) and Harris (1989) suggest that women who discover and acknowledge their vulnerabilities can discover a new wisdom, a more authentic self-perception.
Women struggle to find their authentic selves because they have been encouraged to deny who they are as women (Duerk, 1999; Vaughan, 1995; Winter et al., 1994) and who they are as leaders (Astin, 1991; Curry, 2000; Reynolds & Young, 1995; Winter et al.). Research on spiritual development suggests women who spend quality time determining who they are, are then better able to name who they are (Duerk, 1999; Harris, 1989) and develop spiritually as well as authentically.

Belenky et al.’s (1997) developmental study on women’s ways of knowing, identify the growth of women into the highest level of constructed knowledge. Belenky et al. assert that women in the constructed knowledge level look to identify where they appear fragmented. This self-examination allows them to construct how they feel about knowledge, truth, and self which then guides their intellectual, moral, and personal dimensions. At this constructed knowledge level, women no longer resist ambiguity; they seek authenticity. They no longer seek to deny who they are to avoid conflict. They openly embrace themselves holistically instead of compartmentalizing their lives in “thoughts and feelings, home and work, self and other” (p. 137).

At this constructed knowledge level, women integrate their internal knowledge with the external authorities of knowledge, “…weaving together the strands of rational and emotive thought and of integrating objective and subjective knowing” (p. 134). This self-awareness, critical to women’s well-being, stretches the parameters of their boundaries with others and themselves. By listening to the voices of others as well as their own internal voices, women can construct their own awareness. Belenky suggests women at this level make “the unconscious conscious” (p. 141), creating a connectedness
that allows them to enhance not only their relationships but also their perspectives on knowledge.

This process of seeking self-knowledge is especially critical for women leaders. Common leadership issues of control, fear, desperation, failure, resentment, and self-delusion may be especially poignant for women leaders. Seeking self-knowledge may help women confront how their personal destructive leadership beliefs can be both counterintuitive and inauthentic (Orsborn, 2000). Additionally, seeking self-knowledge about the implications of working within an androcentric profession can enable women leaders to make choices that reflect who they authentically are as leaders (Tripses, 2004). This self-reflection toward a deep understanding of one’s self is critical to this process of finding one’s authentic leadership, according to Tack, Sayles, & Flanigan (2002).

Grogan (1996), a women’s leadership researcher, identifies one of the fundamental traits of women superintendents as the ability to reflect, change, and grow from this process of self-reflection. One of Grogan’s interviewees suggested she needed to “…create a space in the midst of dealing with day-to-day pressures of administration…” (p.150) for reflection on how she could improve her leadership. Capper (1993) suggests a feminist perspective of reflection as a conscious choice where one determines her position cognizant of its strengths and weaknesses. She practices this by engaging in a “constant self-interrogation” (p.33).

Women in higher education concur with Grogan’s perspective. Wellesley College president Diana Chapman Walsh (1999) suggested women leaders must cultivate inner resources so they can tap into their inner place of knowing. According to Chapman
Walsh, women leaders must also cultivate access to this inner self which nurtures them from their spiritual roots.

Finally, research on self-reflection for women of color is especially critical for women leaders. Some African American women leaders in community colleges see self-reflection as a source of inner strength (Robinson, 1996; Southern, 1996). Because they often face a double bind of race and gender, their need to know themselves is heightened. Self-reflection provides them with this essential knowledge.

Values. Once women proceed through self-reflection within the enstatic system, they may enter the third process: acknowledging their values. This acknowledgement is essential both to a woman’s spirituality but also to women as authentic leaders because values form the foundation of how leaders express their spirituality and interdependence (Chickering et al., 2006).

Within the fourth level of Fowler’s stages of faith (1981), individuals construct their own internal set of values. Fowler suggests this may be a difficult process because of the impact of “…established and elaborated systems of relationships and roles that constitute an adult life structure” (p. 182). Feminist educator and writer Tisdell (2003) cautions that while Fowler’s stages of faith are linear, many on a spiritual path may move in a more circular direction as they reflect on their values.

Harris (1989) indicates that at this stage in women’s spiritual development, women begin to acknowledge the power in their vulnerability, emotions, caring, and connectedness. Gilligan (1982) identified how these gendered qualities, traditionally seen as failures in men’s moral developments, were essential to women’s development.
Harris suggests that as women begin to name their personal as well as gendered values, they discover their spiritual power.

As women construct their values and grow in their spirituality, they also become more authentic. Authenticity is a characteristic of healthy spirituality where the person's cognitive, affective, relational, and behavioral choices reflect these values (Vaughan, 1995).

An Eastern Michigan University qualitative study of women higher education leaders (Tack, Sayles & Flannigan, 2002) suggests that most successful women in leadership know who they are and have spent a great deal of time determining their core beliefs and values. They live and act based on their internal values rather than external demands and are willing to lose their jobs rather than compromise these values (Tack et al.).

In a Kellogg Foundation study of women leaders (Machanic, 2003), the theme "know thyself", suggested that creating a place for value clarification allowed women leaders to clarify their goals and determine how best to apply those goals. Listening to their inner voices allowed them to make authentic leadership choices.

The identification of values is also strong in African-American women leaders in community colleges. These women identified personal strength and strong values as consistent themes (Robinson, 1996). Their values also included the responsibility of self-reliance for both their professional and personal lives often because of the duality of potential race and gender discrimination.
Intuitive knowing. Literature suggests that women cycling through the enstatic processes of risking, self-reflection, and identification of their values, will finally reach the fourth process: accessing their intuitive ways of knowing. This key process is essential to the development of spirituality in women as well as to their authentic leadership development.

Women’s intuition is a natural state of consciousness, according to medical researcher Joan Borysenko (1999), and it is an essential dimension of women’s circular spiritual development. Borysenko says intuition is an intelligence that gets decoded, coming to conscious awareness through the human nervous system. Borysenko also explains research on the physiology of intuition. Younger women become more intuitive in the second half of their menstrual cycles as their bodies become more right-hemisphere dominant. As women age, their intuition increases relative to the increase in their neurohormones (Borysenko; Northrup, 1989).

An intuitive dimension of this enstatic spiritual process is also apparent in Fowler’s fifth stage of faith (1981) which refers to the “…opening of the voices of one’s ‘deeper self’” (p. 198). Listening to one’s inner wisdom or intuition is a predominant theme specific to women’s spirituality (Borysenko, 1999; Duerk, 1999; Harris, 1989; Winter et al., 1994). Harris and Duerk suggest women’s spiritual journey involves confirming their original intuitions or a type of “finding,” whether of their past, their reality, or their challenges.

Leadership studies also reveal the value of intuition. Fullan (2001) describes intuition as tacit knowledge because it is “…below the level of awareness” (p. 80). His
examination of the study of Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) reveals the value of this tacit knowledge to business leaders who can utilize these "...subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches..." (p. 80) to build strong organizations. Educational professor Kenneth Chee (2002) says that at the heart of leadership is finding solutions to problems from within.

Finally, intuition is a natural and essential component of women’s authentic leadership according to a number of researchers (Curry, 2000; Fischer, 2005; Frankel, 2004; Westerhof, 2001; Whiteley, 2005). Because intuition is both irrational and nonlinear, it is one of the best administrative tools women leaders possess (Westerhof).

Women are better leaders when they trust their natural intuitiveness, says Frankel (2004). Curry’s women’s leadership study (2000) supports this premise. The study correlates the internal process of women’s self-knowledge to intuition which, in turn, provides solid decision-making. This circular process enables women to develop into their authentic leadership.

Within the enstatic system, the four interrelated processes of willingness to risk, self-reflection, values, and intuition suggest the parallel nature of women’s spiritual and authentic leadership development. These four cognitive and affective processes are foundational for the next four processes within the relational and behavioral ecstatic system of women’s spirituality and authentic leadership.

The Ecstatic Systems of Spirituality and Authentic Leadership Development

Cognitive and affective processes within the enstatic system previously discussed provide a core to the transformative, ever-changing cycles of women’s spirituality and
authentic leadership development. This enstatic system provides a foundation upon which women leaders can proceed to the second ecstatic or external system. This ecstatic system reveals the relational and behavior dimensions of women’s spirituality and authentic leadership.

Both spiritual and authentic leadership development suggests women cycle from an inner system to an outer one (Harris, 1989; Naddaff, 2005; Vaughan, 1995; Westerhof, 2001). Vaughan asserts that the spiritual process entails an internal quest followed by an external journey towards assisting others on their journeys. Westerhof and Harris concur that as women leaders discover who they authentically are, they must move from silence to speech, connecting their inner and outer worlds. Myran et al. (2004) propose the connection between the spiritual and authentic dimensions of leadership: “The outer journey is one of giving full and authentic expression to one’s deepest spiritual and ethical convictions as a leader in the community college setting” (p. 12).

Interconnectedness to self and others. The first process within the ecstatic system of women’s spiritual and authentic leadership begins with the interconnectedness women leaders have to themselves and to others. One essential process in the external spiritual system involves women leaders practicing self-care.

Interconnectedness begins with self-care, according to a number of researchers (Besthorn, 1997; Borysenko, 1999; Duerk, 1993; Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan suggests that women’s central tension is the interconnectedness to others, and this key component frequently leads to a denial of women leaders’ self-care. Borysenko concurs, illustrating how women’s self-care state of being is frequently replaced by an “extremist guerrilla
doing” (p. 275) in which women go to extreme measures to take care of everyone and everything else, denying their personal self-care needs. Both Borysenko and Duerk (1999) suggest the highly spiritual, restful state of being as opposed to doing must be practiced to return women to a state of authentic wholeness. Besthorn (1997) concurs, suggesting how humans taking time to connect with nature become more powerfully intuitive and spiritual.

Women leaders who connect with themselves can also discover their authentic leadership. When they can connect with themselves spiritually, the synergistic combination of being and doing enables their authentic nature to be revealed (Borysenko, 1999). Chickering et al. (2006) advises leaders in higher education to practice the self-care of solitude. Naddaff’s (2005) research suggests that one of the biggest barriers to authentic leadership in women themselves. She says that while women leaders have a strong desire to seek their authentic leadership, they tend to ignore the time they need to nurture themselves and their authenticity. These women leaders benefit from understanding that self-care is good stewardship, according to Palmer (2000) because when leaders do not care for themselves, it extracts a price on others.

In contrast to the self-care connection, one of women’s greatest strengths is their connectedness to others. For women to flourish both spiritually and authentically, they benefit from constant engagement with others (Harris, 1989). Winter et al. (1994) studied women’s spiritual support groups which they call the “spirituality of connection” (p. 258). These spirituality groups revealed the value of enabling one another to find

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meaning and self-identity in their lives and to find a voice to advocate for justice women need.

Making connections to others is necessary for spiritual healthiness (Vaughan, 1995). Winter et al. (1994) suggests that women leaders who practice feminist spirituality are interconnected to all living things through a participative, circular, and communicative connection. This contrasts traditional religious connections which tend to be rigid and hierarchical. Chickering et al. (2006) advocate for higher education leaders to integrate spirituality and interconnectedness, creating “traveling companions” (p. 171).

The spiritual connectedness with other women is one process towards women’s spiritual development. Another process essential to authentic women’s leadership is how women practice a connectedness to others. In one of the foundational studies of women’s development, Gilligan (1982) identifies women’s interconnectedness as critical to their identity. Gilligan reveals that women experience relationship in a nonhierarchical perspective of human connectedness.

Constructed knowledge women leaders have a tremendous sense of caring about others (Belenky et al., 1997), practicing authentic connections with their followers. Belenky, et al. explains that constructivist women feel a moral imperative towards community, deliberating on how their choices will impact others. These women see their work as an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to forging relationships.

One qualitative study done by Hackney & Runnestrand (2003) studied interconnectedness among women educational leaders in a localized area. Through their interconnectedness, the women spoke of feeling more authentic because they felt
empowered and more successful. A similar perspective was seen at Smith College’s Executive Education for Women (EEW; Koonce, 2004). The EEW addressed leadership concerns by nurturing an interconnectedness of trust among the women participants. One of the participants shared how she felt she grew quickly in the program because she felt she could trust others to be her authentic self (Koonce).

Connection to others is especially poignant for African American women who are community college leaders (Robinson, 1996). They describe a connectedness as sorority which serves as a motive for their actions. These women rely heavily upon the interaction they receive from other women, identifying especially the need for mutual nurturing, mentoring, and networking. Finally, they described a core of caring for others, whether they taught a class, facilitated leadership programs, or stood up for a community cause. They felt their roles must be relational to be who they authentically are.

The literature strongly identifies one important dimension of interconnection as mentoring. Women needed mentoring to become authentic leaders because of the nurturing relationship women can offer one another, the safety to speak authentically, and to identify how to circumvent “game-playing techniques” (Lopez, 1993). Harris (1989) and Vaughan (1995) urge women to mentor other women to guide and teach what they have learned.

**Articulating and acting on one’s vision.** The second process within the ecstatic system of women’s spiritual and authentic leadership development is articulating and acting on one’s vision. This process is an integral part of women’s spiritual development as well as women’s authentic leadership development.
A number of spirituality writers identify the need for articulating and acting on one's vision. Harris (1989) describes the process as making public what women believe spiritually (Harris, 1989), suggesting women act on what they believe. Winter et al.'s (1994) study of spiritual women supports this premise, explaining that many spiritual women leaders identify their spiritual development as a process where they begin to speak the truth, acting on social justice issues related to gendered spirituality.

Constructed knowledge women in Belenky et al. (1997) are preoccupied with balancing the internal and external dimensions of their moral, spiritual lives. They feel compelled to act on their values because they feel a responsibility to the community of women as well as the community as a whole.

The process of articulating and acting on their vision is not simply a process for spiritual development. Parker Palmer (2000) suggests educational leaders must have a deep congruence between their inner and outer lives and must act on the truths that this congruence reveals. Chapman Walsh (1999) concurs, saying that the first role of spiritual educational leaders is to clarify their values and visions.

Articulating and action of their vision is also an important process in women's authentic leadership development. Sergiovanni's (1999) view of authentic leaders is that they anchor their actions based on principled values with a moral commitment to be diligent in their decisions. Maldonado & Lacey (2001) say women leaders can be more authentic when they take a stand and speak out about their values. Belenky et al. (1997) concurs. They suggest that constructivist women are extremely focused on moral and
spiritual dimensions of their lives, feeling that to be authentic it is imperative to act on their beliefs.

**Willingness to change.** Within one of the final processes in the ecstatic system is the willingness to change and take risks. This adaptability is frequently seen both in women’s spiritual and authentic leadership processes. Palmer (2000) suggests that leaders who are both spiritual and authentic must relinquish fearful, static patterns and embrace the transformational nature of change.

As women develop spiritually, they may experience the paradoxical concept of hanging on and letting go. They learn they must adapt by being committed to their values while being willing to risk the change that comes from letting go of their previous patterns of behavior (Harris, 1989). This process parallels Fowler’s fifth stage of faith (1981), describing this spiritual process as the conjunctive stage where people experience the “vertigo of relativity” (p. 187). Fowler suggests that in this critical reflection process, people are more adaptable and willing to change.

Wellesley College President Diana Chapman Walsh (1999) reflects on the need for educational leaders to be both spiritual and authentic.

Now, spirituality, it seems to me, is about openness, about receptivity, about empathy, about the courage and faith to venture out into the unknown. So in a real sense, the managerial challenges that were servicing themselves up to me are at their core spiritual challenges. In fact, as I continue to understand more clearly the role I need to play in leading this process of cultural change, I increasingly become aware that my primary task has a spiritual dimension to it (p. 210).

Research also suggests that for women leaders to be authentic, they must be willing to change. The Arbinger Institute’s book, *Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting out of the Box* (2002) suggests how authentic leaders need to be willing to change
themselves by getting out of the box of some unconscious assumptions about prescribed leadership to find their own authentic leadership. Wilson (2004) urges women to risk the changes necessary to be authentic leaders. Citing Eleanor Roosevelt, “Do something to scare yourself each day,” Wilson urges women leaders not to imitate traditional leadership with its twisted gender roles but to risk being who they are as authentic leaders.

Curry (2000) explains that as women construct and hone their authentic leadership, they must be willing to break social and gendered norms about who women are as leaders. This phenomenological, epistemological process involves women leaders’ willingness to change. These changes occur as they juxtapose what their organization is to who they are, albeit keenly aware of retaining their authenticity as leaders.

One woman leader in Curry’s study explained how she viewed her educational leadership challenges as opportunities to grow spiritually, suggesting an interconnection between her authentic leadership and her spirituality.

**Heightened awareness/synchronicity.** The fourth and final process within the ecstatic system of women’s spiritual and authentic leadership development is a heightened awareness and synchronicity. As with the other three processes within the ecstatic system, a heightened awareness and synchronicity can be seen relationally and behaviorally in women’s spirituality as well as in their authentic leadership. As women reflect on their spiritual processes, they may relate to many of the cognitive, affective enstatic systems and to the relational, behavioral ecstatic systems. The literature suggests
this reflection creates the final process of women’s spiritual development, a heightened awareness and synchronicity.

Borysenko (1999) epitomizes women’s heightened awareness in this spiritual life process as

...more chaotic and disorderly, more circular and intuitive. Sometimes we can’t see the next horizon until we step out of the old life. We don’t yet know where we are going. We may not know the place until we arrive...But the revelations on the road to authenticity—when we slowly but surely find our spiritual vision and arrange our outside life to match our inside one—are seals upon the soul (p. 173-174).

These “seals upon the soul” suggest the heightened awareness process women may experience in their spiritual development. This heightened awareness is seen in stage five of Fowler’s *Stages of Faith* (1981) as well as Harris’ (1989) final step in women’s spirituality, the transformative nature of centering.

Vaughan (1995) describes this process as a heightened awareness of reality, suggesting a discernment that comes from experience. Vaughan also suggests this process relates to enlightenment where a woman experiences a greater tolerance for diversity and a deeper awareness of herself and those around her. In the same manner, one constructed knowledge woman (Belenky et al., 1997) explored a transformation in her thinking, revealing a deeper awareness of the world around her.

One dimension of this heightened awareness in women’s spirituality is synchronicity. Jung (as cited in Jaworski, 1999) identified synchronicities as “…a meaningful coincidence of two or more events where something other than the probability of chance in involved” (p. 88). While some may interpret these occurrences
as coincidental, current literature on spirituality provides extensive support for Jung’s perspective (Levoy, 1997; Palmer, 2000; Southern, 1996; Tisdell, 2003; Vaughan, 1995).

In Tisdell’s (2003) studies of spirituality in higher education, she interviewed a number of educators who cited synchronistic incidents as among some of their most significant spiritual experiences. Dyer (1995) says there are no accidents in the spiritual world because obvious coincidences are very purposeful as one relinquishes higher awareness. Levoy (1997) suggests that some synchronicity may not become apparent, however, until a heightened awareness is present. This heightened awareness is often achieved when a person moves beyond the illusion of control to a healthy powerlessness (Richo, 1998).

Vaughan (1995) suggests synchronicity is present with heightened spiritual awareness. Borysenko (1999) describes women’s spiritual synchronicity as a flowing state of being where insights, forces, and ideas unfold. This synchronicity is not present when women’s heightened awareness is obscured and they are out of sync.

While heightened awareness and synchronicity are evident in women’s spiritual development, they are equally apparent in the development of women’s authentic leadership. Curry (2000) and Coughlin, Wingard, and Hollihan (2005) encourage women leaders to be mindful at all times of who they are and the choices they make, while Chapman Walsh (1999) advises women leaders to have a heightened awareness of opportunities within conflicts.

Coughlin, Wingard, and Hollihan (2005) use the phrases reflective leadership and cultivating a still point to describe this present-centered awareness. She encourages
women leaders to cultivate this awareness as an essential process to their authentic leadership.

One dimension of this heightened awareness process is synchronicity, similar to the spiritual synchronicity. Synchronicity in leadership is an awareness and guidance about what coincidental opportunities do and do not open (Palmer, 2000). “Have faith and ‘way’ will open” (p. 38) has become a common expression used by Palmer for this synchronicity. Moxley (2000) suggests that often synchronistic experiences can be dismissed as mere coincidences unless spiritual leaders have a heightened awareness of reality.

Synchronicity is a name used by women leaders who trust their authentic, intuitive experience, according to Orsbom (2000). She suggests this mysterious energy flow reflects the interconnectedness women leaders have when they act authentically on their beliefs.

**Aligning Inner and Outer Systems**


Once we realize that our spirituality defines ourselves at the deepest levels of our being, that spirit enables us to offer our whole selves to the activity of leadership, to connect to others richly and rewardingly, and to give us deep sources of meaning—then we begin to understand its relationship to leadership and its importance in work (p. 34).
The Community College

One final topic pertinent to this literature review is the community colleges’ role for this particular group of women leaders. Two important points contribute to this literature review: the purpose of community colleges and their historical governance.

The majority of community colleges sprang from the 1947 Truman Commission report established after World War II, mandating expanded educational opportunities for all Americans (Quigley & Bailey, 2003). Community colleges’ mission included offering transfer options to bachelor’s programs and terminal occupational education. However, their targeted education also included marginalized populations needing developmental and adult basic education, English as a second language, and educational training for welfare recipients and the unemployed (Quigley & Bailey).

In a nation that was male dominated, segregated, anti-Semitic, and anti-Catholic, with deep pockets of urban and rural poverty, the [1947 Truman Commission] report called for an end of barriers to higher education based on race, gender, religion, income, and geographic location (Quigley & Bailey, 2003, p. xi).

According to Quigley and Bailey (2003), community college expansion since the Truman Commission report would assist in ending segregation and discrimination for these marginalized populations. To meet these goals, faculty and staff hires were to reflect the populations served. For many years, the hiring of these populations did not happen, specifically for women.

One reason this goal was not met was attributed to the historical governance that drove these institutions. As mentioned, the roots of the community college were steeped in a democratic, equitable tradition that relied on social justice (Myran et al., 2004). However, according to Birnbaum (1988) and Myran et al., community colleges have
traditionally been bureaucratic and remain predominantly bureaucratic, much like traditional business and higher education.

Of the over 1200 American community colleges, only 25% had women CEO’s in 1991 (Vaughan, 1991). By 1989, 21% of deans of instruction in community colleges were women (Vaughan). Literature on these women leaders is scant, in part, because the community college is not a research-based institution. Another reason women’s leadership literature is scant is because community colleges have no uniform terminology to collectively define positions in middle management, and collection of data is difficult without consistent language to define these positions.

Conclusion

It is evident from this brief historical summary that women have faced numerous barriers in their ascent to positions of authentic leadership. These barriers are foundational in the understanding of what women leaders face today in higher education. These barriers coupled with the stressors and changing demands made on all higher education institutions, pose tremendous challenges for all leaders.

Spirituality has been suggested as one means for leaders to find their authentic paths. Moreover, literature on women’s spirituality poses distinct characteristics which women leaders may consider when seeking their authentic leadership. The literature suggests women seeking authenticity and a spiritual path may find commonalities to empower them to become the leaders they envision.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this collective case study was to identify the role of spirituality in women's leadership at community colleges. The literature review identified specific qualities of spiritual development in women and in leadership, and these qualities provided a framework in which to study women leaders in community colleges. This study explored women leaders' perceptions of their personal development to determine what role spirituality might play in this development. The intention of this qualitative study was to increase the knowledge of women's leadership with respect to personal development and spirituality within a community college framework.

In order to obtain a rich understanding of the data, a multiple case study design was used to address four research questions in this study. The questions addressed spiritual beliefs and practices of the participants; the contributions of spirituality to authenticity and leadership; and finally, the role gender played in spirituality.

This chapter begins with the epistemological basis for this qualitative study. It is followed by my personal perspectives and insights which determined and framed this study. Next, the research design, description and selection of participants were described. The chapter then details the data collection and data analysis assumptions, and limitations, followed by a brief summary.

Epistemological Basis

Traditional leadership studies contain rich data from a vast history of leadership theories, best practices, and reflection from leaders in the field. Women's leadership
study, in contrast, is exiguous. Until recently, traditional research on leadership is grounded in a white, patriarchal, heterosexual epistemology.

The data that does exist is found to reflect more of a coping perspective from women who have needed to sort through this male-dominated data to determine what theories, practices, and reflections appropriately relate to their personal leadership styles. Most of the data is interpretive, offering various women’s perspectives on what leadership is for them personally.

It is for this reason that traditional positivist research methods will not accurately reflect theoretical frameworks. According to Chickering, et al. (2006), rational empiricism has limitations to higher education research because of its centralized focus on professional training, neglecting human and societal focus on spirituality and authenticity. The scientific language of facts cannot address how the experiences of women are constructed (Chickering et al., 2006).

These research limitations were effectively addressed because much of the more recent literature on women’s leadership utilized a constructivist perspective in which the interviewee was an authority on herself, constructing her own reality of leadership (Glesne, 1999). To support this constructivist perspective, my research made use of more inclusive and diverse epistemological perspectives (Laible, 2003). One perspective, for example, was the work of Belenky et al. (1997), originating from studies of Perry and Gilligan. It described six levels of women’s knowledge development. The highest level reflected a complex thinking process that involved subjective, contextual, intuitive, and collaborative decision-making processes.
Researcher Insights and Perspectives

My interest in this research began when I participated in Iowa State University's community college leadership program, “Leadership in the New Century” (LINC; n.d.). This program's intentionality to address women leaders' issues was evident, as our cohort was provided extensive interactive experiences related to women's leadership. The experiences were very educational and empowering, and many of us began contemplating potential roles as positional leaders.

Later, however, as I studied leadership literature more extensively in my doctoral program, the stark contrast became evident. The literature pertaining to women leaders' development in community colleges was nearly nonexistent, and addressing women's leadership issues seemed inconsequential. To offset this void, I sought out female mentors, and it was then that I began discovering reasons for this void. As I was to discover in the literature review, one of these reasons was that gender disparity still flourished for women in leadership, and its impact was profound albeit generally covert.

I repeatedly found myself asking the question, how do women administrators manage all of the administrative issues they share with their male counterparts, and also cope with the gender disparities? Many of the women I questioned shared strategies they had devised to cope with gendered issues. I began recognizing techniques some women leaders had devised for work personas. Other women made difficult choices regarding marriage and children. Still other women leaders seemed undeterred by these challenges.

One of the women I observed was a college president who shared frank discoveries and challenges about her leadership development. She explained how her
spirituality had enabled her to deal with her unique leadership challenges. Her perspective piqued my interest because I had recently completed two independent studies on spirituality in leadership offered by a forward-thinking educational leadership professor, Dr. Michael Waggoner. The synchronicity of these two experiences crystallized my dissertation topic about the role of spirituality in women’s leadership at the community college.

From these experiences, four questions were used to guide the research as follows:

1. What beliefs and/or practices contribute to the participants’ conception of spirituality?
2. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of authenticity?
3. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of leadership?
4. What role does gender play in the participants’ conception of spirituality?

Research Perspectives

Because researchers are the primary instrument for collection and analysis of data (Merriam, 1998), Chickering et al. (2006) suggests they must be candid about their limitations, motives, and prejudices because they are subject to bias based on their previous experiences and preconceptions. Contemplating and later reflecting back on the research process, I was cognizant of the role my personal experiences, insights, values,
and distinct interests played throughout the formation of the research project to the analysis of the data.

In addition, my educational and experiential background as a counselor afforded me keen intuitive insights to the women leaders' writings and their interviews. Discussing these insights with my methodologist became essential to the unique contribution this made to my study. These insights will be illuminated in Chapter 5.

Research Design

Of utmost importance in qualitative research is the selection of an appropriate research design. The rationale for selecting the collective case study will be delineated, as well as the implications for feminist research.

From the various traditions of research design, the collective case study was most appropriate for several reasons. Creswell (1998) suggested that a case study can be both the object of the study and the methodology where the individuals are studied over time using multiple forms of data collection. Additionally, the context of the case is an essential component, allowing for a within-case analysis of the individual woman leaders as well as allowing for a holistic description and thematic cross-case analysis of all the women (Creswell; Merriam, 1998;). These characteristics paralleled the analysis of women leaders by honing in on the context of each woman's life as well as identifying potential collective themes.

The collective case study was also chosen for this research because of the opportunity to collect data from various sources (Creswell, 1998). To support the existing research, multiple measures of data were collected. Emailed letters to the 15...
community college presidents requested recommendations of women leaders who would provide written explanations of leadership effectiveness. These women leaders provided written perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Further data was then collected from four of those participants who were interviewed in-depth about their written responses and their perceptions on women's leadership and the role of spirituality in that leadership. Finally, email correspondence with each of the four women leaders provided the remaining data.

An additional perspective for consideration for the case study was the feminist perspective. This collective case study (Stake, 1995) identified the two issues: perceptions of women leaders' development in community colleges and the role spirituality plays in these perceptions. Leading feminist Reinharz (1992) suggested that because of the omission of women's case studies by male academic sociologists, women have been invisible in much of educational literature. Reinharz also explained that this omission leads to distortions about women and single sex generalizations.

Chapter 2's literature review supported this perception, and this was one premise for using a feminist perspective for this research. An additional premise for the feminist perspective arose from the need for women leaders to not only understand the historical and sociological progression of leadership, but also to determine appropriate actions in the future once this knowledge is understood. Glesne (1999) suggested by examining the context of women's status (in this case through leadership), women leaders can make more informed choices about how they act. Furthermore, Glesne suggested the feminist
researcher can become an advocate (in this case for women leaders) because of the nature of the relationship with the interviewees.

**Description and Selection of Participants**

All of the participants were women administrators from the 15 community colleges across Iowa. Their positional titles included deans, directors, and vice presidents. The institutions these women served ranged in size from 800 students to over 18,000 students, and were situated in both rural and urban settings.

Participant selection involved multiple processes. First, email requests were sent to the 15 Iowa community college presidents requesting they recommend one woman leader at their institution who fit the specified criteria (Appendices A and B) as follows:

1. A woman administrator at your institution- manager, dean, director, vice president
2. Served approximately eight years in management/administrative experience in community colleges and/or higher education
3. An effective leader
4. Considered approachable by students, faculty, staff, community
5. Reflective and articulate in expressing her views

All 15 community college presidents responded, providing a 100% responses rate. Four of the presidents recommended two women, and for consistency purposes, only the first woman leader recommended by that president was contacted. All of the presidents, contact information, their women leader recommendations, and a checklist of contacts and responses were listed in a table entitled *Grid of Iowa community colleges, presidents,*
and women leaders (Figure 2) to track detailed communication and information. This grid was created from the “2007 Directory of Iowa Community Colleges” found on the Iowa Department of Education website (http://www.iowa.gov/educate/content/view/694/675/).

Pilot Study

Two pilot studies were conducted between December 2006 and January 2007 to determine the efficacy of the questions. The first pilot was conducted with a woman leader in a high-level federal government position, and the second was a woman board chair in a local nonprofit organization. Glesne (1999) proffers that the purposes of pilots are varied, ranging from learning about the research process to identifying the clarity of the questions and their ability to answer the research questions.

As I interviewed the first woman in the pilot, it became abundantly apparent why a pilot was necessary. First, the interview questions were not worded properly to elicit the content I sought, and I was not able to effectively redirect the interview towards that content. I decided to rewrite the questions more deliberately and do a second pilot.

The second pilot provided additional insights. I discovered the value of obtaining a participant from my target population, a point Glesne (1999) suggested was the ideal. While my interview questions had been reformed, they were still not clear, and my participant and I spent a significant part of the interview clarifying the substance and language (Glesne) of many of the questions. Other insights dealt with the timing of the responses and the amount of time the interview would take. My final insight, however,
was the most significant: the realization that an extensive knowledge of a subject could easily cloud one’s sensitivity to subtle nuances or minor themes.

Data Collection

Written Responses

As the responses from the presidents were received and the women leaders had been identified, a second email was sent out to the potential women leader participants (Appendices B and C). This email requested they participate in the study in two potential phases. First, they were all asked to write responses to two questions regarding leadership effectiveness (Appendix B) as follows:

1. Tell me a detailed story about an effective leader whom you greatly admire and with whom you can identify.

2. Tell me a detailed story about an ineffective leader whom you do not admire and with whom you can not identify.

The questionnaire emphasized to these potential 15 participants that the purpose of the questionnaire was to understand their personal thoughts, and not to determine the rightness or wrongness of their responses.

The women leaders were also asked to check a designated box in the email if they would be willing to participate in the second phase of the study which would involve one-on-one interviews. Based on their willingness to participate in the next phase of the study and their responses to the two questions, four to six women leaders would be selected.
Thirteen of the 15 recommended women leaders corresponded (Figure 2), agreeing to be interviewed. One woman declined due to health concerns, and so a second email was sent to the president of that college, requesting an alternative recommendation. The president responded with a second recommendation, and that second woman leader was contacted regarding her willingness to participate. This woman leader agreed to participate.

Two follow-up emails were sent to the women, identifying a timeline for completion of the survey, as a timeline was not included in the original email requesting participation. Of the 14 women who agreed to participate, 12 completed the writings, providing an 80% completion rate from the 15 recommended women leaders.

Because I have worked at one of the Iowa community colleges for ten years, I gave careful consideration to the potential political risk or "dangerous knowledge" (Glesne, 1999) of having a participant from my own institution. Glesne cautions that researching one's own institution, or backyard research, can create preformed assumptions. Additionally, because I knew seven of the 15 women leaders who were selected, I chose to color-code each woman's response (Figure 2), cutting and pasting the women leaders' response into a second document and then color-coding these responses without names to provide more anonymity (Figure 3).

The color-coded document, "Themes with Narratives," was a table with three columns: researcher comments, themes, and narratives. The themes were then copied to a third document, "Sample of Traits of Leaders" (Figure 4), which listed traits of leaders, breaking the various traits into three categories:
1. general leadership qualities

2. qualities matching the ecstatic, external system and its processes (Figure 1)

3. qualities matching the enstatic, internal system and its processes (Figure 1)

The traits were then tallied and the top eighteen responses were listed as well as the number of times that quality was mentioned in one of the writings (Figure 5).

The women leaders' written responses to the two questions were then analyzed using seven distinct components (Figure 6), created to determine which women leaders would be interviewed. Both quantitative and qualitative components were created to provide objective and subjective perspectives of potential interviewees. The goal of utilizing both perspectives was to identify women leaders who were not only able to articulate a variety of leadership dimensions, but whose views were also representative of both the current literature and leadership traits, identified by the other women leaders. Additionally, the goal was to identify women who would provide rich, thick descriptions of leadership that included spiritual dimensions of meaning and purpose.

The quantifiable components were chosen to identify an interviewee who would expound with a variety of descriptors and details to the questions that would be posed. The four quantifiable components included the following:

1. *Quantity of Items* which numerically tallied the traits a woman leader described in her two narratives.

2. The *Number of References* that used similar language to the model, *The Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership*
Development. This component was used to quantifiably identify parallels between the written narratives and the literature on women’s spirituality and women’s leadership.

3. Representative of Tallied Responses of Leadership Traits provided a list of the top 18 leadership traits among the 12 narrative sets. This list of 18 traits was then compared to the 12 narrative sets to determine the frequency of references each narrative set made to this list. This component was created to represent what Glesne (1999) called “typical case sampling” (p. 29).

4. References to Inner Development was a numerical count of any narrative references to the cognitive and/or affective developmental traits of leaders.

Additionally, qualitative components were created to provide a subjective perspective on the narratives. The three qualitative components provided an analysis of the richer dimensions of the narratives as follows:

1. Quality-richness identified my over-all impression of the quality of the narrator’s thoughts and organizational manner in which the narratives were written.

2. Uniqueness of Writing- distinctive, diverse, unusual, unique was another subjective assessment which identified which narratives utilized distinctive and comprehensible language and thoughts.

3. The Uniqueness of Woman- age, race, and disability was the final qualitative component. This measure identified from Glesne (1999), suggested identifying participants who were unusual or special in some manner. If I became aware of these unique qualities through their writing or some prior contact, i.e. presidential recommendations suggesting a particular woman might provide a distinct perspective.
Each of these categories was assigned a numerical value, ranging from one to five. Each of these values was then tallied, and the women with the highest scores were selected to be interviewed. Total tallied scores ranged from 17 to 28. Five women leaders were selected as having significantly higher scores, and they were selected to be interviewed. Creswell (1998) recommends a case study contain no more than four participants, so that each case can be studied in depth. An attempt was made to follow this guideline.

The five women leaders were each contacted by telephone using the script listed in Appendix E. They were asked if they were still willing to participate in the study. All five of the women leaders agreed to be interviewed. The fifth woman, however, was unavailable for three weeks, beyond the time allotted for the interview segment of the data collection, and so she was eliminated from the list of interviewees. The other four women leaders responded affirmatively, and a time for the individual interviews meeting their needs for location and time was selected. Letters of confirmation of the interview as well as copies of the “Informed Consent” were emailed to the women leaders, following the telephone conversations (Appendices E and F).

Interviews

The Questionnaire. The Interview Questionnaire for Women Leader Participants (Appendix 8) was created to identify areas of women leaders’ perceptions of their leadership and the relationships of authenticity, gender, and spirituality to their leadership. With these perceptions in mind, the specific questions were created from the themes selected from the previous responses of all participants, individual responses
given by these four interviewees (See Appendix H), and questions related to the literature on leadership and spiritual development.

The 30 questions were divided into six sections. Section A, Personal Leadership, made use of the constructed knowledge criteria as cited in Belenky et al. (1997) and authentic leadership design by Naddaff (2005). Section B, Values and Ethics Gleaned from Writings, dealt with a general value system as gleaned from the literature. Questions in Section C, Gender, focused on gender and relationships in leadership. These questions were adapted from Belenky et al.; Naddaff; and Duerk (1999). Section D, Coping and Stressors, and Section E, Self/Personal Development, made use of criteria from a spiritual coping article by Metzger (2003) and several women's spirituality publications including Miller (2003), Duerk, Harris (1989), and Borysenko (1999).

The initial interview questions utilized the term *spirituality* frequently. However, two days prior to the interviews, I read an article by Christa Metzger entitled “Self/inner Development of Educational Administrators: A National Study of Urban School District Superintendents and College Deans” (2003). Metzger chose to substitute the term self/inner development for spirituality because her research on educational leaders “supported the assumption that there is a tendency to avoid terms that may get into issues of religion (i.e., separation of church and state)” (p. 671). Metzger further explained her language substitution, citing a study by Mitroff and Denton (1999) which suggested that because the two terms are nearly synonymous, avoiding the use of the language of spirit and spirituality is advisable because

Lacking positive role models of how to practice spirituality in the workplace, many people—not all—are terribly afraid even to use the words “spirituality” and
“soul.” Many of our respondents believed that more neutral words such as “values” which carry less emotional baggage, are more acceptable and less threatening (p. XVI, as cited in Metzger, 2003).

Based on this rationale, I decided to follow a similar substitution. Whenever the term spirituality was used in a question, I replaced it with the terms self/personal development. Furthermore, I made an additional distinction between inner and outer personal development. When this distinction between inner and outer development was identified, inner development was defined as “cognitive, affective, and inside the head and heart” while outer development was defined as more “relational and behavioral.” The rationale for this distinction stemmed from the parallel distinction identified in my model, “The Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development” (Figure 1) which distinguished between internal (enstatic) and external (ecstatic) leadership development.

The Interview Process. The face-to-face interviews with the four women leaders were conducted at various sites across Iowa, at locations and times the women leaders determined most convenient, available, and appropriate for them. Two of the interviews were held in the women leaders’ offices, one of the interviews was held at a satellite campus conference room, and the fourth interview was held in the woman leader’s home.

The interviews took place between January 24, 2007, and January 31, 2007, and the times ranged from two to three hours. The interviews were audio recorded using an external microphone, a laptop computer, and recording software entitled “Audacity.”

At the on-set of the interviews, the Participant Profile (Appendix D) was briefly discussed and any questions or incomplete information were clarified. The Participant
Profile provided background information about work, educational information, and history (Astin, 1991; Belenky et al., 1997). Two women did not have a complete job history, and so both agreed to email their vitae later in the week.

The format for the Interview Questionnaire for Women Leader Participants (Appendix E) was discussed briefly, and the interviews began. The questionnaire consisted of a series of open-ended probe questions (Appendix E) designed to elicit a narrative describing how each woman personally perceived leadership. While beginning with a preset list of questions based, in part, on their earlier email responses, the scope of the initial results involved additional directions and new perspectives.

Some interviews occurred without interruption. The first interview took place in the woman leader’s office, and her request to her secretary to “hold all calls” was evident, as the interview proceeded undisturbed. The three remaining women had interruptions which enhanced the interview by providing additional observations. In one interview, the college president and vice president popped their heads into the conference room for introductions. During another interview, a teenager called her mother twice for driving directions to some destination. In the fourth interview, which took place in the woman leader’s home, her pets briefly entered the room, interrupting our conversation.

Detailed field notes, taken by the researcher, included a written account of visual, sensory, and auditory observations during the interviews. These notes not only provided valuable data for later analysis, they were also referenced when ensuing questions needed recall from an earlier statement. Upon completion of the interviews, the interviewees were encouraged to follow up with any additional comments, either via telephone, email,
or mail. During one interview for approximately 30 minutes, the recording was stopped when the computer was inadvertently unplugged by the interviewee’s dog. A 40-minute follow-up phone interview occurred two weeks later at which time the missing segments of the interview were rerecorded.

Significant auditory data collection (and analysis) also occurred for several weeks following the interviews during repeated auditory playing of the interview CD’s, burned for the researcher’s daily two-hour commute to work. This technology provided significant data about voice inflections, extended pauses, and repeated words and/or phrases.

**Data Analysis**

Because data analysis begins the moment the researcher has contact with the interviewees (Glesne, 1999), critical reading of their responses to the email questions became essential. Analysis continued throughout and following the interviews. Additional study of their voices, body language, and language selection were also considered. As mentioned previously, this data analysis continued upon completion of each interview during tape transcriptions, the repeated audio playing of the CD’s burned from the interview recordings, and finally, the paper transcripts.

As suggested by Glesne (1999) and Creswell (1998), data analysis includes a number of processes. It includes coding the data collected from the written responses, observations, transcribed notes from interviews, audio recordings, follow-up emails, and any additional information presented by the participants.
I began another level of this data analysis by listening twice to each of the four interviews during my two-hour daily commute. In addition, I listened a third time during the creation of real-time recordings of the CDs to audio tapes for the transcriptionists. This auditory procedure provided not only clear recall of the particular language and rhythm of each woman, but also voice inflections, hesitations, and speaking patterns. These auditory factors became foundational in my cognitive and intuitive understanding of the interviews.

Each day after two hours of reflective listening, I formed perceptions and patterns. Each evening, based on my auditory, cognitive, and intuitive understanding of the interviews, I began jotting down potential topics, based on my preformed perceptions and patterns. Practicing a stream of consciousness, I sat with paper and pen, reflecting on the various conversations. As each subsequent topic arose, I began drawing webbed connections, using bubbles, arrows, bullets, and numbers as potential subsets of each topic.

These two processes culminated in multiple pages of webbed patterns, and from these patterns, I created individual pages for each of the more dominant topics. This data analysis processes continued as various factors and themes were explored and applied to the central pages of topics. By the time the last audio recordings were completed, an extensive list of topics had been collected. Each topic was then written on a separate piece of paper and taped on the walls as a visual display.

Organizational files, three-ring notebooks, hard drive files, and email files were all carefully organized for efficient access and accurate record keeping. Upon receipt of
the electronic versions of the transcripts, one-sided, colored hard copies were created and organized in three-ring notebooks. Electronic copies were saved in computer files to facilitate more accurate cutting and pasting for Chapter 4.

An organized analysis of the hard copy transcripts began with a careful initial study where key terms were listed in the right-hand column of the transcript. During the second reading, common emerging themes were listed on the left side of the blank pages. Checkmarks, plus signs, and circles were organized as a system of symbols indicating various levels of definite themes, potential themes, and potential sub-themes. Commonalities were explored within these factors and themes as unique perspectives or interpretations became apparent.

Twelve tentative themes were identified by the third reading, and those themes were then color-coded. Among the 12 were themes such as "vision," "passion and excitement," "learning from experience," "tenacity," and "adaptation." These tentative themes were later dropped, rewritten as parallel themes, or created as sub-themes.

The fourth reading fleshed out potential sub-themes and excerpts which were also color-coded. Various versions of color-coded tables were created to organize and reorganize the themes, the definitions of these themes, and excerpts representing these themes. (Figure 7) In all, 18 versions of this page were created and recreated for the reliability coding, which will be discussed in the next section.

The coding continued with subcodes, as patterns and additional themes were noted. Initially 12 themes were coded, but multiple themes were later integrated into the final nine. These nine codes and subcodes were interconnected, and so they were
purposefully organized into a meaningful sequence within chapters 4 and 5. Part of the
data analysis included a follow-up email with each of the participants (a part of
triangulation, detailed in the next section of this chapter.) They were asked to assess
preliminary interpretations of the case studies and offer their views and construct on the
accuracy of these interpretations. This process was approached from a feminist
perspective which suggests asking women their opinions about the researcher’s analysis.
In this manner, marginalization was minimized, misrepresentation was diminished, and
women were given a voice to represent themselves.

The diverse methods of data collection had provided a sound analysis of themes,
and to further facilitate advanced data collection, I began listening to the audio recordings
a fourth time. This time, the tapes provided clarity of support to the themes that had been
identified, and additional dimensions of the themes surfaced which were added to the
written data in the transcripts. By the fifth playing of the audio recordings, it became
apparent that what I heard was repetitious, and no new concepts emerged. This same
repetition had also occurred with the transcripts, and so once the themes were identified, I
began the written analysis by shifting to the electronic versions of the transcripts.

The language and terminology had become so familiar that I was able to switch
back and forth between various computer screens using the “find” command. This
allowed for ease in cutting and pasting an excerpt, quickly verifying a detail in the
transcripts, and comparing two parallel themes from two different transcripts.
Triangulation

Triangulation is an essential component of data analysis as well as an integral dimension of qualitative research. It involves verification procedures used by researchers to provide corroborating evidence that their data analysis and results are credible (Creswell, 1998). For this multiple case study, three types of triangulation included multiple data sources, reliability coding, and voice verification.

Multiple Data Sources

One form of triangulation involves utilizing multiple data sources (Creswell, 1998). Utilizing the women leader recommendations from the 15 community college presidents provided the study with a stronger perceived leadership pool than had random leaders been selected. Another rich data source involved the twelve narratives written by the women from the leadership pool. These narratives were used to generate 35 leadership traits as well as forming the criteria for selection of the final four interviewees.

Interviews provided the greatest depth with multiple sources of rich data. Initially, participant observation generated visual, sensory, and auditory data during the interviews. Additional data sources were possible because the recorded data was published in both written transcripts and audio CDs which provided multiple rich auditory perceptions. Finally, emailed communication with the four women leaders provided the final data source.

Reliability Coding

The second type of verification used in the triangulation process was reliability coding. A color-coded table of the original 12 themes was created. The themes were
listed, defined, and excerpts were listed. On a second document, a similar table was created but which contained definitions and descriptions without any examples. The first examiner was briefly taught the codes, and this examination provided a 75% agreement. After discussion with the examiner, theme categories were rewritten and several themes were combined but the sequence remained the same. Additionally, excerpts providing examples of each theme were included during ensuing examinations.

After corrections were made to the coding pages, a second examiner was enlisted and was given more extensive training than the first examiner. After several clarifications and extensive discussion about the interrelationship of several of the themes, the examiner provided a 95% agreement. Following this discussion, the order of the themes was altered and the language reflected these changes. A third examiner was given the revised coding pages and more extensive explanations were provided. This examiner provided 100% agreement, providing the researcher confidence that the revised coding system was substantially reliable.

**Voice Verification**

The third and final type of triangulation used in this qualitative research process was voice verification. As the interviews were analyzed, standards for verification became necessary. One area especially lent itself to a brief discussion of this verification.

Much of the difficulties for women administrators stems from their lack of voice in administrative circles. The idiom of the square peg in a round hole clearly depicts women administrators who have entered the academic world of educational administration, but feel challenged because of their gender. Curry (2000) suggests some
women go through a transformation as they attempt to be leaders because they often must be transformed under the "...burden of legitimizing their positions..." (p. 3) as women. To reliably represent this transformation in my research, I used one of Creswell’s (1998) standards for verification which suggests that good qualitative research must represent the voice of its interviewees, "...so that their voice is not silenced, disengaged, or marginalized" (p. 196). For this verification, I emailed drafts of the individual case studies to their respective interviewees and asked them to determine if I was, in fact, capturing their voices and not marginalizing their perceptions. I also asked the women from three to five additional questions about the statements in the interviews as further clarification I was reflecting their voices.

Wendy was not available for voice verification, but the other three women leaders did respond to my email. Cathryn, Laura, and Debra verified that I had accurately depicted their comments and perspectives in the interviews. They also provided further clarification and additional perspective to the questions I asked them in the emails.

For example, in Cathryn’s email, four important comments were made. Initially, she took exception to the term profound that I used to describe her disability. In a subsequent sentence, however, she acknowledged that the term I had used probably was diagnostically correct. "It is hard for me to read that you perceive [my disability] as profound, but it is probably accurate in diagnostic terms. I just have never thought of it as profound." Her second comment dealt with an inaccuracy: I had incorrectly recorded the age when she was diagnosed with her disability, and I corrected this error. The third comment suggested some personal characteristics revealed in the case study would make
her identify easily identifiable, and so those were changed as well. The fourth and final comment was the most poignant and profound. She wrote, “Thanks for the experience. You held a mirror up to me and I have been renewed by the experience! Know that you will always have a room at the “[___’s] bed and breakfast!” Cathryn’s comment verified a perspective I had hoped for as a researcher: that in the process of our interviews, the women leaders would find a benefit.

Laura’s responses produced two important points. First, she confirmed that I had accurately reflected her voice. “I read the interview summary several times and I find nothing that was misconstrued or misrepresented me.” Her second point suggested that through the interview, she had gained an important insight about the importance of mentoring other women leaders, and she affirmed her interest in providing more mentoring experiences.

The third voice verification response came from Debra who had made several editing corrections in the case study, but verified that I had not only accurately reflected her voice, but that she had benefited from the interview as well:

You presented me in a very flattering view. Apparently you read more about me through body language and all those intangibles that occur when one is speaking about oneself. The actual interview left me feeling quite exhilarated. When you are being asked questions about yourself, it can either be uplifting or depressing. I didn’t realize ahead of time how much I really had to say about myself and my leadership style. I do believe you captured who I am.

Based on the three affirmative verifications I did receive, I felt confident that I had reflected their “voices” in the case studies. As a researcher, it was also affirming to read that they had profited from the interviews.
Assumptions

Four assumptions form the foundation of this study.

1. Without clarity concerning (a) the meaning of authenticity, leadership, and spirituality in administrative discourse; (b) the extent to which these constructs have been contextualized by historical and hegemonic influences, and (c) how these constructs may be reconceptualized, women leaders will continue to perceive leadership in more traditional genre, ignoring the personal, transcendent constructs of their authentic leadership.

2. Each woman leader would construct her personal and professional perceptions of leadership effectiveness. Each woman leader did, indeed, identify her distinct perceptions, with underpinnings from divergent lifestyles, mentors, personal and professional experiences, and educational backgrounds.

3. Characteristics of women’s leadership and women’s spirituality would reveal significant parallels. Subsequently, women leaders could potentially represent a spiritual leadership perspective without ascribing to a spiritual affiliation. This assumption was also validated.

4. Critical awareness of the constructs of spirituality and authentic leadership will contribute to more authentic theory and practice in higher education.

Limitations

While this collective case study is an appropriate strategy for studying what factors contribute to perceptions of leadership effectiveness among women in community colleges, limitations do exist. First, because my original career goal was to obtain a
leadership position in a community college, I wanted to understand how women in visible leadership roles perceive leadership and what factors contribute to this effectiveness. As a 30 year veteran in education, I bring to this study a wealth of knowledge that can enhance as well as detract from its purpose. It is imperative that I be diligent about objectivity to obtain the most accurate data.

Because women leaders identified themselves using unique terminology, misinterpretation between our definitions of these terms was a distinct possibility. For this reason, it was imperative that definitions were clear and clarification were sought during the entire interview and analysis process. This became evident especially after I changed the terminology of spirituality to self/personal development. For example, of the four interviewees,

- one preferred the term “religious,” saying the word “spiritual” sounded mystic
- one preferred the term “balance” but used it interchangeably with my definition for “spiritual”
- a third said she was “religious” but not “spiritual” because she had not been attending church
- the fourth was fairly secretive about the use of either term

Finally, because the sample was purposefully selected, generalizations about all women administrators were not advised. It was imperative to identify the case studies as individual entities to avoid any generalizations.
Summary

The purpose of this collective case study was to identify the factors that contributed to perceptions of leadership effectiveness among women leaders in community colleges. An initial email survey was used for participant selection by college presidents. Participants from this selected group were then asked to write descriptors about leadership. Based on responses from this group, participants were selected for audio taped interviews. The data analysis looked for themes within the written descriptors and interviews, and these were categorized in nine themes and sub-themes. Follow-up emails and extensive study of the tapes and transcripts provided thick descriptions of the four case studies and themes pertaining to the role spirituality plays in women’s leadership.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter will analyze the results obtained from written responses and personal interviews of the four women leaders included in the data set. Section One: “Written Responses,” analyzes the written responses and includes the most consistently identified traits of an effective leader, as well as linkages to the Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development model (Figure 1). Section Two: “Themes” will explore the nine dominant themes gleaned from both written responses and interviews, and provide brief examples of each. Section Three: “Case Studies” describes the personal interviews of the women leaders in four narrative case studies.

Section One: Written Responses

This section describes the data obtained from the written responses. It is divided into three parts: (1) the 18 most consistently identified leadership traits of an effective leader; (2) linkages to the Enstatic and Ecstatic dimensions of The Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development model (Figure 1); and (3) dominant themes emerging from the written statements.

Leadership Traits

Twenty-seven leadership traits were identified in the written narratives. Of those traits, 18 were identified at least four times. The 18 traits listed in Table 1, Tallied Responses of Leadership Traits from Written Narratives, are ordered by their frequency of occurrence. Additionally, Table 1 lists the leadership traits that were specifically
identified in the narratives of the four interviewed women leaders. These four women leaders were selected for interviews based on the frequency of their responses to core, identified leadership traits ascertained from the initial written responses.

Table 2

*Tallied Responses of Leadership Traits from Written Narratives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Leadership Trait</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Debra</th>
<th>Cathryn</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Wendy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Values, likes, respects others</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Supports, empowers others</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lives by value system-role model</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cares for others</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Collaborative; relation-builder; engages others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Genuine-authentic; real</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Courageous, risk-taker</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Honest, trustworthy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vulnerable; laughs at self; open to criticism</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Self-care</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Learns from experiences</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Energetic; enthusiastic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Good listener</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References to Enstatic and Ecstatic Systems

This section identifies the commonalities between the leadership traits identified in the narratives and the enstatic and ecstatic dimensions of authentic leadership development found within the Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women's Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development (Figure 1). Table 3 identifies leaderships traits reflected in the Enstatic (internal) dimension of Women's Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development and Table 3 identifies the leaderships traits reflected in the Ecstatic (external) dimension of Women's Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development.

Table 3

Leadership Traits from Written Narratives Reflected in the Enstatic System of Women's Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Leadership Traits Identified in the Enstatic System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Courageous, risk-taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>• Honest, trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>• Vulnerable; laughs at self; open to criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>• Self-care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Values others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 4

Leadership Traits from Written Narratives Reflected in the Ecstatic System of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Leadership Traits Identified in the Ecstatic System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Values, likes, respects others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Supports, empowers others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lives by value system-role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cares for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Collaborative; relation-builder; engages others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Good listener</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dominant Interview Themes

Nine dominant themes surfaced from the four interviewed women. These nine themes, listed in the table below, were selected if at least three of the women identified them.
Table 5

**Dominant Themes Addressed by Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Debra</th>
<th>Cathryn</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Wendy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heightened Awareness of Gender Issues</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to a Core Set of Values</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflection &amp; Learning from Experiences</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-care and Balance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage and Tenacity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of Others</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the nine dominant interview themes, six were also identified as important leadership traits from the written narratives. Table 6 records these responses.
Table 6

*Interview Themes Replicated in Written Narratives*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Themes</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Leadership traits from Written Narratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heightened Awareness of Gender Issues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to a Core Set of Values</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lives by value system; role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflection &amp; Learning from Experiences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learns from experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-care and Balance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Self-care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Genuine; authentic; real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage and Tenacity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Courageous; risk-taker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Values, likes, or respects others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>supports/empowers others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Cares for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Collaborative; relation-builder; engages others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Two: Themes

As previously mentioned, nine dominant themes surfaced from the personal interviews. Each theme represents respondents’ unique and context specific understanding of the concepts. Representative examples are provided. Definitions for these nine themes became specific to the interviewees, and so definitions and examples of each theme were based on the interviews briefly detailed as follows:
Heightened Awareness of Gendered Issues

The first theme “heightened awareness of gender issues” could be seen in the way the women discussed gender and its role in leadership dynamics. Their language suggested in-depth understanding of historical, gender-related issues. Respondent language focused on issues of gender, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and misogyny towards women in leadership positions.

The first excerpt was from Laura’s interview. It discussed her perspective on the current status of what she identified as the “Good Old Boy Network.”

I think [the Good Old Boy Network] is more of a certain age. The younger men I see here [on her campus] have wives who have good jobs and they would never want to see their wives undergo [harassment, discrimination, assault] by anyone. So they are probably more cognizant of how women in the workforce can feel. Among older men, a lot of the time their wives do not work outside of the home. I think there is an inherent belief [in the Good Old Boy Network] that women can’t do what men can do. I think when [these] men feel threatened and it is a woman who threatens them, they may resort back to some of that behavior just because it is easier.

A second excerpt further suggested the need for women to understand the Good Old Boy (GOB) Network and how dangerous it can be for women leaders. This respondent had made significant and long-term contributions to the community college where she worked. When the president’s position opened up, she applied and it was then that she discovered the hidden and often discriminatory dynamics associated with male dominated leadership system and how dangerous it could be.

The Boys [GOB] there worked very, very hard – they did it well. They just worked hard to destroy me. Rumors began surfacing. They were making accusations that I was having an affair with the president who had left. Just really ugly stuff. These people, who were so against the idea of having me or a woman, would have made it up anyway. That’s probably the worst-- the accusations. Just the really ugly stuff.
The final example of gendered awareness is an excerpt from one of the narratives, and suggests a woman leader who sees strength in her male president, yet is fully aware of how his behavior served to perpetuate stereotypes against women.

In [president ____’s] case, he has an insatiable need to know all about people, yet the information he possesses is accompanied with the power to use it. At times I have observed that this is unfair to some individuals, and serves to perpetuate stereotypes such as roles women should play, or how certain professionals should act.

Commitment to a Core Set of Values

The second theme “commitment to a core set of values” was identified in the way women talked about their collective belief systems. These core values emerged from long held beliefs nested within families of origin, although they also come from life experiences and spiritual and/or religious commitments. When respondents spoke of their values, they allude to them as the essence of their lives and their relationships. They form a kind of moral compass.

While this theme identifies collective values and beliefs, women also recognized that these collective values are closely associated with individual values and beliefs. These individual values and beliefs were identified as subsets that inform particular traits within the woman’s collective value system. Because this theme involved a reflective component (such as that seen in theme three), it sometimes mirrored a process-oriented theme.

The first excerpt, from Wendy, spoke to how her collective set of values drives her leadership. “Without [following the beliefs] you hold near and dear to you, you’ll
never be able to be an effective leader. The only way I can be an effective leader is to follow that certain set of standards I’ve internalized.”

The second excerpt, from Debra, a woman leader with a strong religious orientation, sees her collective values driven by her faith in God.

I think I have strong values. I’m a very definite believer. I participate in my faith in church and try to act out the things that I believe. I think I’m also very ethical and make decisions on what’s really the right way to do [things] and not what’s a shady way. That doesn’t mean that I’m afraid to try something new, but I do have very strong [ideas] about what I think are right and wrong. I’m also not afraid to be a leader who puts her hands in the dirt to get the work done.

Self-reflection and Learning from Experiences (Internal)

The third theme “Self-reflection and Learning from Experiences (Internal)” are reflected in the interviews as a kind of internal cognitive and affective process. Respondents used language to describe how they sought a realistic understanding of their unique strengths and weaknesses, irrespective of how others defined them. They described seeking time to assess and reflect upon what they had learned from past experiences, how they responded in difficult or stressful situations, and what important decisions they determined best for themselves, their families, and their work. Finally, they described how this reflective time had improved their awareness and knowledge about themselves and their experiences.

The first excerpt details poignantly the theme of self-reflection and learning from experiences. Debra describes the difficult process of reflection and the valuable learning experience it became.

My former husband was an alcoholic. We went through family treatment, aftercare counseling. My husband wouldn’t do counseling so I [left him]. That was not an easy thing to do after 27 years of marriage. Dealing with all that, I had
to come to terms with issues I could and couldn’t control. But once I got beyond that... I found a freedom to be who I was. I learned you have to get weak before you can get strong.

This second excerpt by Cathryn, reveals about how she hopes to help students be more self-reflective by opening up opportunities for a “teachable moment.”

I want to treat every student how I’d want my daughter to be treated. How do you deal with a person who has probably been beaten up, beaten down, who actually has no regard for authority? Here’s a teachable moment. I honestly believe there are teachable moments in people’s lives and sometimes they come at the most odd times. When you’re expecting somebody to give you holy hell and demean you and put you down and instead they treat you kindly but are still firm with you. How does that change a person? They can’t hate you. They can’t think the institution doesn’t care about them. So they have to think about something else. [I hope they think that] maybe they are responsible for their behavior. I always hope that maybe they got more out of it than they were caught drinking in the dorms and— it’s a stupid rule— and we’re kicking [them] out.

Changing (External)

The fourth theme of “Self-reflection and Learning from Experiences” was frequently associated with the idea of change. Women respondents recognized that particular coping strategies and or practices did not always achieve desired results. They described a progression from awakening consciousness of the need for change to some action-based implementation of these changes. They also described lessons they learned, both personally and professionally, when they reflected upon how difficult situations became a catalyst for change. These lessons empowered them and led to greater wisdom and strength.

The first excerpt from Wendy identifies how her personal life changed the way she considers the needs of students and how this perspective might be different had she
been a male leader. She explained that because she had been a nontraditional student and working mother, this transformed her understanding of leadership.

I probably wouldn't have the empathy toward working mothers... probably wouldn't worry about schedules as much as I do. Making sure people have the ability to get home before dark. If it's winter time I worry about snow issues... If the weather is getting bad, do we call off classes? I don't think I'd worry about our students, especially our nontrads who are going to school while trying to raise their children.

Self-care and Balance

The fifth theme of “Self-care and Balance” suggested the value respondents placed on self-care and balance. Discussions centered on how self-care and balance was an on-going process of self-assessment as well as integration of self-care strategies. Self-care and balance became a catalyst for living more centered lives: emotionally, physically, spiritually, familially, socially, and professionally.

Both examples of self-care and balance are from Wendy. She was able to identify key ingredients to self care. “I have a little dog that's just there unconditionally. I can pet her and stroke her, but if I don't feel like talking, I don't have to.” Wendy’s dog provided her with the unconditional nurturance Wendy needed. The second example, illustrates another way she has learned to find balance.

My mind doesn’t shut down when I’m not balanced. I can’t sleep or concentrate on a movie. So I listen to music-classic rock, 60’s and 70’s and some not-so-twangy country. Music is a soother and a relaxer. It really helps my mind race less.
Authenticity

The sixth theme of “authenticity” was reflected in the language of symmetry between what women said and what they did. They often described authenticity as a conscious choice to be open and genuine regardless of the consequences.

In the first example, Wendy identifies how her integrity was critical to her authenticity.

[I’m a] very honest person with a lot of integrity. I have the same value system at home or work, being a mother, neighbor or friend. [If I couldn’t be myself at work] I’d be performing every day. I don’t think I would be approachable; [I’d be] two different people. I think the authenticity or the lack thereof would show up. [Others would say,] “She’s just feeding me a canned line.” I’m very genuine.

In the next example, Cathryn acknowledges how authenticity becomes a transparent lens to see her real self.

I don’t think those [values to be authentic] change that much. If you’re [so] guarded that you are guarding [yourself, there’s a problem]. I’m lucky that in my job, I haven’t been punished for allowing myself to be flawed. I’m not sure you ever can get beyond that. People will see through you.

Spirituality

The seventh theme of “spirituality” was reflected in how respondents described their search for meaning, purpose, and connection with self, others, and the universe. Several respondents described these traits in terms of religion and both terms were used somewhat interchangeably.

Three of the women acknowledged a connection with a religious organization. Several women preferred to refer to themselves as religious rather than spiritual—feeling it had a mystical quality to it that did not fully fit their perspective on development.
Courage and Tenacity

The eighth theme of "courage and tenacity" encompassed two distinct concepts. First, respondents described a never quit or never give up attitude regardless of the consequences. Their language also illustrated a persistence or tenacity to move through difficult experiences.

Wendy tells how women demonstrate tenacity and courage as risk-takers.

I think women are greater risk-takers than men. They don't mind if something doesn't work. They just regroup and try something different. If men fail at something, it's a real bad thing. If women fail, they just try it again a different way. Women are not afraid.

In excerpt two, Cathryn identifies how important tenacity is to being a strong leader.

Tenacity is absolutely essential [to leadership]. Tenacity, both on an inner level and in terms of working when you’re tired, working when you’re depressed, working when you don’t think it’s going to work; pushing for it when nobody else believes in it. Or pushing when it’s not popular or maybe the cause you’re fighting for isn’t pretty or politically correct.

Care of Others

The ninth and final theme, "care of others" was illustrated in a number of ways. Respondents discussed the importance of heightening their awareness of and appreciation for the inherent worth and dignity of others. Their responses also revealed a growing sensitivity to nurturance, helping, and treating all people with respect.

This fascinating excerpt revealed how deeply Cathryn cared about others and took the time to teach her beliefs to a colleague.

A teacher was angry and felt betrayed because a student had cheated on his test, and Cathryn responded to that. "The student didn’t do [the cheating] to you. He broke the rule, but he wasn’t doing it to you. You need to expect them to stretch
the rules, but it’s not personal.” In this way, Cathryn has learned to separate the person from their behavior.

In this second excerpt, Cathryn also talks about how she cares for others and her hope that each encounter will help the other see positive sides to apparent difficulties.

Cathryn is an optimist, believing she can make a difference in someone’s life. She said she really has faith in people, especially if they have all the information they need to make the right choices. “I’ve been burned numerous times. But those times when you don’t get burned and something really wonderful happen in terms of a person figuring ‘it’ out...I’ll take one in five.”

In this third and final excerpt from the narrative, “Care of Others,” is reflected. Debra describes how a former president was an effective leader, but it was his wife who really cared for others.

Although he was an outgoing friendly individual who met persons easily, I really learned how to “work the crowd” from his wife. At campus events, whether they were student receptions, alumni meetings, or fund raising activities his wife would literally touch every person at the event. She would introduce people to each other and share those little tidbits of information about one that helps to build relationships.

As a new [positional title] she took me by the hand and introduced me to everyone I did not know including some personal information about me. To this day, I am known as the “chief mingler” when we have events on our campus. I make the rounds connecting with each person there and seek out those who seem reticent or uncomfortable. I honed this skill watching Mrs. ____.

Section Three: Case Studies

In this third section, four narrative case studies will describe the four women respondents. Iowa’s 15 community colleges do extensive collaborating, and so many respondents are acquainted with one another. For this reason, the pseudonyms, Debra,
Cathryn, Laura, and Wendy, are used to insure privacy. Some minor alterations in story details have also been made to protect the identities of these respondents.

Within these four narrative case studies, the nine major themes will be revealed. Additionally, distinctive traits pertaining to particular woman leaders will also be examined.

Case Study One: Debra

Debra was a striking woman. Her immaculately groomed hair, makeup, and nails were impeccably styled and her black suit reflected a professional air. Her spacious office was also neat and well-organized, tastefully decorated with artwork and images of the community college she served. I noted this was probably reflective of her personality, and my assumption was proven correct as the interview ensued.

During the interview, Debra was clear, pointed, attentive, yet reflective. Her answers were rich with detail and imagery. While her demeanor was strong and confident, she had a distinct quality of compassion and sensitivity. She explained that this was something she worked hard to achieve.

I need to be surrounded with people who are not all like me. ESTJ’s {a Myers-Briggs personality type} don’t always think about [the feelings of others]. We’re moving forward and doing things and we’re very analytical. We need those feelers to help us understand how we’re impacting others and think about that. I’ve always talked with staff about [the fact that] we can’t all be alike if we’re on the team because it doesn’t work very well. I am well aware of it and I know when I’m under pressure and stress, I become much more analytic—get it done—than I am at other times. So I have to keep those persons talking to me.

Her recent pending retirement had been delayed when she was asked to step into a high level interim position. While she seemed clearly capable to undertake this new
challenge, she described it as a huge undertaking. Nevertheless, this woman leader had an energy level that enabled her to handle this new challenge.

**Electric energy.** One of Debra’s distinctive traits was an electric energy. It was palpable when I first met her several years ago at an Iowa higher education conference. A mutual friend had suggested Debra and I connect, and the friend had brought me to meet Debra in their hotel suite as she was preparing for a meeting.

Upon meeting her, I instantly felt caught up by Debra’s electric, charismatic energy. She was warmly collegial as she conveyed a sense of accomplishment, a sense of compassion, and an intense sense of pride in being a woman. We connected instantly and she briefly shared with me her leadership journey, fraught with pain and triumph. I recall wanting to sit by her feet, soaking in her wisdom, as the followers of Socrates had done long ago. But then she turned her attention to me and my interests, and listened with equally intense enthusiasm.

Nearly two years later, the intense memories of that brief encounter remained as we reconnected, this time for a dissertation interview. That same electric, charismatic energy I had witnessed two years prior resonated from her as she greeted me again.

At 70 years of age, Debra continues to have that same extraordinary electric energy. She was involved with a vast number of organizations and activities. She had been team-teaching master’s level leadership classes at a nearby university, working on a number of local and state boards, donating time to various women’s organizations and in a few weeks, she was going to be the keynote at a state student conference, discussing leadership.
This energy level was strongest when she felt healthy. “[When I have balance in my life]. I have a lot of energy. I’m feeling good and things aren’t pressing down on me. I have a variety of things to do. I don’t like sitting home doing nothing.”

This was not surprising as she told her story. She had been raised by parents with an eighth grade education. Her father, an automobile mechanic, was not interested in education, but her mother was. Debra’s mother did ironing for the wife of a lawyer who would discuss various books with her.

That made mother so excited and so validated. She lived to be 94…but when she got to the care facility…it was like she blossomed. All of a sudden she led newspaper discussion groups. She read all those little tiny things in the newspaper that you and I would probably look over. She would lead the discussion group. Here’s a woman to me who was inspirational.

Her mother’s passion and enthusiasm for education directly impacted Debra. After high school, Debra went to college at a time when women could only be nurses, secretaries, or teachers. She studied education for two years and began teaching at the age of 20. She continued her education at nights and in the summers, and when she began work on her doctorate in her 40s, her dad questioned why. She replied, “Because it’s what I want to do. It’s just that drive that’s innate in me.”

Debra would eventually spend 45 years in education, 24 of those years as a higher education administrator, upon completion of the doctorate her father would never understand.

The skin of a rhinoceros. In a leadership trait distinctive to Debra, she was a tough yet highly evolved woman who had developed sophisticated systems to learn from life’s lessons. She has been through what she termed “a firing,” a divorce, and dramatic
changes in the institutions she has served. She had also raised her children with her 
strong religious foundation, her organized personality, and her keen personal awareness.

These traits had also served to give her grace and poise in the face of adversity. 
She quoted Eleanor Roosevelt who said, “Anyone who goes into politics needs to have 
the skin of a rhinoceros.” She relayed this common thread, woven throughout her 
challenging encounters. She believed Roosevelt’s rhino metaphor was essential.

You have to learn that you can’t let everything everybody says upset you. If you 
are in a leadership position, people talk about you...bad things...good 
things...positive and negative. You have to decide when you’re going to respond 
and when you’re not going to respond.

In our interview, she revealed both the high, intense energy and the strong, 
charismatic leadership as she discussed one of her greatest leadership challenges.

[The challenge] is keeping everything straight and keeping every ball balanced, 
so that you’re responding to this and you’re responding to that and you’re trying 
to think ahead and plan something new and different or provide the opportunities 
to move the institution along...while keeping all the day-to- day stuff moving at 
the same time. You never have the luxury of doing just one of those things. And 
then it’s how you communicate all that with others, either to the persons you 
supervise or the team you’re working with...so that they keep their balls all 
moving at the same time. Because as a leader, you don’t accomplish anything if 
you don’t have some followers. You don’t do anything by yourself. It’s kind of 
pushing people along or bringing them along.

These leadership traits indicated a strong managerial style and yet she indicated a 
distinct collaborative component. She clearly saw the need to step forward as a leader, 
and she was not “afraid to get her hands dirty.” 

Tenacity and courage. What makes a woman leader tenacious and courageous? 
For Debra, one answer might be healing from adversity. I could imagine Debra saying
the age-old adage, what doesn’t kill you will make you stronger! The following two stories exemplify this major theme of courage and tenacity.

My former husband was an alcoholic. Not when I married him, but became [one]. I went through family treatments, made the boys go through family treatments. We did counseling, aftercare counseling for a year. I made the kids get counseling, [but] my husband wouldn’t have anything to do with counseling. So I just said, “I’m leaving and this is it.”

He went back to treatment a couple different times, but it didn’t really take and he’s since deceased. He died of liver problems from alcoholism. Dealing with all that, you had to come to terms with some things. I probably liked to control, so you have to come to terms with that as well. What you can and what you cannot control. The Serenity Prayer – you learn to practice it as best you can. It doesn’t mean you always do it.

Once I got beyond that, it was like a freedom to try something new. A freedom to be who I was. I had been married for 27 years, so you know this was not an easy thing to do. Then I could develop myself in ways that he did not want me to develop.

Together we decided I needed this degree if I wanted tenure, but he was very resentful about it after we got into it. But yet it was kind of freeing for me once we’d gotten through all that. Those are things that helped me develop personally and made me a stronger person. You have to get weak before you can get strong.

Debra’s last statement was indicative of how her tenacity had led to her courage.

This experience, in part, probably prepared her to have courage for the Debra’s story of courage and tenacity.

I might still be at [that college]. I have nothing concrete to base that on. I was the oldest, I was a female and I was fired. We had hired a new president. As part of the interview process, I asked the new president how he was going to handle the administrative team and were we going to be kept or was he going to want a new administrative team—I know what happens. Well, he said we’d just all work together for awhile and see how it worked. So I assumed that would be what would happen.

In the meantime, one morning in May, the interim president called me in and said, “We’re releasing you from your contract. You may either take this severance package that we’re offering you or you may take the regular 30 day wages and go home and think about this. Come back tomorrow and let me know.”
They said, “We’re going to have you retire.” I was 62 at the time. I went to my computer and emailed the new president and said, “Did you know this ahead of time”? I never got an answer and then my email was shut off.

I went to an attorney and I got a pretty good severance package and she said, “The college has done some of this before. They’re learning because they’re giving you a pretty good package. But you’re ‘an employee at will’, which means they can let you go in 30 days.” I knew that and understood it.

So, a day later I came back. I called my secretary and had her call a meeting of all the people that reported to me because I was going to tell them myself. Then I packed up my stuff and left that day. They wanted to have a retirement party for me and I said, “No thank you. I am not retiring.” The [local paper] came out and interviewed me because they had heard about it. They wanted to know if I was retiring and I said, “No, I’m not retiring. I’m not ready to retire.” I don’t remember exactly what I said, but it got in the paper that way. My staff had a party at someone’s house later.

I was angry. I was furious. I didn’t work. For the first time I’d had my summer free in my whole life. I cleaned my house from top to bottom. It was the shiniest it had ever been.

You have to go through a grieving process and you have to go through those steps if you’re going to get healthy. [Another woman administrator] had the same thing happen to her on the very same day. I did get through the grieving process. I got over the anger. You just kind of work it out. Then about late August I decided I wanted to look for a job.

Debra was soon hired at her current community college where she would again become a part of a leadership team. She had gained exponentially more tenacity and courage, and these traits enabled her to become the successful woman leader she was when she chose her true “retirement.”

Spirituality. In one of the nine thematic categories, Debra discussed openly her faith in God. While the other women leaders seemed guarded about talking about their spiritual beliefs, Debra talked freely and consistently about the role her faith had played in her values, in her activities, and in her life.

I think I have strong values. I’m a very definite believer [in God.] I participate in my faith in church and try to act out the things that I believe in that way. That comes from a religious background.
I think I'm also very ethical and make decisions on what’s really the right way to do it and not what’s a shady way or a maybe way. That doesn’t mean that I’m afraid to try something new, but I do have very strong things that I think are right and wrong. I try to teach that to my sons as well.

We discussed the use of the terms religious and spiritual, and while she wasn’t closed-minded, she was comfortable with the language she had used for years.

“I probably would use [the terms] religious or Christian. I don’t know the words to describe ‘spiritual’ and I’m not saying I’m not, but I think that’s a little bit more mystic.”

I quizzed Debra about the importance of having a religious [to use her term] dimension to leadership, she was adamant about its importance.

Yes, absolutely [it is important!] You can tell who has it and who maybe doesn’t have it...behavior, language, respect, those ethical kinds of things. People who disregard others are usually not very strong in their faith. People whose every third word is ‘f this and that’ are not strong in their faith. They don’t respect themselves, they don’t respect others.

When I was at a private institution, religious aspects were very much a part of that. We didn’t have chapel, but we had events or things that dealt with religion...at graduation you had prayers. We had campus ministers. I was very comfortable in that sort of environment.

We continued discussing the impact of her faith on her leadership, and in that short conversation, it became apparent that while she was clearly a faith-based person, she didn’t judge others who were not, and she clarified this point carefully.

For me personally? Yes, yes! It has made me a better leader. I just didn’t want the opposite to be said, that if you’re not faith-based you’re not a good leader. I would not want to go on record as saying that. But for me personally, absolutely!

Debra’s language indicated a very spiritual/religious person whose faith had always been an integral part of her life and her leadership at the community college.

**Proactiveness.** One of Debra’s distinctive leadership traits revealed her proactiveness. Debra was intensely proactive in her work as well as in her life. Her work
theme reflected a “stay alert and have a plan” theme. Throughout the interview, her voice checked off answers in a staccato manner, as if she had already seen the questions. Her keen sharpness and knowledge reflected a leader who often dealt with issues long before others knew there was a problem.

Self-care and balance. In one of the dominant themes of personal self-care and balance, Debra also demonstrated this proactive trait. In addition to all the activities she had also mentioned, she remained energetic because she walked five times a week to stay healthy and release stress. Her life outside the community college also demonstrates her balanced perspective. She played in the bell choir at her local church, taught college classes on leadership, attended the symphony, and volunteered extensively to local agencies and women’s educational organizations.

She also enjoyed the solitude of reading.

I like to read mysteries for fun. I may read two books a week. You can read mysteries without reading every word. Yet they have enough plot to them that they hold your interest. It’s very different than reading the kind of stuff that you do at work. That is an escape that I like to do.

She found tremendous balance from playing Bridge, visiting her grandchildren, and participating in various activities at her church. This is also where she sought relief from high stress.

I think there’s some religious ways of coping - meditation, church, prayer. I’m a regular [church] attender. I participate. I go to bell practice on Wednesday night. At bell practice you cannot think and count and play at the same time. So you don’t think. So when I’m done, I may be more refreshed than I was. I got rid of all that stuff that I walked in there with. I have done that a lot.

Care of others. Church was not only a place where she found solace; she was also giving to others, displaying one of the dominant themes. And giving back was a high
value for Debra. She shared with me that so many people had helped her during her rise to leadership that this was now her time to give back. She donated extensive time to one organization that supported women moving towards leadership positions. She said women needed safe places to try out their skills, and this organization had helped many women in this manner.

Educational core. In one of Debra’s distinctive leadership traits, these women’s organizations provided one type of education for Debra to both receive and in time, to give back. Women needed safe places to learn leadership, and she had learned the lessons well.

Education was important to Debra not only personally but also professionally. She earned her doctorate nearly 25 years ago when few women were in higher education leadership. Interestingly, this degree was sought, partially at the urging of her supervisor, the president. This man was clearly a significant mentor to Debra because he encouraged her to get her doctorate and then promoted her to administrative positions when few women had held these positions.

Heightened awareness of gender issues. Gendered issues were clearly on Debra’s radar, and she incorporated them into her reality. She noted that while she had experienced incidents of sexual innuendos, she would not allow those to impact her strong work drive. “[Being a woman leader] means you have to work harder and better than anybody else...at least in the early stages.”

Debra dealt with these challenges by integrating a heightened awareness of gender issues into her leadership style.
I knew at the time there was discrimination. [While] I have not been a victim of overt harassment or discrimination based on gender, that I’m aware of, sometimes it’s the subtle things—the guys off talking about this, and you’re the only woman on the group so you’re not privy to playing the golf or doing these sorts of things that are kind of part of that “old boy” network. You laugh at it and know it’s out there.

As mentioned previously, one especially painful incident occurred, even though she could not “prove it”: she felt certain she was fired from a high level position in higher education because she was a woman. Even as we spoke, it was apparent in her face that the pain of this experience had never completely left her. When I asked her about it, she acknowledged it:

Well, sure! I had just had a good review. I didn’t have [evaluations] that said I needed to be working on this or that. It was just that “You’ve been here too long and we want to do some new things and numbers aren’t where we want them.” I think that was it.

The college regularly worked with one business, despite the fact that Debra knew to be cautious with the owner.

The local dealer that we worked with would give us really good rates, so we went with him. But he was a good old boy and he was always making comments. Not harassing comments, but just comments that you knew weren’t maybe what he should have been saying… You learn to deal with things and move on. I was not going to change him.

Debra was quick to share her pain, but she was just as quick to let it go and move on to another subject. She revealed that she had also had equally positive experiences with men in her life. Her first Chief Financial Officer (CFO) had been a strong mentor, teaching her tremendous insights into accounting skills. Despite his helpfulness, she did mention the fact that he was also strongly connected to the good old boy’s network.
As I reflected back on Debra’s demeanor during this phase of the interview, I sensed a deep, inner sadness, as if the fight to stay in leadership had worn her down. As the eldest woman leader I had interviewed, she seemed to have earned battle scars, and I admired the courage it took for her to dredge up some of her stories again.

**Case Study Two: Cathryn**

Cathryn was a passionate, complex woman who loved a challenge. She and her husband were weekend warriors, who in warmer weather, commuted hundreds of miles each weekend to participate in this sport. While participating, Cathryn reconnected with her spirit. She left her Type A personality behind as she rejoined this athletic community, where her life was dictated by the whim of the weather rather than some governmental or bureaucratic mandate.

Solitude was essential for all the women leaders, and Cathryn’s perspective was poignant. In her early years, she assumed she loved ironing the family’s clothes, but one day she made the realization that it was the act of being alone that she sought. In recent years, Cathryn made solitude an art form. In addition to life as a weekend warrior, she was an avid reader. Her artistic nature was revealed in her scrap booking and making greeting cards. And when the day had been extremely difficult, this passionate woman put on soulful, dismal music, and engaged in dramatic wailing!

She also had an intense, intimate relationship with her husband of 27 years. They filled their lives with interior decorating, athletic excursions around the world, and nurturing their two adorable dogs. Four years ago, they sold their older family home and all its belongings to create a new home that reflected their present life together. They
purchased a modern new home, exquisitely decorated with deep rich colors and an extensive art collection with athletic and travel themes. In this opulent yet comfortable home, Cathryn often released the tensions of the day, unloading to her husband over a glass of good wine from their extensive wine collection.

This precious time was used for reflection because Cathryn saw it as essential to making good decisions. She “over plans to a fault,” and so this time served to validate her many managerial decisions as she played out scenarios in her mind. It was in this comfortable setting that we interviewed, and being in her “safe zone” as she called it, I discovered a courageous, tenacious, reflective, and authentic woman leader.

**Courage and tenacity.** Cathryn was a blazing fireball who had navigated challenges throughout her 60 years. Her courage and tenacity were both breath-taking and inspiring. I repeatedly questioned her about how she got her determination and will through challenging times. She did not appear to have consciously or unconsciously developed these skills but rather they seemed an inherent part of her makeup. This puzzled me so I kept probing.

After repeated attempts to clarify this, in a quiet lull in the conversation, the revelation became apparent. Cathryn was diagnosed with a profound disability at the age of two or three. It was then that her doctor gave Cathryn’s parents the diagnosis that her disability was permanent. When they questioned the doctor about what their options were, he said, “I would feed her, spank her, and put her to bed.” Her mother became quite upset, questioning the doctor’s unkind comment. His response would be the foundation upon which she and her parents would build her life.
“You have a choice. You can have a poor disabled girl all your life. She’ll live with you. She’ll be dependent upon you all your life. Her [disability] is bad enough that people with [this disability are often sent away.]

Or you can decide that she will exist in [your] world and you will be hard on her and you will drive her.” My dad took that to heart.

As a young child, Cathryn struggled but learned basic household tasks such as sweeping floors and washing dishes. She learned to balance the books for the family business. When she was told she could not do something, she found a way to do it: “I’ve had to do most things the hard way.” This appeared to represent the cornerstone of her courage and tenacity.

Because no educational accommodations existed during her college years, she paid other students to assist her in her schoolwork. When she chose a major in education, she was told she would never get a teaching job because she would not be able to control the students. She replied, “Watch me!”

She became a teacher and a debate coach. When her debate students had contests, she had to find transportation. Nothing slowed her down. She returned to college again. This time she completed a master’s degree and began teaching at the community college that she would call home for over half of her life. After years of courageous tenacity and creative adaptations, it appeared her disability had proven to be a minor inconvenience rather than a barrier defining her limitations.

Cathryn spoke metaphorically about her tenacious leadership.

I’m a turtle. I have a really tough shell and that has served me well because I take very little personally. Being the oldest of six kids, I learned that at an early age. The people who I think get really messed up in early years of leadership are the people who can’t take the knocks. I’m a turtle because I [move forward] out of tenacity. I just keep moving forward.
The turtle also can't go anywhere without sticking its neck out. He can't stay in the shell protected and get anywhere.

Her turtle metaphor described not only the courageous and tenacious woman I met at the interview, but also the leader she chose to describe in her written narrative.

The effective leader she spoke of

...sees what can be, what should be, and what will be...long before others appear to do so. She is not over-cautious about expressing her vision to others and helps others see how the vision would move the institution forward, empower individuals, and be “the right thing to do.” Sometimes she has been seen as a maverick or even labeled as “a devil’s advocate” for her positions on issues. She is not afraid to be wrong, so she offers ideas long before she envision them to be probable.

Cathryn had a rich understanding of what it took for an effective leader to display courage and tenacity. Cathryn had seen these leadership traits in this woman even before she had positional power. “She embodied these skills when she was an entry level employee. She is a leader—always has been and will continue to be so long after she retires her position.”

**Spirituality.** This tough woman spent nearly the entire interview convincing me of her abrasive edge, and yet in quiet moments, she revealed a deeply spiritual being. I had asked in multiple ways about her inner development, and had come to the part of the interview where I defined this type of development as spiritual. She concurred that it was spiritual, and I asked my next question: How does your spirituality contribute to your concept of leadership?

It was then that her faith in God flowed out of her like a river. “It tracks my values and calms me. Remember back you asked me how I deal with the stress? Part of
that is the spirituality. Giving up part of that control to a being greater than myself, where I have peace. That’s where I find inner peace – in spirituality.”

Her hesitancy to share her connection with God was gone.

I am a firm believer in instant prayer. Instant prayer is during the day you see somebody who is really overcoming something. Let’s say a disabled student who is really making a concerted effort to do something. I think in my mind, ‘God give that person the strength that they need, God give that person the passion and courage that they need to continue.’ I see somebody, like today, being really cruel to each other. In that instant moment of time I’m thinking, ‘God, let them see how they’re hurting each other and let them come back together.’ At some point in my day when I’m alone and getting my act together, then I say a prayer. There are thoughts during the day, but then they become a prayer.

That’s something that was taught to me by a janitor at the college where I went. The janitor was a retired minister. He used to go around campus singing. We all thought he was odd. An ambulance would go by and he would say, “Instant prayer.” One time we were sitting next to each other in the cafeteria and I said, “What is this instant prayer”? He said, “You just keep all those good thoughts. You don’t want to bother about them all day, every minute. You just send them all up at once, instant prayer.” It’s a way of reminding you that you’ve been thinking about those spiritual things all day. It’s very renewing and very refreshing to know that all those connections that happen all day long have kept you who you are.

Cathryn’s connection to God was clear-cut: it grounded her, it gave her peace, and it provided a silent path for her to reach out and to care for others. This was the taproot to this mighty oak!

As an educational leader; however, Cathryn stood firmly entrenched in the “separation of church and state” barrier. I reflected later how tragic it was for our institutions to keep such a rich dimension of this leader hidden from sight for fear of a lawsuit or making someone uncomfortable.
Heightened awareness of gender issues. In one of the major themes, Cathryn described her vast knowledge base of gendered issues. Some of her experiences were painful, some were frustrating, but all of her experiences taught her valuable lessons.

Women in Cathryn's generation often experienced blatant sexual harassment and discrimination, and she was no exception. After one especially difficult and repeated stalking, she had reported the perpetrator to the Dean. She recalled she was very frightened from this experience, and so she decided her best approach in the future would be to confront these issues in an aggressive manner. She said she became "more of a victimizer than a victim."

Another troubling experience had occurred one night after work when Cathryn and a group of staff had gone out to socialize with some of their spouses. The husband of one of her employees had become drunk and made sexual advances on her. While she had dealt with the situation, it left her heart sick, not only for her staff, but also for the man's wife. From this experience, she learned to proactively curtail her socializing earlier in the evening, diminishing the potential for inappropriate behaviors.

Through my counseling experiences, I have seen many women like Cathryn develop defensive and aggressive coping mechanisms to deal with these types of negative behavior. These coping mechanisms can become a type of safety net, and this appeared to have been what happened to Cathryn. This safety net appeared to have served her well and sexual behaviors towards her diminished.

Over the years, Cathryn moved up the administrative rank, and finally became the administrator who dealt with these types of grievance. Cathryn finally had the ability
to determine consequences, and she made a choice. She determined in many cases the best approach was to go directly to the offending person and speak directly to him/her. People were less defensive when she talked directly to them, she explained, and many times the experience became a teachable moment for everyone.

While Cathryn could bestow upon her staff this opportunity to learn from their experiences, she was not always afforded the same opportunity.

In my early years, men were assumed to be leaders unless they proved to be otherwise. Women had to start with the assumption that they had to prove that they had the ability to lead. It had to be a deliberate decision...it was a deliberate decision. [I’d say to myself], I think I can do this and I know I’m going to do it.

There also wasn’t much of a honeymoon time [for women leaders.]

For a woman like Cathryn, this fit her courageous and tenacious approach to life. It appeared as one more challenge she had to overcome. “It used to mean being a maverick; out there on the edge.” Cathryn capitalized on this behavior and conveyed a strong sense of pride in her ability to be a maverick.

As she developed this notoriety, it spilled into other arenas and she began stretching—but not breaking—other rules and mores. Her most recent male president obviously appreciated her colorful exploits. He would laugh with her and say, “Okay, how did you get around this one”? Her ability to assimilate difficulties and stay positive carried her through many difficult experiences, and she seemed to passionately enjoy her notorious escapades over the years.

As the years progressed, a third and more contemporary dimension of Cathryn’s heightened awareness of gendered issues conveyed extensive deliberation on leadership styles. And as she moved up to higher levels of leadership, she developed a richer
knowledge of the roles gender played in men’s and women’s leadership. She conveyed similarities she had seen between the two.

I think both good men and women leaders are very goal-oriented, are very task-oriented, and are very process-oriented. Males can be very relationship-oriented, [but] I think women as a whole tend to have a much broader scope of what that means to the relationship and are able to forecast, “What would it mean if I did it this way as opposed to doing it that way”? Why would it make a difference if I sent an email [in response to a staff proposal] saying, “No! Absolutely no! Are you crazy”? as opposed to walking down to the person’s office and saying, “You know, your proposal—I just don’t think we can do it and here’s why.” Both styles can work, but I think we [women] tend to think through the relationship.

On the other hand, I think men are better at not allowing those relationships to impede forward movement.

She shared the following scenarios:

Two women play racquetball every Thursday night at 7:00. This Thursday night, they’re playing racquetball and they get into a big argument. It’s such a bad argument that one just throws down her racquet, walks out and leaves. Next Thursday, do the two women show up to play racquetball?

They’re both waiting for the other to reconfirm the relationship before they can play racquetball. It doesn’t really matter which one of them does it, but they have to reestablish the relationship before the racquetball [game] happens the next Thursday.

Now, on the other hand, two men play racquetball and they get into a big fight and one guy says, “You’re full of shit”! and throws the racquet down and walks out. Next Thursday, they’re both there. Because when they both show up, they know or don’t care. Either way, the relationship is okay unless one of them doesn’t show up.

Cathryn explained that she had witnessed variations of these scenarios on numerous occasions in her life, and it accurately reflected her perception about differences between men’s and women’s relational perspectives in leadership.

Self-reflection and learning from experiences. The stories Cathryn told suggested that the first half of her professional life seemed dominated more by quick and decisive action while the second half seems more dominated by self-reflection. However, it was
very apparent that this woman leader learned from nearly all experiences over time—even the most difficult or personal ones.

The following excerpt contains two painful stories that exemplified how Cathryn’s reflection from one experience enabled her to learn from a second difficult experience. Cathryn had been married previously to a man in another state. Their eight-year marriage was ending, and a judge had to determine their marriage was irreconcilable. She remembers at the mandated counseling session, her husband protested:

“How can she be unhappy? I am really happy. We have the greatest relationship. I don’t understand”!

That stuck with me...that people really can be oblivious to how their behavior affects other people. But I had never pulled that over to my professional life until I [realized] what was going on with me. I wasn’t happy with my manager. He seemed oblivious to the fact that nobody was responding to him at their whole potential. Then I thought, “Is it possible that I could be that oblivious”? [And] “If he’s that oblivious, what would make me so superior that I wouldn’t be that oblivious to my staff”?

Cathryn reflected on the difficulty she was having herself and then made a critical decision that would impact her life exponentially.

My department was doing well. I’d always gotten glowing results from top down. But I had my leadership staff, my directors, do a really critical evaluation of me. I asked them to do it as a group, so they wouldn’t be individually identified. “As a group, you guys all agree on my strengths [and] weaknesses.”

The directors did as she had asked and then submitted their results to her.

It was gut-wrenching. It just hit me in the gut. I always thought I was a great leader because I had answers. I was decisive. I didn’t make them wait to get their results.

What came back through the evaluation was, “She shoots from the hip”! “She micromanages”!
“She doesn’t trust us”!
“She always has the answers”!

It was a devastating blow because as I heard those things and talked to them about those things, it wasn’t me. Not only wasn’t it who I wanted to be, it wasn’t me. It wasn’t who I was.

What I realized was that my behavior was not a statement of how I thought about them and what I believed. It was contrary to what I believed. Why was I behaving that way? I was behaving that way because I thought that’s what it was to be a good manager. It was such a revelation to me.

This experience vividly resonates with a spirit of reflection as well as courage. I expressed to Cathryn how courageous that decision was for her. She repeatedly denied it was courage, saying she presumed her staff would, in fact, give her strong, positive feedback. I suspected her intuition told her otherwise.

Cathryn had taken one of the greatest risks a supervisor would ever consider, and it appeared the results were disastrous…but then this was Cathryn…and she seemed frequently to do the unthinkable.

Changing. I suspect a typical manager, in that previous story, would have given up, left the job, and moved on to California, but not Cathryn. She went home that night, reflected extensively on what they had said, and came back the next day, asking for further clarification of what she was doing and how she was doing it. When she felt clear about their comments, she willingly called her directors together again, and said,

I’m just blown away. Thank you. This is going to change my life.

The only thing I ask of you is not to think that my change [will be] phony because it’s different tomorrow than it was today. Allow me to change because this behavior is not satisfactory to me or to you.

And with that announcement, Cathryn began to change.

I stopped micromanaging…or [rather] I made a deliberate effort to decrease my micromanaging. You micromanage when you are not confident. When you feel measured, you tend to do that on down. I really worked really
hard at not micromanaging and being more inclusive in decision-making. I didn’t have to prove anything anymore!

She continued reflecting and realized that her supervisor’s management style was judgmental to the point of being invasive. She realized how she had struggled to effectively do her job under his reign. Her self-esteem had faltered and her confidence had wavered. Through these reflections, Cathryn said she became more holistic in her leadership and more self-actualized.

**Authenticity.** As a feminist researcher, my goal for authenticity was to reflect the voices of the women I met in the interviews. My job was to take their words at face value and reflect those words as their reality. However, with Cathryn, it was different because Cathryn and I had a past. It was not a pleasant past nor did I think we shared the same reality about what had transpired. But then, this was Cathryn...

Several years ago, Cathryn and I had gotten into a politically awkward conflict, and we had ended up in separate camps. She had been the spokesperson for one side, and I was clearly on the other side. The experience for me had been both humiliating and troubling because I had not understood the politics of the situation.

Cathryn and I met again a year later, and that time the tables were turned. I had the potential to have the upper hand. But in this instance, we forged the gap, meeting one another half-way and the awkward rift between us was forgiven, albeit not forgotten.

For my methodology, I had evaluated the narratives in a manner that did not disclose the names of the writers. Because of this methodological decision, I did not realize until I had completed the narrative scoring that Cathryn would be one of my interviewees. I remember hesitantly calling her, nervous about the potential
awkwardness this could create. Cathryn surprised me: she was extremely gracious on the phone, offering me lodging in her home. Cathryn had extended the olive branch of peace, and I recall feeling hesitant, but hopeful. I accepted her gracious offer.

My interest in this woman as a researcher was intense, but my curiosity as a woman was greater. I reflected, questioning on how this woman could have been so caustic towards me the first time we had met, yet how could she have scored so high in my narrative evaluation. I was intensely aware of how researcher bias can play a role in data collection, and I recall my resolve to be very intentional with my listening and responses with her interview. After the interview ended, I felt satisfied that I had been very intentional.

In retrospect, had I not possessed the strong listening and responding skills of a veteran counselor, I am certain our interview would not have revealed such profound dimensions of this intriguing woman leader. I had felt simultaneously afraid yet intrigued by her. Cathryn was one of the most intense, larger-than-life people I have ever met, and one of my burning questions had been to understand who she authentically was.

And so as we sat in her comfortable family room, I vividly recall probing layer upon layer of who this woman authentically was.

And while this segment of the data results may appear out of order, it was strategically placed here as the unveiling of Cathryn’s authenticity was revealed. This all-powerful woman was, as I mentioned earlier, extremely complex, much like a tapestry. Within the weaving of her life, she had woven fabric of bristly burlap suggestive of her coarseness. She had woven this with other contrasting fabrics: a
delicate fabric of a resplendent, golden material as well as colorful cloths that reflected a rich, uninhibited human being. I had arrived at the interview, expecting to see one piece of a fabric, and what I had experienced was the revelation of an evolving, resplendent tapestry she would continue to weave as long as she lived.

She and I spoke candidly about our illustrious confrontation, and Cathryn revealed her authentic and vulnerable core.

I'm constantly changing! After the [difficult] meeting [we had three years ago], I was talking with [a colleague], on the ride home. I said," Why was I the administrator] that came forward...What possesses me to always be the outspoken person? How could I have said what I wanted to communicate in a less threatening way? Why was I so hell-bent on saying it in such a demanding way”?

I was really emotional about it. I was irritated with [my] group, and not you guys, because [my] group had made a decisive decision that they were all sitting around saying nothing.

[Reflecting] through those things always helps me do it better next time.

At any given time in her personal development, Cathryn had portrayed her authentic self, a woman who was committed to constantly understanding and changing herself. As Cathryn grew and developed from this process, her self-reflection became foundational to her willingness to change. From this change evolved a more and more authentic woman leader.

Cathryn’s self-assuredness may have been viewed as the classic “bitch” persona to an outsider who did not take the time to know her. Cathryn had faced insurmountable challenges over her lifetime, and as many women say, she had “earned the right to be a bitch!” However, Cathryn’s exterior was simply battle armor to an external war-torn world of sexual advances, judgmental perceptions, and naysayers she had battled in her
career. I had been given the rare opportunity to see the real, authentic Cathryn, and I knew I would never be the same.

Case Study Three: Laura

Seated in the outer lobby to Laura’s office, I noted her office door was ajar and she was conducting a meeting. The three men meeting with Laura were visible through her open office door, and they intently engaged in conversation. Her voice wafted out from the open doorway, but she was not yet visible. This glimpse of a woman I had briefly met years ago, created a build-up to meeting her again, and afforded me a further opportunity to study a person who is one of the most powerful women leaders in Iowa’s community colleges.

The conversation level ebbed and flowed, increasing my curiosity of a woman who was clearly dynamic, powerful, and engaging. As much as I tried to divert my attention to a glossy edition of a community college history book, my attention was drawn back again and again to this office. Nearing the time of our designated interview, the men, all dressed alike in expensive dark suits, pushed back their chairs and stood, indicating the meeting was ending. However, they lingered, remaining engaged with the woman still obscured by a wall.

After several more minutes, the men began disengaging as they turned, laughing, and strode past me, still clearly focusing on their meeting and conversing with enthusiastic tones. The experience was reminiscent of being in an audience with minor actors, waiting for the star to emerge on the stage. And finally she did, revealing a conversational technique which displayed interest yet closure with the final man from her
meeting. I attempted yet failed to remain unaware of their presence as they strode near me, temporarily lingering a few feet from my chair.

Without missing a beat, the woman concluded her conversation, and turned her full attention to her next appointment, me. The charismatic nature and engaging enthusiasm she had revealed with the previous group never wavered as she spoke my name, extending her hand to welcome me. She graciously offered to help me carry in the materials I had brought for the interview. I looked up into the eyes of this tall, svelte woman leader, and felt immediately comfortable.

While one of an interviewer’s first responsibilities is to help the interviewee feel more comfortable, Laura had already achieved the reverse, engaging me at a level where any discomfort I might have felt was dispelled. As I had already observed and would learn first-hand, Laura was the quintessential servant leader: kind, compassionate, friendly, and putting her energy into meeting the needs of others while still maintaining a personal sense of who she was.

**Authenticity.** A self-effacing leader with a warm sense of humor, Laura regularly poked fun at herself. This humor was richly warm, positively ingratiating herself to people by revealing an authentic vulnerability. She relayed a quick story of this authenticity and mirth:

[The president] had just promoted me to [a high level position]. It was a huge deal [because I was one of the first women leaders on my campus.] A few months later, I was pregnant, and I was scared to death to tell him—for all the stupid reasons.

Oh, my God, he’s going to think I don’t care about the promotion—stupid, stupid reasons. Finally before [a campus holiday break], I figured I had to tell him because I would be wearing maternity clothes when I came back. So I went
into his office and said, “I have something to tell you. It’s very personal. It doesn’t mean I’m not committed.”

I think the build-up I had—he thought it was something so horrible. And you know, he was so relieved to find out that I was simply pregnant. But you know, I struggled and struggled to know whether to even say I’m having a baby [or] I’m pregnant. Those were such personal kinds of words. And then he would know I’d had sex, and he’s my boss—ewww!

This humorous reluctance to tell her president about her impending motherhood indicated a child-like, vulnerable quality to her personality that quickly put people at ease. This was one of her clear goals, because while she had tremendous positional power in her position, she “loathed” the thought of self-promoting behavior. She deliberately avoided using her title when she was at meetings off campus or when she met someone socially. When people meeting her socially asked her what she did at her institution, she side-stepped the direct answer by saying she was “in management” or “an administrator” choosing never to give her official title because it might sound ostentatious.

When I asked Laura if she had ever introduced herself as “Doctor,” she emphatically replied, “Oh, my God, no—never”! And then we were off on another humorous story showing another very humanistic side of this powerful woman.

The only time I’ve [used my title of doctor] was when my daughter and I were shopping in a jewelry store. The woman, who was the owner, was being just a real jerk—just real condescending. I was signing something, and I signed it “doctor,” just because I thought it would piss her off!

As she finished the story, she rolled her eyes, embarrassed, but my perspective went beyond that. What struck me about Laura the leader, was that she was not afraid to be herself, and show the vulnerability all people experience but are afraid to demonstrate.
This willingness to show her vulnerability and her human side was still one more way Laura modeled authenticity as a leader. She talked about the importance of sensitivity to her staff’s needs, and allowing them to be who they authentically were. I asked Laura what advice she would give to a young professional about being themselves at work, and she immediately explained that her family was an integral part of her authentic self:

Don’t give up. You don’t get your kids childhood back. Don’t keep your family – kids – we spend so much time at work – it would be horrible if I couldn’t talk about my kids at work. My family is who I am. So, it’s almost always appropriate to talk about family stuff. Don’t be afraid to take phone calls from your kids at work, if you’re not in the middle of a meeting. Don’t shut your personal life until you walk out the door.

Laura did, however, understand the need to practice situational authenticity. Much like situational leadership, Laura was clear that effective leadership must be both learned and also intuitive. There were situations where she felt she needed to serve a role, and she identified the old adage about there is a time and a place for certain behaviors.

Another important dimension of Laura’s authenticity came from her years of experience and her positional power. As a higher level administrator, “I’m in a position where I can be myself more easily, probably more so than someone [in middle management]. I have tremendous freedom.” It had not always been like that for Laura. She recalled struggling with being herself in earlier years:

I used to worry a whole lot more if I missed a meeting or whatever. I would fret a lot more about the family-work balance. I needed to go to this kid’s event or miss a meeting where I needed to make my “mark.” Now, I’ve made my mark, and [while] I certainly have more responsibility to make sure the college runs efficiently, I’m not trying to please others as much.
She quickly clarified, however, that it was important to her to please the people she works for, namely her employees.

Care of others. An ethic of care was a critical dimension to Laura, and she revealed this through how she cared for others as well as how she mentored young women leaders. Her family was clearly her highest priority, but she extended this role to her staff as well as women for whom she mentored.

One of Laura’s highest priorities was being accessible and available to her family, specifically to her children. While she was in a high position of authority with enormous responsibilities, Laura regularly took phone calls from her children throughout the work day. On weekends, she described how she forfeited numerous work-related events because she was gone nearly every weekend to her children’s activities and events. This was a significant theme for Laura because through spending time with her children, she also nurtured herself.

The manner in which she nurtured with her children carried over into her relationships as a leader, and she described her leadership metaphorically as a “mother.”

I think you should treat your employees as the kind of people you want to raise your children to be. I think you look at your employee’s individual differences. I think you let them make their mistakes. Help them learn from themselves without being real punitive. I think you encourage your team to show a lot of respect for each other’s differences. I think there are a lot of similarities between raising good, solid, kids who are respectful and like one another and do their best, with managing a team or leading a team that will get along and be respectful and do their best.

Laura’s nurturing persona was also evident specifically in how she mentored young women. She spoke regularly about how she talked with women’s leadership
groups and how she encouraged young women leaders to seek balanced lives. She reiterated this perspective weeks later during our voice verification communication.

Reflecting on our interview, she provided still another dimension of her care for others.

Probably the most valuable realization was that it's important to share my perspective on leadership with other women. You confirmed to me that women still want and need to hear about how one can balance home and a demanding job, and still manage to pursue higher level positions without sacrificing other things that are important. I really am at the point in my life that I really want to give back, and to serve as a mentor to others. It makes me feel sort of old to say that, because I have lots of learning left to do, but I've been through lots of wars, and have gained some perspective and insights to share with others.

Laura’s comment about “giving back” resonated with an ethic of care, much like Cathryn. By caring for others, this powerful woman leader met an innate need she had, and she was determined to pass on this important dimension of her legacy.

Self-care and balance. Certainly the true definition of self-care for Laura was caring for others as well as herself. She articulately spoke the language of a woman who was highly evolved, and she had a deep understanding of how her evolution was important to her work as well as to her personal life. “When I’m balanced and emotionally healthy, I don’t feel guilty about taking care of myself and my family.” Feeling guilt was a red flag for her, signally she was out of balance and needed to focus on her own needs.

Being alone was an especially rare commodity with children, but she reveled in the time with her family.

I learned over time what made me the best person that I could be. Time for myself and time where I don’t have 10 things I have to do. It may not be just time for myself. It may be sitting and watching a movie with my kids and my husband. It refreshes me. It gives me back my balance.
While she said being with her family refreshed her, Laura had already mentioned that she was an introvert and that she needed solitude. I asked, "You mentioned professional care, you talked about family balance, but now what about you personally?"

She laughed, knowing I had cornered her! "Ah, you’re thinking I’m not spending time on myself!"

I responded, "I think you’ve mentioned that three or four times."

She really seemed to have an aversion to talking about herself, so I tried a new approach. I asked her if she was giving self-care advice to a young woman professional, what would she say? "Make time for yourself. That’s something that I have not always practiced. Time to play. Don’t give yourself away so much that you run out of yourself to give."

Laura engaged regularly in self-care. Exercise for her was extremely important and a powerful stress reliever. She said she worked out four times a week, kick-boxing, biking, and running. Running was an obvious favorite for several reasons. "Alone time, running. I love to run alone with my ipod. I can go for miles." She also found balance in a variety of ways including reading alone, traveling with her husband, and taking baths, (which she likes to do but says she never does!) "I have massages once in a while. I should have them once every two weeks. That should be a goal—I think I’ll put that down."

This was Laura’s favorite topic of discussion, and so I asked her how she had come to know her process. She explained that it had evolved over many years, and that she had not always been so balanced. In 2007, however, she felt pleased with her
progress, and said she would grade herself at a “B” for balance. Then laughing, she
acknowledged her family would probably give her a “D”!

I asked her how she nurtured and developed herself as an introvert. It was then
that she revealed her self-care fantasy.

My preference is just to sit at home and read a book for hours on end. I always
[wonder] how long I could spend totally off by myself without having to speak to
anyone. That’s my fantasy – to go on a week-long spa retreat where I don’t have
to speak to one single person. Time alone is really re-energizing for me.

Laura’s need for solitude honed in on a unique dimension of the personality of
leaders. She had obviously explored this and other issues with leadership and self care.

She continued on, saying that she was equally clear about another manner in which self-
care and balance made her a better leader.

I’m a firm believer that leaders should be very good role models, which means
that they should be calm, rational, and listen, [taking] in what they need to take in
before they make decisions. We make important decisions and they affect
people’s lives, to some huge extent. I think in order to do that you have to
maintain a very balanced perspective on your life. And that’s hard to do
sometimes -- when it’s easy to work in this job 80 hours a week.

Long hours were a common issue with women leaders, and Laura was very clear that
working such long hours impacted herself personally as well as professionally.

When I [work 80 hour weeks] my family suffers and things get out of whack.
Then I get short or crabby or don’t always take the time to make the kinds of
decisions you need to make, or let little things go. So, you know, for me the
greatest challenge is remaining very, very balanced, and when I'm very balanced,
I'm a good leader, and I make good decisions. I consider all the things I need to
consider. I take care of the little things as well as the big things.

She also affirmed that she had better perspective when she took care of herself.

She and her president had discussed the issue of adequate sleep, a common self-care
concern for administrators. The president asserted how proud he was that he spent little
time sleeping, but Laura had a strong rebuttal:

“You know John, it makes you crazy. [When] you don’t sleep at night, you lose
perspective.” He does lose perspective. He just gets whacko – you know, stop!—
Rome doesn’t have to be built in seven minutes... not a day for him –seven
minutes!

He’s a wonderful man – don’t get me wrong. You know, maybe I used to
be someone who said I hardly need any sleep and you know that’s bullshit. It
really is. You don’t get sleep—you lose perspective... period! And [when] you
lose perspective on things, you’re a wreck!

While Laura may not have changed her president’s mind during this discussion,
she had clearly reflected on the value of self-care for her, and she demonstrated this
personal commitment in her day-to-day life, encouraging others to also reflect on what
was important to them.

Self-reflection and learning from experience. Earlier in this chapter, I had
explored excerpts of Laura’s perspectives on self-promotion and how it related to the
theme of authenticity. She also discussed how the issue of self-promotion revealed the
theme of self-reflection in this profound woman. Foundational to many of her leadership
values, she discussed how self-reflection was instrumental to two issues in her life: an
issue about self-promotion she had been exploring for several years and to another, more
devastating period in her life.

Laura had been reflecting on the efficacy of her self-promotion perspectives ever
since two situations had occurred. The first situation occurred after a series of years
where Laura had quietly but effectively assumed the responsibilities of a high-level
colleague who was not fulfilling his job responsibilities. During a campus crisis, her
work on those additional responsibilities had become apparent to other high-level leaders.
One such leader for the institution had remarked about her additional work, “I didn’t know you had the skills and abilities to do this!”

And I thought, “Who the hell do you think has been [doing this job] for the last number of years”?

It really struck home that in my quest to always be seen as equal to others and not putting myself above others, I probably haven’t given myself enough credit. I sort of loath the whole idea of self-promotion, but I haven’t given myself enough credit for all the really hard things I had to do to get where I am.

Laura had reflected on this situation for a number of years, and it appeared she was beginning to understand the implications of what had transpired. Although she loathed self-promotion, she acknowledged,

I have taken that too far in my life and not given myself enough credit for all the really hard things I’ve had to do to get where I am. Well, and not being afraid to say – I’m really good at that. I’m much better about that now then I used to be. But I think it took hitting me over the head [with that previous conversation] to do that.

It may be partially because all of my upward moves have been in the same institution. I talk to women in groups all the time about what it’s like to move up and suddenly you’re the supervisor of your friend—people who were your friends and your peers. You have to be so careful, you know. You really can’t socialize with those people any more to the exclusion of other people. You have to separate yourself. And I have done that but probably at a cost to myself in some ways because I certainly don’t want anyone ever to think that I’m better than them.

A short time ago, Laura had another conversation about her job and its title. She reflected on this issue and this conversation in our interview.

I guess it’s not the most important role in my life and so to identify myself in that way is still a little uncomfortable to me. Hmm, that’s very interesting to me.

I’ve been thinking about this a lot lately because my president said something to me. “You are the [title of her position] of this college. Why do you not introduce yourself in that way? And I said, “Who really cares”?

Laura had held this position for well over a decade and had contemplated this issue for several years, and yet she was still reflecting on what this all meant to her. Her
process of reflection was indicative of the commitment she had to learning and
development. It was apparent that she would continue reflecting upon this issue until she
was better able to understand its meaning.

While the previous situation exemplified a longitudinal reflection, this second
example had had a deeply profound effect on her life. "I'm a better person if I take the
time to be introspective," she had mused. While the following situation was not an
epiphany per se, she had taken the time to reflect extensively on what it had meant to her.

Two devastating tragedies struck her life simultaneously, and she felt forced to
deal with them alone.

It was a really defining time in my life... But what it made me do was to step
back and say, Laura, you've had a pretty damn good life up until now. You've
never had anything horrible happen to you. So, you can either suck it up and
manage all of this or you can fall apart.

You know, you can't fall apart – I couldn't fall apart... It taught me a lot
in terms of drawing on your inner resources. You know all those buzz words?
They really are true. And it also taught me that, you know, if either one of those
things had happened independent of the other one, I probably would have been
way more obsessive...One without the other would have been awful enough. I
may have gone crazy, worrying constantly, that, oh, my God, what if ...what if
...? But because I was having to deal with so much...I just had to have faith that
it would be ok...

It was interesting that they happened at exactly the same time. If they
were both going to happen, it was probably good that they happened at the same
time because it made me deal with both and not obsess. I know it sounds really
weird – I wish I could describe it better. Boy, you learn good coping skills in
those situations and you do, really honest to God, realize that people are going to
help you and you can accept from them. I've never been really good at accepting
help. And [also] nothing's more important than your family. So, you know,
obsessing about stuff at work, pretty little, doesn't work. Someone you love
could be gone tomorrow. Until you've been faced with someone telling you that,
then I don't think you really believe it.

You know what I did – I haven't thought about this for a long time. Every
day I would write down something –I can do this... or, this will be ok...or...
[We] will get through this. I just took one day at a time.
I’m not a particularly religious person in terms of saying “God, get me through this”! but faith that it would be ok and that it would all work out. I relied on people here. Relied on my family – my kids were great. It had a huge, huge effect on my life.

Laura and I spent a considerable amount of time discussing the impact of these two tragedies. It was abundantly apparent she had experienced a difficult time and learned valuable lessons that she would use at work and in life. It had honed many values that impacted her leadership.

**Commitment to a core set of values.** The final major theme reflected in Laura’s interview was a strong commitment to a core set of values. She conveyed three dimensions of her values: who she was as a person, who she wanted others to see, and what she valued as a leader.

First, it was clear that she doesn’t compartmentalize her life.

I don’t have my personal set of values and my work set of values. They bleed into one another and, like most women and many men, I’m working while I’m at home and thinking about working. I’m talking to my kids on the phone when I’m at work, and thinking about home. I don’t know how you can have a different set of beliefs for work and personal life and not be bipolar.

“'I’m a pretty basic person,’ she continued. She was raised on a farm in a small town in Iowa. Her mom was a teacher and her father was a farmer. The couple shared responsibilities for the home and for the family. Her dad made breakfast every morning. They taught Laura she could be whatever she wanted to be. They taught her the Golden Rule, and she said to this day, she had a bottom-line value that “everyone deserves to be treated with respect. It doesn’t matter if it’s the president or the custodian.”

Laura’s second example about her commitment to a set of values complimented her first set: the values she wanted others to see in her.
I want people to know who the *Laura that is most important to Laura* is. It's really important for people to know who I truly am. And what's most important to me is that people see me as a person who has her whole life together... who is equally a leader who treats people fairly... who is equally a good spouse, a good mother, a good friend. It is being seen only as Laura the [job title] that is not comfortable for me. I guess I've never actually said it like that before, but I think that that is true.

Her need to be viewed in this manner was very apparent when I met Laura. She was indeed straightforward, well-balanced, and genuinely Laura.

The third and final portrayal of her commitment to a core set of values was a common-sense view of leadership. "Good leaders are very comfortable with themselves and they know themselves. They're willing to look at their strengths and weakness." She concluded that a wise leader is a grounded leader.

Laura's authenticity and caring was as apparent as being enveloped in a warm blanket. She had carefully and fully articulated the importance of a leader caring for others as well as herself. Her reflective nature about positional power, tragedy, and values had struck a chord with me, and as I left her office, I knew I had met a real leader!

**Case Study Four: Wendy**

Wendy had suggested we interview at one of her community college's sites off main campus to minimize the distance I had to commute that day, and I was grateful: the visibility was poor on this icy, snowy January morning. I navigated to the campus location, through a long mini mall parking lot to the side of a large steel building. I spied a sign with the campus logo and parked at a nearby door. I collected my interview materials, and hurried to the door. It was locked, the interior was dark, and I felt disheartened.
Some community college satellite offices are not utilized extensively, and so I began making assumptions about the lack of activity at this site. However, I spied two cars drive around the end of the building, and so curious, I followed them around the corner. There, I discovered the main entrance: a massive sign and logo hung high on the building façade above expansive glass doors. Embarrassed at my previous assumption, I entered the lobby and discovered multiple hallways jetting out in various directions. The place was alive with activity as I entered the nearest office and announced my arrival to the receptionist.

I was a few minutes early, and so I decided to locate a cup of coffee and explore this expansive building. The receptionist’s directions suggested this was no small facility. Leaving the office, I proceeded down a hallway that snaked through the building, past offices, classrooms, computer labs, and what appeared to be a small library. People were everywhere, and I made a mental note as a researcher to curtail any more judgments of the campus.

I finally arrived at the small but homey community lounge. Pouring myself a fresh cup of coffee from the carafe on the counter, I noted what an enticing service this was. Three female nontraditional students were intently conversing at one of the round tables. Posted signs displayed friendly reminders for students to get registered for classes, check on financial aid, and utilize various campus services.

I slipped into a nearby bathroom and found an odd sign on the stall door. “Ladies, please dispose of personal products…” While it was certainly written in a friendly manner, I was puzzled by the use of the word *ladies*. I had not seen the term
used on a college campus recently- it was often perceived as politically incorrect. Maybe it was a cultural or regional issue, I mused, as I hurried back to the lobby for my appointment.

A few minutes later, an attractive 40-something woman popped her head around the corner and identified herself as Wendy. She had a warm, welcoming smile, and I realized quickly why she had been chosen as the president’s recommended woman leader. She was an engaging and approachable leader with a great sense of humor.

Wendy led me around a corner, down an uninhabited hallway, and past the darkened doorway I had encountered when I first arrived at the campus. Near the doorway, we entered a small private room with a large table and nearly a dozen comfortable chairs. “This is our conference room,” she relayed, and encouraged me to get situated in the most advantageous location for the interview.

We soon began what would be an intense, funny, and thought-provoking two-hour interview. But about ten minutes into the interview, we were interrupted. Unsure what was happening, I continued recording an encounter which would inadvertently epitomize a pivotal part of Wendy’s life at this college.

The president and, moments later, one of the vice presidents (who she fondly referred to as “mustache boy”) opened the closed door and popped their heads into the room. They ambled into the room, smiling brightly as if they had arrived for a surprise party. They were amicable and curious as Wendy made introductions, and after a few minutes of small-talk, they apologized for the interruption in a placating manner and left.
I was admittedly stunned by the interruption and by the importance of the guests who stopped by to chat for a few minutes. Wendy was obviously a VIP on this campus, garnering this kind of attention, I contemplated. But when I turned back to Wendy, I realized this interruption has been a source of irritation or embarrassment for her. We talked briefly about our uninvited guests and then returned to the interview. It was only later that Wendy would reveal the implications of the visit from our uninvited guests.

**Tenacity and courage.** While equally as tenacious and courageous as the other three women leaders, Wendy's rise to leadership was a dramatic contrast. She relayed that she had barely made it through high school, married immediately, and then moved into a rural farmhouse to become a stay-at-home mother.

My husband had a good blue collar job [that] at the time paid phenomenally well. And I didn’t have to work. I didn’t have to worry about finances. And when that youngest child was due to be born, [the plant where her husband worked] closed the day [her child] got home from the hospital. And so there we were with little kids and two high school educations and no job. And no health insurance. There was a real poverty time for us. He got a new job the next week, but it was for half the pay. He was one of the fortunate ones because there were seven hundred people in that town that didn’t have jobs.

Within a short time, family financial constrictions forced her to get a job for $3.23 an hour at a nursing home. Wendy liked the work and being around people. However, she remembered sadly, being the “newbie,” she had to work over all the holidays that year. “I remember spending Christmas day at work. I had these three little kids and after I paid daycare, I had $26. I missed Christmas with my kids so I could earn $26 bucks. I don’t think so.” Her children were her highest priority, and the price she had paid was too dear. She reevaluated her priorities, and courageously quit her job.
So then I took a year off. We were really struggling. I needed to get a part-time job, but knew that by the time I[paid] daycare, [it wouldn't be worth it.] I needed one that was flexible, so I was really looking at the school system or the college. You know, that would work for our kids' schedules.

As she persevered, Wendy began realizing that getting an education was the key to protecting her family from poverty. On three separate occasions in the interview, she mentioned that she needed that “ticket” or “that piece of paper” to help her family. “I’d see other jobs and I’d say, I can do that, if I just had a piece a paper.”

I didn’t start taking classes until my youngest was in kindergarten. It was my first college class, and I started working, at [my college] with just a high school education, recruiting high school dropouts for $5.25 an hour. I got an associate’s degree after I was there for a year or two.

Tenaciously, Wendy knew she could do more, however.

We didn’t get health insurance when we were part-time, and you have choices. You either pay for your own insurance or you put yourself in a position where you can apply for a position that does have it...I needed to get into a position where I had it, so what does it take? I didn’t want to be a secretary, I didn’t really like cleaning—I don’t like cleaning at home. I certainly didn’t want to be a custodian, so what way do you go?

Wendy was constantly observing other jobs on campus, and she would think, “I can do that!” She continued chipping away at her education. “It makes you able to persevere.” Over time she went on to earn a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree, and she is currently A.B.D., (all but dissertation) hoping to graduate soon. She said each time she earned a new degree, her income doubled. “It wasn’t hard to do, [however,] because I only started at $5.25 an hour”!

Wendy’s tenacity and courage had been an integral part of her academic progress and career successes, but she didn’t seem especially cognizant of her own fortitude.
Fulfilling others' expectations. In this distinctive leadership trait of Wendy, she recalled having few expectations of herself over the years. Rather, she attributed her impetus to fulfilling other people's expectations of her. Her parents, especially her father, and her husband seemed the central figures in these expectations.

Her decision to marry and raise children right out of high school seemed to be a central issue in these expectations.

My parents were extremely disappointed. Not that they didn't like my husband—they did. But I'd always done well in elementary and middle school—upper range of the class. I think they had great hopes for me and then I got married right out of high school. And they were just sure I was never going to go to college. I remember having the conversation with my dad. I think I've always tried, [but] I think I knew I disappointed them, and so I think I tried to make sure I wasn't letting people down. To say, see, I did accomplish that. I did these things. I can have it all. I can have my family. I can have my education.

That's part of it, trying to prove to other people, maybe more so than even myself. I never had major goals for myself but maybe it's living up to other people's expectations.

Her face looked pained as she discussed these struggles, especially when she and her dad discussed his concerns.

I recall the conversation. "You won't go to school! No, you won't—it's too hard! It's too difficult to have a family and do these things"! I remember when I got my bachelor's degree. My dad gave me a buck. He said, "You won the bet"! But I didn't recall betting. And he handwrote out [the note.]

Her first goal to meet her parents' expectations had been met and she indicated a sense of satisfaction with this. After this experience with her father, she recalled thinking as she snickered, "Dad, not only can I get a bachelor's but watch this!"

She had met one of her father's expectations, but she had another person whose expectations were important to her. Wendy's husband had a clear-cut expectation about
what a woman should or should not do, and early in the marriage, Wendy acknowledged that she had made the decision that she would meet his expectations as well.

Like many other women leaders, Wendy had struggled to balance home, work, and college. It became more of a challenge, however, because her husband was not certain he wanted her to stop being a stay-at-home wife and mother.

I was also fighting at home to get to do those things. Because, you know, it was still a very traditional [marriage.] My husband was the sole bread winner. And then I got this part-time job, and, boy, he wasn’t sure he liked that. He didn’t know if he liked me doing that. But as long as the kids were to school on time everyday and as long as the housework was still done...

Her voice trailed off. Again, she seemed to reflect an internal struggle with these expectations, but then she said with resolve, “He was a farm boy. He grew up that way, and I didn’t ever try and change that for whatever reason. It worked ok at our house.”

As his wife, she was obviously determined to meet his needs—while still working outside the home, working at the college, and attending college—and she felt she was able to balance it all. “This was working, you know. I was balancing all the roles. I took care of everybody!”

He wouldn’t know how to cook a meal if his life depended on it. He was a farm child in Iowa and grew up [with the assumption that] the women stayed in the house and prepared the meals and the men... and yes, can it change? It can. Would it have been easy for him? No! And so, therefore, I just allowed it because it was just easier for me to just do it all.

Wendy was determined she needed to meet her husband’s expectations about running the household, but his frozen resolve to keep her at home all day seemed to be thawing. She recalled that one day he proudly stated that each time she completed another degree, her salary had doubled.
And then he had said something that made her laugh. She recalled that she had just completed her B.A., and he suggested she start on a master’s degree. As the interviewer, I was visibly shocked, stopping the flow of the interview. I asked, “Did you say he made the suggestion”?

She chortled and replied affirmatively. “Once the paychecks get a little bigger [and] it came master’s [degree] time, he said, “This is working... You oughta jump into that”! Rather tongue-in-cheek, she added, “All of a sudden, we had a supporter when in the past, we hadn’t”!

Wendy’s tenacity had paid off and she had brought both her parents and her husband around to her way of thinking. Had she known this would happen all along? I was not certain, but it was clear that Wendy was fulfilling the needs of others in a manner that still met her needs.

Networking. One of Wendy’s unique leadership traits was networking. While at times her support system may have appeared weak, she encountered a number of strong supports which aided her in her leadership journey. These connections would engage her, support her, and empower her to become the tenacious leader she was today.

In her early years at the community college, her first supervisor must have seen Wendy’s leadership potential, determining she would benefit from additional training. Wendy and two colleagues, none with any postsecondary education, were sent to the University of Iowa’s “Annual Iowa Great Teachers’ Workshop.” One of the workshop’s goals is “To promote an attitude of introspection and self-appraisal by providing a relaxed setting and an open environment where participants can seriously
reflect on their attitudes, methods, and behaviors as teachers.” (Great Iowa Teachers’ Workshop, n.d.) This goal was obviously accomplished with Wendy because the experience was life changing:

The neat thing is that you are intermeshed with faculty around the state who have these wonderful degrees and are human beings and pretty normal people. You know and you can’t tell them who you are and what you do. You went by first names only. You couldn’t tell them what institution you were from or what you did there or your last name, and so it was a very anonymous week and everybody was very supportive. It was the most phenomenal week of my life.

The last day comes the unveiling, telling who everybody is and at what institution they work, And [my colleague said,] “All they are going to see is my taillights”! Here we are, $5.25 an hour [high school drop-out] recruiters. I think they gave us a fancier title than that. Everybody was saying, that’s great, you know. But it was like, if those people can do that, I can do that. They are just the same as me except they have that ticket.

I got home on a Friday night from that and the following Monday, I enrolled in college full-time. And that was, now I’m getting teary, but that was truly the moment…

Wendy reflected on how this networking had impacted her development. “I think it honed [me into an educational] track. I think the development was there… [but] what if I hadn’t gone? What if my boss hadn’t thought her staff needed that? She was a very visionary woman.”

The networking and support she had experienced from the Great Iowa Teacher’s Workshop had exponentially impacted her development and her decision to attend college. However, Wendy revealed that additional networking also came from other important people in her life.

One of those people was a former president who had mentored her on her road to leadership. Wendy had recently dealt with a difficult person and was considering a confrontation. She reflected back on what her networking with the former president had
taught her about dealing with difficult people and confronting these difficult issues. He had often said, "Sometimes it's better to allow time to pass before you have those conversations, but you do want to bring them back up because otherwise it just hangs over your head, everyone’s head. And it's best just not to let [that] go on."

In addition to this former president, other women were also essential networks for Wendy. First, she had experienced a strong network of other stay-at-home moms when she had been so isolated on that farmhouse long ago.

At that time, luckily those wives were stay at home too...talking on the phone all day long. Doing whatever. Getting together to have the kids play. But boy, that isolation of being out in the middle of nowhere, more or less was a real change. Being in about every sport in high school—it was a real change.

The transition had been difficult between her active social involvement in extracurricular activities as a high school adolescent and her isolated life as a stay-at-home mom with few resources. Having a network of other women had been life-saving!

In much the same manner, women in leadership positions find themselves isolated at times. With her past experience, Wendy expressed gratitude for the network she had with other women leaders on campus with whom she could converse. Specifically, she found kinship with one woman colleague through laughter, one of Wendy’s greatest stress relievers. “We just spend all day laughing. It just helps with some of the stressors too.”

In addition to the previous networking she had discussed, Wendy especially appreciated networking with all the other experts at the community college.

What I like about working in a community college so much, is that we have experts in so many areas and you can learn so much from everybody you work
with. I think I’m smarter at the end of the day than when I went to work that morning because of the people that I work with.

Networking had empowered Wendy. She had learned a great deal about engagement from networking, and her knowledge base had been vastly expanded.

**Selflessness.** One distinctive leadership trait Wendy revealed was her selflessness because while upper management can sometimes be perceived as elitist, her leadership was the antithesis—a selfless servant leader. Her community college employment spanned from the lowest paid admissions representatives up to one of the highest positions at the community college.

This stark work contrast was also reflected in both her childhood as well as her adult home lives where blue-collar and white collar coexisted. “I think I can work with all the groups of the college because I’ve served in basically every role there. I don’t think I ask anybody to do anything I wouldn’t do. Any maybe I have more respect from the people.”

And much like the selflessness reflected in a traditional work ethic that puts the company before the individual, Wendy felt a strong sense of commitment and gratitude to her community college. “I’ve been committed to the college for a long time. The college is what gave me the life I have now. So I feel I owe a lot back to the college.”

These traits may have contributed to Wendy’s selfless servant leadership style of management which was abundantly evident, despite the fact that she had no inclination to promote it openly. Wendy veiled her uniqueness and tenacity carefully, preferring others observe her internal strength and her values. Her perception of servant leadership was that “actions speak louder than words.”
I'd rather they saw it in me. And truly this is tough for me. I don't talk about myself that much. I don't think I do. I think there are people who I work with that don't know how many children I have and don't know because I think I would rather have them see me as modeling what I think I should be, rather than telling them.

I've [worked] with some folks who carry on and on about what they are. I heard [one] boss say millions and millions of times, "I don't have an ego. I don't need to be x, y, and z," and then he did the opposite. If I had a dime for every time he said it, I'd be wealthy. I would rather he demonstrated than say what he was and then have somebody interpret it the other way.

Much like Laura, Wendy avoided any behavior that she deemed self-promoting, and she was very selfless about her perceived persona.

**Dichotomous thinking.** One trait Wendy had troubled me as a researcher. Her entire selflessness concept strongly paralleled another concept I had heard her describe, and that was a poor self-concept. As a researcher, this led me to ponder various dimensions of Wendy. Was Wendy a living contradiction in terms, as I had frequently wondered?

I had heard her talk about her multiple decisions to act selflessly as a leader, a wife, and a daughter. I had also observed it first-hand. But was she being selfless because this reflected her values or was it more the direct result of poor self-confidence?

I contemplated other examples that seemed contradictory. Were the stories of her husband's insistence that she do all of the household and child care management—while simultaneously attending college and working outside the home—further indications of a woman who lacked self-confidence or the value system of a woman who valued her husband's needs?

The evidence of her poor self-confidence seemed to mount for this theme. Wendy had discussed her own academic goal-setting. She explained that she had set small,
short-term goals, but seemed hesitant to set larger, long-term goals for herself. “I thought, if I set these goals, and then I fail, I’d drop [out of school] completely. I never said I was going to graduate.”

She repeated this alleged poor self-concept theme as she observed others setting their own academic goals. “When I hear someone say they’re getting their Ph.D, and they’re working on the A.A. degree, I think, why do you set yourself up for failure”? She had explained that she attributed part of these comments to a lack of confidence.

These incidents of alleged poor self-concept dramatically seemed to contradict Wendy, the leader, who discussed a diametrically opposed perspective when I asked her to describe a metaphor that reflected her leadership.

There’ve been some who said I was a bulldog. I don’t want that to be my persona because I’m really a nice person. But I guess I’m not afraid of challenges so maybe that would be ok. At least I can be stubborn and strong, but that’s certainly not my goal.

She later selected what she felt was a better metaphor, a leveler, a type of measuring device seen in carpentry.

I think I’m a “leveler.” I level people. You know, you get the really nice people that won’t address conflicts that need addressing because they don’t want to hurt anybody’s feelings. And then you get the real strong-willed people and I think in both cases, they come my way to figure out the solution-solving mechanism. And so I think I can bring the ones who are really high energy and go after the problems. It doesn’t really matter how much china we break in the process, you know. We’re going to get this resolved.

The two metaphors did not sound like a person with a poor self-concept, but rather a woman leader with confidence in her abilities. She offered even more
convincing evidence of her perceived confidence and abilities when she described her leadership tendencies, especially as a child.

I think I've always had some leadership tendencies. You know, it was always on the playground, you go back to the playground. You can go back [and ask] are they the ones who are controlling? They are the ones who are controlling what we are going to play today. You can make a lot of people mad along the way too if you don’t hone that correctly. You can be [perceived as ]bossy.

But I think I always had some leadership [traits] in that way. I didn’t mind doing things alone which I think a leader has to able to do that. Be comfortable in their own skin.

We have people in the institution who can’t really go down and get a soda without taking a coworker with them. They can’t have an opinion unless they have a consensus [over] coffee first. I had some of those [traits], and I’ve never been afraid to state what’s on my mind, and you know, right or wrong, it worked for me.

Wendy was undoubtedly a woman with contrasting perspectives on who she was. She demonstrated a complexity I will probably always find intriguing. But she had been honest to reveal this intriguing contrast, and I noted that I felt a great admiration for this!

Adaptability. In previous case studies, I had described women leaders who were reflective and willing to change. While Wendy fit these themes, she seemed to enhance the notion of reflection and changing. She demonstrated a finely honed adaptability to the many circumstances she had encountered in her lifetime which she could not change. She relayed examples that echoed a version of this theme.

The first example dealt with her rise in leadership. Several years ago, Wendy had interviewed for a leadership position at another campus. One of the interviewers had formed a question out of a statement. “...looking at your résumé, you have moved up very, very quickly?” Her response was carefully crafted:

“In education, it probably appears that way, but it was a long time in coming. In general...[my career process] started a long time ago when I first got out of high
school. I had the family, raised kids, and some different things I did along the way.” But I said, “Sure, in the world of education, the promotions have come along quickly.”

Wendy’s career path had been put on hold numerous times, such as in the aforementioned example. She believed she had the ability to do any job on campus, but that ticket, she had described earlier, had not been “punched.” She patiently adapted to her circumstances, slowly completing degree after degree. Because Wendy chose to remain employed at the same college, she also needed to patiently wait for increasingly higher level positions to open.

She was quick to acknowledge one of the most difficult issues she encountered was adapting to the various supervisors. Some of her most difficult adaptations occurred with two especially difficult supervisors. Wendy was working at a grant-funded agency for what turned out to be an unethical supervisor. Her supervisor deliberately and routinely altered the finances, taking money from Wendy’s budget. The agency would get audited, and the supervisor always talked her way out of the situation. Wendy found herself in a real dilemma. “How could I be an effective director if that person was undercutting and undermining the quality of the grant programming because of what she was doing with the funding”?

This troubled Wendy deeply. She could not afford to quit her job at the time, and so, frightened but determined, she finally reported the supervisor to the executive director.

And he just looked the other away. And I thought, well, gosh, if her boss isn’t even addressing this, then what choice do I have in this? Even if we had this level of unethical activity going on, we could still make it better by what we did on a daily basis. Whether we cut corners in other
ways, we could still serve the people in the right avenues, in a better avenue than if we walked away.

Despite the predicament she had discovered, she knew two things to be true. First, she needed to get a new job and leave this unethical situation. Secondly, she valued the clients the agency served, and she was going to find ways to best serve them despite the managerial ineptness.

And so, until she was able to obtain another job, Wendy adapted the services to best meet the needs of their clients. She had done everything she thought she could to improve the situation, and when everything she tried and failed to correct the situation, she adapted, deciding to do what she deemed right for the clients. Her work paid off and she soon obtained another job, but she never forgot the lessons she learned from this difficult situation.

In her second situation of adaptability, Wendy revealed a frustrating and on-going conflict with another supervisor, her president. In a story reminiscent of my encounter with him, Wendy illuminated how her president had, on several occasions, prior to our meeting, “ barged in” on important business she was conducting. One incident involved multiple people who had strategically arranged several tight schedules to specifically meet with Wendy. The meeting had finally taken place. “We were in the conference room with the door shut, and in came the president. He sat down that day [and took over the meeting.] I never answered another question. He totally answered every question.”

Because he was new to community college administration at the time, he was answering questions about which he knew little. Wendy, on the other hand, did have
extensive knowledge and experience on the subject, which is why the participants had specifically requested Wendy for the meeting.

When the meeting concluded, the president casually added, “Well, I hope I didn’t just barge in. I hope I didn’t interrupt anything”!

Wendy was incensed! “How rude! How absolutely rude”!

She acknowledged that in time, she would confront the situation, but that immediate circumstances necessitated her adapting to the situation. When she arrived home that night, her husband asked her how her day had gone. She was able to communicate that she had had some difficulties, but that she had spent two hours internally processing the situation, and she needed to process this issue privately for a few days before she was willing to talk about it.

She couldn’t discuss it with anyone for days. She knew, however, that she needed to cope with this situation temporarily, adapting to his behavior until she could determine how best to address his repeated offenses. She accomplished this with a great deal of self-talk:

[Being a president,] he is a pretty big deal. I had to think, how could I prevent this from happening again, and what should I have done? I rehearsed in my mind, and I just kept replaying it. I kept thinking, what should have been done differently? What [can I do] if it happens again, and what could I do to make my feelings known?

I came up with about 2-3 scenarios, and some of them [involved him coming in and saying,] “Boy, I hope you didn’t think I was barging in.” I had all sorts of different scenarios played in my mind...When people have issues to deal with, counselors will encourage them to write a letter and never mail it. And I think that’s what I do when I replay these things in my mind. I may not ever have the intentions.

What I thought is that he felt I was incompetent. The [scenario] that I stuck to and actually would have followed through with had he approached me the next day, was, “Well, I hope [your interruption] was because you had
something to share and not that you felt I was incompetent, because that's the way I felt. I would have [said] that, if he's asked, but he never asked.

Wendy's ability to adapt, while painful at times, allowed her to do her job, to function, and to meet the many challenges she faced as a leader.

**Heightened awareness of gendered issues.** Wendy was well-aware of gendered issues in her position as a community college administrator. She seemed sandwiched between the two key men in her life who had extremely traditional values. As previously mentioned, her husband had a most traditional perspective on Wendy’s role as a wife and mother.

The second man in her life, her current boss, was a public school veteran with no experience with women leaders and little experience with community colleges. His inability to understand Wendy’s skills and talents routinely caused Wendy to “suck it up,” a phrase Laura had used in the previous interview. This gendered issue reflected an ignorance and insensitivity to her experience as well as her skills.

There is still a glass ceiling out there. I am A.B.D. and I've got a lot of education. [Our new president has] never worked with a female administrator. Many times I feel like I'm doing the clerical work for him and I'd say that's the most difficult thing. I've encountered this...many times.

I can type, but I don't know word processing. I don't know how to align the margins. “You've got a secretary right there, use her”! I know he's just not used to it.

Wendy found this situation both limiting and frustrating. She explained a gendered perspective about good old boys, similar to the perspective Laura had also seen. “He comes from a situation [where] his wife has never worked outside of the home. She does not want to be a part of social settings, like he comes to the Christmas party. She
avoids people whenever possible. I think that’s what he knows [about women], and that’s what he had.”

It was obvious that another situation existed where this woman leader needed to be adaptable. Her desire to be a more active leader was being inhibited by a male leader who was ignorant of her skills and talents, simply because of her gender.

Despite his view of women’s abilities, Wendy saw the strength and abilities the women leaders in her college did bring to the table. She took great comfort in the fact that she worked in a community of many women administrators, and she was immediately energized as she talked about this community of women leaders.

I’m glad I’m a woman in a leadership role. I really count on my female colleagues when I need something to get done. Not to stereotype or generalize, there are obviously some differences, but we are living around and working with a lot of men who have great ideas but no ability to implement them. I think women have had to multitask for so many years and do things from start to finish that they are not used to giving up...projects...from the conceptualization through the implementation stage, every step of the process.

Women are not afraid. I am not afraid to type up my own work. Men a lot of times are ready to hand it off. I think we [women] learn more and gain more from it because we know it from start to finish. If you want something done, give it to a woman.

Her explanation spoke volumes about the gender disparity she experiences as well as the supportive collegial climate the women administrators had created to support one another.

Self-care and balance. At the core of Wendy was her love of laughter and fun. Wendy carefully delineated between playful Wendy and professional Wendy, although the two often intersected. “[Playful Wendy] rides a Harley, for God’s sake!” While she jokingly denied having any tattoos, she did acknowledge she liked to go out for drinks.
and socialize with people who “…offer a world beyond state standards and employment issues.” With her friends, she does not have to “…go home and write up notes about what was said or what we did last night. I don’t have to follow up on something.”

Her social life balanced and relaxed her “…because there is no responsibility attached to it.” She especially loved the balance she felt spending time with her kids and her sister. She loved to laugh with her sister and they often poked fun of one another, something she felt was inappropriate at work.

What suffers with Wendy when she’s not balanced was her “…ability to connect with people the way I want to connect with them, whether it be my adult children, my husband, or coworkers. I become very irritable and short with them. I can’t get down to that very relaxed level.” Wendy then started to notice other behaviors such as being overly critical of her children and spouse, not exercising, using food to deal with stress, and not being able to sleep through the night.

Wendy understood that self-care was about balancing her personal needs. “I need people and I need to be away from people. I think it’s finding the balance—when I need to engage and when I need to withdraw.” Wendy loved to jump on her Harley and she and her husband rode together. Then she realized she wanted to be alone, and she convinced him that having separate bikes was preferable. Her self-care enabled her to be more effective as a leader, and she took this concept very seriously.

Spirituality. The final theme identified in Wendy’s interviews was spirituality. While she was quick to identify the religious dimension of her spirituality, our most vivid discussion came when we redefined spirituality.
Wendy initially identified a definitive core of religious spirituality. She was raised and in turn raised her own children in a strict protestant church. She professed this core, but seemed to believe she was somehow inadequate spiritually because she didn’t regularly attend Sunday services. Even with her active involvement in church committees, she was quick to focus on how she was not fulfilling the obligatory dimensions of a member in an organization.

As a researcher, I knew that if our discussion on spirituality could move forward, I would have to reframe the definition of *spirituality*. Being raised in the same denomination as Wendy but a more liberal segment of that denomination, I knew only too well the shame-based origin of our mutual church and the origin of her definition for religious spirituality. As I had done with the other three women, I offered her an alternative explanation of *spirituality*:

What if we defined spiritual as including religion or religious, but that was only one piece of it? It had more to do with making sense out of your world and developing yourself and defining how you treat other people. More about making the world a better place and making yourself a better person.

Her response was completely different then. “I don’t think spirituality is [just about] God. I agree with you. Religious and God are a part of that, but it’s about connecting on a whole different plane.’ We discussed the need to be sensitive to using the spiritual language in educational settings. “The word spiritual has different meanings for different people and I think sometimes, in education, we are so directed that we can’t talk about church or God or things like that. And to many people, spirituality is that. And so I probably do avoid saying [I’m] a spiritual person, which I am.”
We talked further about her views, and then I asked her how she would feel if I defined her as spiritual, based on the definition we’d discussed. “I’d be honored,” she responded. This discussion flowed perfectly into discussion of our final question.

The final question in the interview read, “Some of the literature (including Metzger, 03) suggests a correlation between a leader’s self-development and organizational effectiveness. What are your thoughts on this”?

She reflected on this and then replied,

Well, I'm not sure they can be separated. It’s one in the same, I would think. Everything that goes into a person’s self-development, into their spirituality, [goes with them to work.] Unless they are just going to work each day and performing like an actor, it will have everything to do with how they impact their organization or how they serve as leaders. They can’t be separated in my opinion.

The spirituality she conveyed during this final discussion typified the leader she had revealed in our two-hour interview, and as we concluded, she seemed exhausted, yet reflective.

Qualitative research is not scripted and may not have distinctive endings because it is more about the reality expressed by the individual. And so, at the conclusion of my interview with this vivacious, compassionate leader, my reality went something like this:

...And as we said our goodbyes, Wendy popped on her helmet, jumped on her bike, and then, gunning her motor, with a wave, drove off into the sunset, she and her Harley, in a vibrant trail of blue smoke!
Summary

The proceeding discussion and analysis yielded rich spiritual insights into the attitudes, beliefs, values, commitments, and action plans of remarkable women as they sought to understand and negotiate the complexities of personal growth and professional development toward a life of authentic leadership. I was privileged to glimpse into both the intense struggles and the moments of sheer joy and wonderment. Authentic leadership was not easily attained nor was it easy to maintain. These courageous women had done the work and, for many, they were now reaping the rewards.

This chapter identified nine core themes as well as unique and distinctive leadership traits that enhanced comprehension of the internal and external dynamics at work in women as they sought to describe their finely nuanced perceptions of what it meant to be an authentic, spiritual leader. Their fiduciary stories of struggle, passion, and successes elucidated their core values and their development into the passionate, spiritual women they had become.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUMMARY

According to the 2004 Directory of Iowa Community Colleges, women comprise an estimated 47% of Iowa’s community college middle-level administrators. My study was undertaken to expand the body of knowledge of these women leaders. This qualitative study focused on how women leaders understood the many complex and sometimes competing ways their personal values, beliefs, and attitudes interfaced with their professional leadership and how these both informed and contributed to their evolution as more authentic leaders. Specifically, this study sought to better understand and articulate the role that spirituality and/or religious orientation played in how these women understood the evolution of a deeper sense of personal authenticity in their leadership.

To better understand spirituality’s contribution to authentic leadership, the 15 Iowa community college presidents were asked to recommend one self-reflective and articulate woman administrator from their campuses who might provide insight and clarity about women’s leadership. Each woman was asked to submit a written narrative about her perceptions of effective and ineffective leadership. Twelve narratives were eventually submitted to the researcher. From these twelve narratives, four women leaders were selected for more detailed, follow-up interviews. These four respondents comprised a major portion of the data set for the current study. Personal interviews were conducted to probe more deeply into how these women understood both their theoretical orientation to and experiential perception of women’s leadership. They were also asked to discuss...
their personal journeys toward authentic leadership and what, if any, role spirituality had to play in this developmental process.

Richly descriptive case studies detailing the experiences and perceptions of these four women leaders were reviewed in chapter 4. An iterative and constant comparative technique that analyzed the original twelve narratives and four interviews led to several significant findings. Nine distinct themes emerged from both the narrative accounts and personal interviews; however, and so these nine themes were defined and exemplified.

Generally speaking, women respondents spoke of the pressing demands and constant stressors that threatened to fragment their leadership responsibilities and personal lives. To cope with these demands and stressors, women leaders sought out and attempted to integrate more holistic ways to balance their lives. Developing better personal and professional balance allowed these women to live lives of meaning and purpose. It also led to a deepening sense of inter-connectedness with their families and staff as well as an appreciation for the importance of self-actualization in the context and culture of professional activity. Spirituality was one of the important factors in their development towards better balance in their lives and ultimately, to their capacity to be more effective and authentic leaders.

Four research questions guided the current study:

1. What beliefs and/or practices contribute to the participants’ conception of spirituality?

2. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of authenticity?
3. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of leadership?

4. What role does gender play in the participants’ conception of spirituality?

This final chapter will seek to provide some tentative answers to these questions through a discussion of research findings, recommendations for future research and applications, and a succinct summary of the overall scope of this study.

The first section will summarize the research findings through an analysis of the nine themes that emerged from the twelve written narratives and the four case studies. Parallels will be drawn between these themes and the theoretical model which acted as the theoretical framework for this study: The Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development.

Section two will offer recommendations regarding language considerations, parallel research study, higher education considerations, leadership training, and leadership networking. The final section will offer a succinct summary of this study.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings for this study will proceed through three sections. It will begin with an analysis of the nine most dominant themes that emerged from the interviews and written narratives. This discussion will then draw some parallels between these themes and the theoretical model which formed the backdrop for this study. It will conclude with an analysis of the four research questions focusing on issues of gender, authenticity, leadership, and spirituality.
Pseudonyms have been used throughout this study to protect the identities of respondents. Additional precautions to protect identity became necessary during the course of writing this chapter. Thus, periodically, a blank space will appear in place of a name to further protect the respondents' identity; principally in those places where the information offered was of a particularly sensitive nature.

**Theme One: Heightened Awareness of Gender Issues**

Sensitivity to issues of gender, especially gender equality, is a critical component of effective leadership. Gender inequities can compromise the confidence and competency of women leaders. Similarly, a heightened awareness of the value of women’s individual and collective skill development and competencies can positively impact authentic leadership. This first theme analyzes five dimensions of heightened awareness of gender related issues and their impact on authentic leadership.

**Sensitivity and awareness.** Sensitivity and awareness of gendered barriers is one example of how women sought to better understand their leadership roles. Cathryn discussed how she had become increasing aware of the inappropriate sexually motivated remarks men had made during her early professional life. Because of this heightened awareness, Cathryn made decisions to cope with these behaviors by laughing them off or ignoring them, knowing that at this stage of her career she had few other choices. In recent years, when she became aware of gender-related improprieties, she no longer ignored them but often utilized sensitivity training for all staff which she hoped would heighten everyone’s awareness of the impact that these improprieties could have on the work environment.
Wendy's, Cathryn's, and Laura's collective experiences with some male supervisors suggested that the supervisors did not understand women's unique leadership potential nor trust their leadership skills. Confronted by what they saw as gender-based ignorance, these women leaders coped by internalizing what Baker and Miller (1986) identified as a cultural acceptance of sexual inferiority. As is still often the case in community college administrative settings, men still dominate prominent leadership roles enabling them, in some cases, to ignore growing gender-based conflicts, while women leaders are left with few options except to adapt or leave.

Awareness and sensitivity to these issues enabled women to reflect on how they would address similar kinds of issues in the future. Laura had chosen to remain mute, while Wendy decided to build a case to some day confront her male president with her growing concerns of gender bias and inequality. For many women in these positions the bottom line is basic survival (Baker and Miller, 1986). Awareness of these realities enables women leaders to be more self-reflective and to make more informed choices.

**Historical knowledge.** The old adage that knowledge is power is critical to our current discussion. It is very important that women have some historical knowledge and background into issues of gender inequality and its impact on their professional lives. Women leaders who are aware of historical gender bias have a foundational perspective upon which to build their own perceptions of authentic leadership. While all respondents displayed a general, fundamental knowledge about the historical impact of gender bias, one dimension appeared to be particularly problematic some women. Wendy was regularly subjected to subtle gender bias which had a profound impact on her self-image
or self-perception and thus impacted her confidence to be an effective decision maker.

This is a similar dilemma discussed in Robinson’s (1996) study of woman administrators. Her study suggests that women’s professional leadership obligations, in the context of historical gender bias and inequality, left little time for women to reflect upon their feelings of isolation or loneliness. Similarly, Wendy’s lack of time to reflect on historic gender bias issues in her place of work leaves her open to having her sense of self and her professional responsibilities solely defined by her male president.

This current theme suggests the need for women to have a thorough awareness of and sensitivity to the historical trajectory of gender-based biases and inequalities. “Gender becomes a relevant concept in restructuring the knowledge base of educational administration” (Grogan, 1996, p. 172). This historical knowledge enables women to understand the dynamics, potential barriers, and the uniqueness of the interface between their gender specific personal and professional responsibilities. Knowledge of the impact of sexual harassment, gender inequity, and stereotypes provide woman leaders a broader perspective to deal with the diverse issues impacting them as women and as leaders.

Additionally, the power to decide how they will proceed with gendered issues is significant. For example, after Cathryn encountered situations of sexual harassment, she had personal power to decide how to proceed in an effective manner. Her primary choice was to confront sexual improprieties decisively and immediately. This helped Cathryn to realize that she could and would act proactively. This preventative stance not only enhanced her personal competency as an effective leader but educated her staff and helped them to learn from their experiences.
The Good Old Boy Network. The Good Old Boy network still exists in the context of leadership, and it is essential that women leaders not only understand this exclusivist mindset but also develop an understanding of its implications for them personally and in their leadership roles. The Good Old Boy network was frequently referred to and extensively defined by every respondent.

Three of the women were confident they had lost bids for the presidency of their institution—attributing this, in part, to the Good Old Boy network. [Name withheld] explained that while the interviewees for the presidency of her institution included a veteran woman administrator, only men, with negligible community college experience, were selected by the male-dominated board of directors for final consideration. [Name withheld] talked in dark intonations about “The Boys” as an exclusive club that had regularly functioned consistently and decisively during her administrative tenure but in ways that often left women out of the decision-making processes.

She described her perception of the psychological dynamics existing for some of the more staunch members of the network: “I think they have an inherent belief that women can’t do what men can do. When these men feel threatened and it is a woman who threatens them, they may resort back to some of that behavior just because it is easier.” Almost unanimous among the women leaders interviewed was the perception that the Good Old Boy network was made up of generally older men—a dying club they perceived would soon lose its power. These respondents’ statements concur with what has been suggested in the literature that the Good Old Boy network is losing power as older male leaders retire and younger women enter leadership positions.
Understanding fundamental gender differences in leadership. The fourth aspect of gender awareness dealt with leadership differences between men and women and was a powerful point of discussion. All four women saw this dimension of gender awareness in extremely positive terms. By pooling the gendered resources of all leaders, there rests the potential for positive outcomes for the organization. For example, women leaders with enhanced relational skills contribute insights to collaborative decision-making while men leaders with more traditional decision making attributes can make their unique contribution based on their particular knowledge and skills. Women contribute depth and variety to decision-making when they are able to utilize their particular leadership skills and abilities. Robinson (2003) encourages women leaders to adapt a combination of strong male and soft female leadership skills into a “stroft” (p. 11) leadership style.

All four respondents discussed their leadership skills in the context of having developed good mothering skills. This was reflected in how they treated employees or students. The parallel is seen in another women’s leadership study. Wilson (2004) cited a 2001 Wellesley College leadership study, in which some of the sixty prominent women from a variety of fields “…identified a framework for understanding the roots and practices of leadership as emerging from mothering” (p. 73). This innate quality which women contribute to leadership is another essential component of the awareness of gendered issues.

Gendered socialization to the realities of difference between male and female leadership styles creates a culture where women can be sensitive to relational leadership styles while at the same time respecting the way men have been socialized to more...
traditional leadership roles. By understanding these differences, women and men leaders can enhance their understanding of the gender related dynamics that often come into play in organizational conflicts, communication, and discourse.

**Gender literacy.** This final dimension of heightened awareness was reflected in the way women leaders sought to understand the full scope of gender-related issues impacting leadership. This reflects a more sophisticated kind of gender literacy—the ability to see both the positive and negative aspects of gender as it relates to leadership. The word *adaptable* was mentioned repeatedly in the interviews, especially pertaining to gendered issues. These women's knowledge of both the positive and negative potential of gender issues empowered these women leaders toward a heightened "gender literacy" (Campbell, 2003). Campbell suggests gender literacy should be fostered in order to make women leaders more visible as well as help women “learn about the schemas that work against us and how they do so” (p. 125).

This study affirmed the assumptions from the literature and early theoretical models that women's leadership constructs had been contextualized by historical and hegemonic influences. The women respondents had, indeed, contextualized historical and hegemonic influences and each had constructed her own unique perspective on gender literacy. This literacy skill enabled respondents not to personalize negative comments, to ignore but sometimes challenge inappropriate behavior, to celebrate the contributions from both genders, and to make behavioral or attitudinal change based on their personal gender literacy. Each woman saw her decision-making skill as reflective
of her ability to make free and informed choices that fit her personal and authentic leadership development.

**Theme Two: Commitment to a Core Set of Values**

A second theme that was most frequently identified by the majority of respondents is related to the importance of having a strong commitment to a core set of values. It was an essential core to how these women leaders understood their leadership development.

While respondents offered a number of differing insights about originating points for the evolution of their value systems—families of origin; life experiences; and/or spiritual and/or religious commitments—they all agreed that these values acted as a kind of moral compass. They formed the essence of their lives and relationships. A commitment to following these values and beliefs was essential to respondents. And, when these value commitments came under threat, for whatever reason, respondents were quick to make adjustments.

All of the women believed their core value system began to emerge in childhood. Debra and Wendy talked about early ties with organized religion and discussed their values in the context of an association with a particular church or denominational affiliation. Both were firm in their conviction that religious commitments were strongly associated with the core of their value systems.

In addition to early religious-oriented value development, respondents spoke of the importance of later lived experiences and how these also contributed to their core set of values. Wendy had become a stay-at-home wife and mother at an early age. This
experience had helped formalize in her mind the impact of caretaking responsibilities and the importance of working for career success in non-traditional ways. Cathryn had struggled with a unique disability but this had instilled in her a strong commitment to work hard, don't give up, life is a challenge, and the sky is the limit. Laura was able to reprioritize and strengthen her earlier value system as a result of experiences with two very significant life traumas. Cathryn's experience with a devastating job evaluation had also allowed her to reconfigure her earlier value system. Debra had struggled through a painful, unjust firing which forced her to reframe her professional and personal value perspectives.

Each of the aforementioned difficulties of these four women leaders impacted their lives dramatically. But they courageously and tenaciously drew upon their core values to assist them in a kind of evolution to some higher place of personal, social, emotional, and spiritual development. Parker Palmer (2004) vividly details what happens to professionals who don't live by a core set of personal values. He had in mind dismissive doctors, lying politicians, executives who cheat their fellow employees out of their savings, and priests who violate children. Palmer suggests that people, who live lives divided, fail to understand that their personal pathology deeply impacts not only themselves but also the people they serve.

Laura accurately reflects Palmer's perspective. She detailed how one particularly difficult situation could have worked "to destroy me." As Laura reflected on this situation, it became apparent that she understood the consequences of trying to live a professional life divided from her personal values. In adversity, "you can either handle it
well or not well. Everybody is watching you. So I decided to handle it well...it wasn’t an easy thing to swallow, but it certainly taught me how to be graceful.” Repeatedly these women encountered adversity, and repeatedly they relied on their core set of values as a moral compass to guide them through their experiences, developing into stronger, more balanced and more spiritually grounded women leaders.

**Theme Three: Self-reflection and Learning from Experiences**

The third theme, self-reflection and learning from experiences, represents the cognitive and affective dimensions of women leaders’ development. This theme emerged numerous times in both the written narratives and the personal interviews. Four dimensions of self-reflection and learning from experiences were identified.

**Reflective leadership.** Even as she prepared to retire, Cathryn reflected on a question that had gnawed at her for some time. “What part of me is still underdeveloped?” She knew some decisions and choices she had made in the past had not turned out as she had hoped, and it became important for her to go through the process of self-reflection to see if there was anything that she could have changed about them. This was important to her self-discovery and development.

Laura had also discussed the need to process dimensions of her self-identity that made it difficult for her to identify and affirm her strong professional skills and talents. She explained how she would never use her professional titles in public and avoided identifying some of the work she had quietly done to cover for another administrator. While she seemed fearful that public revelation of her talents might be perceived as self-promotion, the opposite had occurred. At times, she had not been perceived as competent
enough to fulfill certain job-related obligations, and she was cognizant of the fact that this had deleterious professional implications.

Laura’s and Cathryn’s insights share similarities with Grogan’s (1996) women’s leadership study. Grogan asserts that “the most striking traits in the women [leaders] in this study are their ability to reflect on who they are and what they do (p. 150)”. Equally significant from Grogan’s feminist perspective was the fact that women leaders needed to identify and live out of their unique, value-laden personal perspective on particular issues rather than adopt the dominant view of others which may or may not correspond to their personal commitments. Women in the current study confirmed the significance of this observation.

**Constructed knower.** Debra spoke of her Myers-Briggs Personality Type which had identified her as an ESTJ—a personality type who tends to make analytical decisions to the exclusion of how others feel about it. She knew this context well. To compensate, Debra explained that she had learned the wisdom of surrounding herself with those who emphasized “feeling” over “analysis” when making decisions. She was clear that in later years, she had made better decisions because a variety of perspectives helped her make more informed decisions and more fully consider the feeling dimensions associated with an issue.

Debra was exhibiting what Belenky et al. (1997) referred to as a *constructed knower*. *Constructed knowers* examine their beliefs which lead to a reconstruction of a new way of thinking about self, others, and how one goes about constructing knowledge. Her decision to incorporate a blend of thinking-based and feeling-based decision-makers
was no doubt a difficult adjustment for this decisive, linear-thinking woman. However, she clearly understood the value of having these two perspectives and actively sought ways to incorporate this new understanding into her professional activity. Debra’s ability to reflect upon and integrate various dimensions and limitations of her personality type and professional style demonstrated her ability to tolerate and learn from, what Belenky (p. 137) refers to as, “internal contradiction and ambiguity”. This process of reflection and the ability to be comfortable with contradiction and ambiguity helped her to move beyond or transcend engrained patterns to a new place of leadership style. She was able to integrate and then adjust the complex dimensions of her internal and external developmental processes.

Women’s learning through conflict. Wellesley College President Diana Chapman Walsh explored the value of interpersonal conflict and its importance to the reflective learning process for women leaders. “Conflict is a resource...People will be challenged to grow and to meet these challenges, and in order to do this, they are going to have to confront the ambiguity, uncertainty, discomfort and conflict that are the crucibles of learning (Glazer, 1999, p.211)”.

Debra’s reflections on her firing from her college vividly demonstrated these crucibles of learning. Her decision to remain and work in the same community; her ability to move through the grieving process and her poise in social settings as she repeatedly encountered the person who had fired her, were all important dimensions of the life changing experience that led to many important changes and opportunities for growth. These cognitive and affective reflections on conflictual experiences indicated the
willingness of these women leaders to learn from experiences and to move toward the development of more tenacity and resiliency in their personal and professional lives.

**Spiritual balance through reflection.** Cathryn emphatically stated, “To be an effective leader, you have to be constantly changing!” The sentiment of Cathryn’s perspective was that women leaders must constantly reflect on their values and truth claims and learn from sometimes painful experiences. These painful experiences are an integral part of women’s development of authentic leadership and, for many of the respondents, have a definite spiritual component related to them. Authenticity and spirituality are related constructs. Authentic leadership, for many of the respondents, depended on a consistent process of spiritual development as they worked to balance and integrate their values, their truths, and their experiences.

Cathryn’s reflection on the importance of and the sometimes contradictory nature of change shares similarity with Harris’s Seven Steps of Women’s Spirituality (1989). Harris explains that women have a paradoxical pair of traits that both help them work toward balance while at the same time keeping them in a relative state of disequilibrium. The disequilibrium arises from a feeling that a woman is not living her authentic experience, while at the same time there is an emerging sense that in order to be more whole a woman must find a way to integrate both polarities—of who she now is and who she is becoming.

Much like Palmer’s concept of dividedness, Harris points out that women’s spirituality plays an integral role in leading them towards wholeness. Spirituality helps to repair this sense of dividedness many women feel when they are living a life someone
else has defined. Harris concludes that women must constantly reflect on their values, their spiritual journey, and the way they define their own truth claims rather than create an appearance of wholeness by trying to live someone else’s truth.

Women’s spiritual development and development toward authentic, reflective leadership is an iterative and reciprocal process. This may best be depicted in Laura’s comment; “Balance, balance, balance. It’s all about balance!”

Theme Four: Changing

The two previous themes regarding defining core values and the importance of self-reflection share a common thread—that transformative change is an important and necessary by-product of self-reflection. These women changed their lives as they reflected on themselves—their experiences, their values, and their movement toward wholeness. The distinctive element of this theme lies in its interconnection with the internal (cognitive and affective) and external (relational and behavioral) dimensions of the developmental process.

All four of the women leaders discussed changes they had made as they developed into more authentic leaders. Some of the changes were temporary adaptive coping mechanisms but many reflected their innate desire to become more authentic leaders. The following three subsets of the theme “changing” were identified from the respondent’s accounts.

Adaptive change and vulnerability. One significant perspective on processes of change explores the feelings of vulnerability which can arise in the face of significant life changes. Kram & McCollom Hampton (1998) discuss this sense of vulnerability. They
explain when people are under high stress they feel very vulnerable and as a result, they often project their feelings of vulnerability onto others, rather than taking responsibility for it. Sex-role socializing often prepares women to accept and find ways to be comfortable with this projective process. In many cases male vulnerability, at the prospect of change or under high stress, is projected onto females. This can lead to unfortunate consequences for the female counterpart. Kram & McCollom Hampton (1998) stress that female leaders must be wary of male leaders projecting their vulnerability onto them. They acknowledge that women are socialized to readily absorb this projected vulnerability but it often puts them in difficult personal and professional positions.

This is illustrated in the experiences of two of the respondents. Both respondents encountered ineffective leadership skills among new presidents at their respective institutions. They felt pressure to adapt to and compensate for these leadership deficits but also felt this kind of strategy was not an authentic reflection of their core values. [Name withheld] was keenly aware of the effect of this sex-role socializing to internalize and, thus, attempt to compensate for the deficits of another—especially those of previous presidents. She described her frustrations with a previous president’s vulnerabilities. She revealed how she had to cope with a president who had routinely projected his vulnerabilities onto her, imposing his fears about his new job and putting her in compromising positions to cover his perceived inadequacies. While this woman leader seemed clear that she had felt compelled to change her own leadership style to adapt
temporarily, she was also clear that she would not have been able to function in this manner for an extended time.

Another respondent also described how she had also felt compelled to temporarily adapt. Her president had not been fulfilling his administrative duties of attending to critical college business. Rather than report his improprieties to the board of directors, she had personally taken over those significant parts of the president’s job, adding those parts to her personal workload.

These two accounts attest to the significant vulnerability women felt while attempting to adapt to change especially when those changes placed them in compromising positions and/or were in violation of their core value. They were willing to temporarily accept the vulnerability and make these adaptive changes to keep the college running smoothly or to help with a temporary injustice. However, in both stories, the women leaders seemed quite clear about the negative consequences that would accrue to their evolution toward authentic leadership if they had accommodated to these adaptations permanently.

The emperor’s new clothes. A most revealing point came from Laura who described how easily misperceptions of skill and authenticity can come with high positional power. She explained that leaders can become insulated from the truth. Staff and the community often tell high-level administrators what they want to hear. For Laura, the trick is for leaders to have a realistic appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses so that they do not fool themselves into believing that they are something that they really are not. Authentic leadership requires this realistic self-appraisal and a
healthy skepticism toward the overly positive comments of others. Laura acknowledged that she had fallen into a similar trap at one time and had to reverse some of her own behavioral patterns in order that she might become a more authentic reflection of her core values.

In the lighthearted but revealing fable, The Emperor’s New Clothes by Hans Christian Andersen, the emperor is fooled into believing his new wardrobe is made of fine linens and anyone who can’t see it is uneducated. The only person who spoke the truth was a little boy who acknowledged that the emperor was naked. This playful story reflects the challenges women leaders encounter. They must remain very intentional and deliberate about their authentic selves—making changes based on realistic knowledge and reasonable appraisal of their experiences and perceptions. Women who know themselves well, and understand their strengths and weaknesses are better able to make changes that reflect their authenticity.

Change from reflection. The final subset of the theme “changing” reveals how self-reflection and a commitment to change improves quality of life and enhances professional relationships. Cathryn’s previous story of change based on the gut-wrenching experience of her 360° Feedback evaluation from her staff was transformative. As a result of this experience, Cathryn committed to be a more spiritually grounded person, a more reflective person, a more collaborative colleague, and a more authentic leader. Clearly, the reflective process and change events leading up to women leaders’ decisions to adopt a more authentic leadership frame of reference can be

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difficult. But it reveals, that for these respondents, a fundamentally important spin-off of hard-won change is to improve themselves and their relationships.

Joan Borysenko, M.D. (1999), talks about women's changes from a biological standpoint. She explains that due to an increase in testosterone and estrogen decline, "women get more ballsy and brazen at midlife, speaking out about what is important" (p.90). Through this biological component of mid-life, female assertiveness may strike the uniformed as humorous; it may also be a critical piece of the puzzle that leads to higher level thinking or cognitive function for women as they negotiate the demands of life (Belenky, 1997). These women discover they do not want to live fragmented and contradictory lives, so they change, speaking out and acting out of their desire to be more authentic.

While it is no doubt certain that hormonal and biological variances must account for some of the women's choices to change, the respondents stories also seem to reflect a desire to change the relational dynamics of the personal professional lives. Their decisions to change marked a movement toward deeper authenticity—a place where their external behaviors were more congruent with their internal beliefs. Wendy challenged her husband's skepticism and ended up purchasing a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Laura gave herself permission to relax more around the demands of her work responsibilities which, in turn, cut down significantly on her guilt. This change resulted in her giving more time to her family and not stressing as much about "making her mark" at every work-related meeting. Debra felt free to be her authentic self when she finally divorced...
her husband, and Cathryn’s decision to stop being a micromanager improved relations with her staff and lessened her stress level.

Borysenko (1999) concurs. She talks about self-discovery and authenticity, and how, sometimes, these revelations “...get lost in the subsequent busyness of life. But the revelations on the road to authenticity—when we slowly but surely find our spiritual vision and arrange our outside life to match our inside one...” (p. 173-174)...those are the changes of consequence.

Theme Five: Self-care and Balance

The fifth theme of “self-care and balance” was a major topic for many of the respondents. Self-care had both a cognitive and behavioral component. Plans and decisions to better care for oneself necessitated a behavior change in activities to bring better balance and a healthier perspective.

Self-care is often antithetical to women who have been historically socialized to put others before themselves. However, the current respondents found self-care to be one of the key process themes (Figure 1) to their ongoing leadership development processes. Self-care had become an integral part of who these women were and many spoke of self-care as having a strong spiritual and/or religious component to it. They consistently reiterated that through seeking to maintain spiritual balance and caring for themselves first, they became more effective leaders and were more proactive in their decisions making processes.

Unbalanced lives. Respondents indicated that when they did not seek balance by practicing self-care, they experienced a wide variety of adverse reactions. Wendy and
Cathryn withdrew from others and could not talk. Laura became tense, irritable, and hypercritical of others. Wendy could not focus, and watching a movie became an exercise in futility. Debra’s thoughts lost clarity and became muddled. Wendy could not sleep and overate to cope with her stress. Laura’s ability for definitive decision-making suffered and she missed important details.

Women leaders who live unbalanced lives do not care well for themselves or for others. Because of their inability to concentrate, their lives become disjointed and unmanageable, and they aren’t able to address important details. Their decision-making is compromised, affecting themselves, their families, their colleagues, and their colleges.

Collectively, the current women leaders knew that when they pushed themselves too hard, they needed to take at least some steps to better manage or control this debilitating obstacle to their healthy functioning. To this point, Anne Wilson Schaef (1990) offered some insight: “Some good workaholics have found that if they do a cursory job of nurturing themselves, they can work even harder. Unfortunately, that isn’t nurturing oneself, that’s protecting one’s supply.” (p. February 26) Wilson Schaef’s observation offers one insight as to how current respondents sometimes understood the need for self-care—as a cursory effort to produce higher levels of productivity. For some of these hard-driven leaders who managed hundreds of people and millions of dollars, there was a growing awareness that self-care could not just be a half-hearted afterthought. It was becoming a non-negotiable commodity for these women leaders. Understanding their needs and practicing regular self-care was essential to healthy living and effective leadership development.
**Balanced lives.** When these women did seek balance by practicing self-care, their lives were more spiritual and joyful. Cathryn stated she was happier and had a smile on her face more often. Wendy had more fun. Laura felt less guilty and laughed more. Debra and Wendy had better energy levels and socialized more frequently. Laura and Cathryn were calm, peaceful, and content. Wendy tended to be more giving and generous, and all the respondents said they were better wives, mothers, friends, and workers. They slept better, ate healthier, and worked less hours. Balanced lives meant better perspectives on life and more functional ease in their leadership responsibilities.

Ryan (1998) notes that when women care for themselves, they develop a growing clarity of voice, mood, attitude, and opinion. She says that compassionate self-care is foundational for women to progress to higher levels of spiritual development and to better appreciate the connection between themselves and the world. When women compassionately care for themselves, they learn to have compassion for the whole world.

**Process of self-care and balance.** While a variety of self-care and balance beliefs and practices were disclosed by these women leaders, they all sought to find simple techniques to bring about better balance. Initially, they needed a contextual definition of self-care and balance. This began when they constructed their personal self-care baselines. Next, they defined their personal constructs of balance and how it might impact healthy living, supportive relationships, or reasonable working conditions. Once respondents defined their personal constructs, they were better able to reflect on the beliefs and practices needed to achieve balance in their personal and professional. They were then better able to reassess and reflect upon both their successes and on those areas
that needed further improvement. They noted cognitive, affective, relational, or behavioral indicators of this new and emerging sense of balance.

Listening to these women describe their process of self-care and balance was similar to Harris’ (1989) fourth step—dwelling—of “The Seven Steps of Women’s Spirituality”. Harries describes dwelling as finding a comfortable place and creating time for self-reflection, personal awareness, and emotional connection. She identifies the necessity for rest and solitude but also for finding time for connection with others including children, pets, and nature, as well as other family and friends. This focus on dwelling appears to be the kind the thing that the current respondents were beginning to focus more intently upon.

**External self-care and balance.** These women leaders also noted external processes of self-care. External processes such as exercise, socializing, travel, playing with pets, reading, and attending religious functions were some dimensions of this external, self-care enterprise. They also sought intellectual and professional balance through educational and volunteer pursuits. While Wendy sought intellectual stimulus by completing her doctorate, Debra, Cathryn, and Laura did an extraordinary amount of volunteer work—serving on local, state, and national boards. Many of the respondents served as consultants, keynote speakers at state conferences, and instructors for a variety of leadership classes.

These women leaders seemed to have a high need for variety in their lives. This was an important dimension of their self-care practice. They sought fulfillment of this need through serving others. Their sentiments paralleled findings by Carol Gilligan
who identified women's need for self-care as contributing to a deeper sense of interconnectedness with themselves as well as others.

Integrated self-care. Claiming the right to care for themselves as well as others (Gilligan, 1982) is a pivotal moment in women's lives. For Gilligan, it represents an advanced stage of moral development and occurs when women fully integrate the competing demands to care for others as well as themselves. The level of integration this researcher heard and intuited from respondents seemed to be a function of both chronological age and current levels of leadership development. The youngest interviewee's words and perspectives seemed to indicate unfamiliarity with caring for herself, and she deferred to the opinions of others frequently. Several times she began answering a question, hesitated, and then stopped—often in mid-sentence. She would switch from first person to third person, deferring to the ideas of someone else—often a male figure in her life. As many feminist writers suggest (Baker Miller, 1986; Belenky et al.; 1997; Gilligan, 1982), this seemed to reflect a struggle to find her integrated "voice".

Two of the more senior women respondents did appear to have found their "voices" and these voices rang out loud and clear. I sensed a slight edginess around their assertions of self-care; suggestive of a woman who must defiantly claim her right to self-care. The fourth woman leader seemed to have found her "voice" as well, but its arrival had been relatively unremarkable, albeit not without considerable hard work. She reflected a pride in how she cared for herself, but even her voice betrayed a slight rational justification, which I suspected was the voice she used to mentor younger women leaders and possibly her children.
Internal self-care and balance. As respondents talked about self-care and balance, they noted that rarely, if ever, had anyone asked about the internal dynamics involved in the self-care process. Internal self-care and balance included inner monologs such as self-talk, values clarification, clearly defining their lived reality and seeking insight into the reality of others. Fundamental self-care strategies for all of these women leaders were associated with a relatively high need for solitude. This internal self-care involved shutting down their racing minds, reflecting, or just being silent. Self-care also involved internalized spiritual and/or religious practices such as meditation, retreats, and prayer. These internal activities are closely linked to our earlier discussion on self-reflection and correspond well to some of Belenky’s (1997) ideas, previously mentioned, around the concept of a constructed knower. A constructed knower includes delving into the internal processes of the mind—becoming aware of and staying engaged with how their minds work. This internalized self-awareness better enables women to define personal and professional boundaries as well as more clearly defining their needs and expectations.

Three of the four interviewed respondents exhibited characteristics of the constructed knower, and these three were the elder leaders. Two of these women were retiring soon, and it appeared they were spending the later part of their careers involved as constructed knowers who desired to make “the unconscious conscious, by consulting and listening to the self” (Belenky et al., 1997, p. 141).

Theme Six: Care of Others

Theme six: “Care of Others” was the most cited aspect of authentic leadership in both the written narrative and personal interviews. It is also a consistent theme in the
scholarly literature. Respondents indicated that care of others involves several important dimensions. First, women leaders placed high value on caring for others. Secondly, care for others meant bringing strong relational skills to the board room. Finally, care for others involved a strong spiritual component.

**Value of caring for others.** Women respondents placed a high value on caring for others. Indeed, it was one of their highest value commitments. They repeatedly used terms such as collaboration, modeling, mentoring, compassion, fairness, and equity. These findings lend support to Gilligan’s (1982) work suggesting that one of women’s highest moral imperatives is an injunction to care. They also share some similarity with Margaret Wheatley’s (2002) fundamental principles for leadership. Framed in spiritual thinking, Wheatley’s principles include the joy of serving others and the interconnectedness women feel for others. Whether the respondents were advocating for a rebellious student or encouraging a young woman leader to practice self-care, they cared deeply about the people they served. They enjoyed serving others, and they recognized the importance of interconnectedness that they were helping to foster in their institutions.

Caring for others is repeatedly cited in the literature as representing a kind of metaphorical weaving together of the fabric of human life (Belenky et al., 1997; Harris, 1989; Helgesen, 1990; Plaskow & Christ, 1989; Ryan, 1998). As women care for others and weave connections, their spiritual lives are enhanced and they find greater purpose.

**Relational skills in the board room.** The second “care of others” dimension spoke to the strong relational skills women leaders bring to their administrative
responsibilities—to the board room. Respondents addressed their contributions to cabinet leadership, which at the community college is typically a board of upper level administrators. They cited details of how their unique relational perspectives were seen as an essential component to decision-making among other upper level, predominantly male leaders.

Wellesley President Diana Chapman Walsh (1999) discussed how essential this relational perspective is for authentic leaders. She focused on how leaders dealing with disagreement must note conflict’s impact on others by paying extra attention to maintaining bonds to one’s self, to others, and to the larger culture. Fischer (2005) calls this intuitive relational talent of women “web thinking”: “Women integrate more details faster [than men] and arrange those bits of data into more complex patterns. As they make decisions, women tend to generalize, synthesize, and take a broader, more holistic, more contextual perspective of any issue” (p. 134).

Women’s contribution to the board room through their more finely nuanced relational skills and their proclivity for web thinking provide opportunities for more holistic care of others. These intuitive skills reflect essential components of women’s authentic leadership development.

The spiritual dimension of women’s leadership development. The third and final perspective in “care of others”, as in our previous discussions, suggests a strong spiritual dimension. Cathryn’s pending retirement evoked profound spiritual self-reflections on the meaning and purpose she had brought to the institution and how she had cared for the place that had brought her much fulfillment.
I think everyone can be replaced, but I think that there will be a part of me that is missing from the organization when I leave. Until someone replaces that part, they won’t even know what is missing. But something will be missing. I haven’t seen somebody step up with that particular part. Things will thrive, but they won’t even know what’s missing until somebody comes and replaces it. It could be one person, it could be several people, who jointly provide that. I’m not even sure how I identify it, but I do know that the organization has my fingerprints on it.

Scott (1994) attempts to explain this spiritual dimension of care. “It involves an awareness of being part of a whole, a whole with visible and invisible parts. It is recognition of one’s existence in the context of Other, and a sense of interconnectedness to a much larger world” (p. 69).

When these four women leaders spoke of their personal leadership qualities, their predominant language was relational: caring, compassion, fairness, and understanding. Their highest purpose in leadership was the connections they made with others. Their frequent use of mothering metaphors emphasized the importance they held for their loving and nurturing connections to others. Vaughan’s (1995) work typifies the literature’s predominant mothering metaphor best as she describes the selfless service of parental love, specifically mothering. The mothering metaphor is suggestive of how the interconnection of care for others, or the maternal “experience of love” (p. 94) changes and enriches both lives immeasurably. It may best be typified in the selfless work of Mother Teresa of Calcutta who acted on the basis love and care for others.

The theme of “caring for others” reflected a deep-seated value system for these women. The value of caring for others encompassed compelling personal, relational, and spiritual dimensions and was a very important part of authentic leadership development.
Theme Seven: Authenticity

This research study began as a general quest to understand the contribution spirituality makes to women’s authentic leadership. The respondents had much to say about authenticity and we will now review this thematic area in greater detail.

Being themselves and being authentic. A prominent sub-theme dealt with respondents distinguishing between being authentic and being themselves. This is a difficult distinction to make for many might suggest that being authentic and being fully oneself are indistinguishable constructs. Respondents helped clarify the differences. These women were tough, resilient risk-takers, but they clearly distinguished between when they were being themselves and when they were being authentic. One respondent quipped, “I ride a Harley, for God’s sake!” For her, it was clear that while she was authentic at work, she did not always show all dimensions of her personality (fully being herself) because some of the other sides of her personality were not always easily shared with others.

As the researcher, I tended to define these women leaders as authentic, yet I failed to give them a working definition. Thus, the two concepts of being themselves and being authentic became almost opposing perspectives in the women’s response to me. Nevertheless, this discussion reflects what I observed and heard, rather than focusing on the specific words by which they chose to define themselves.

My working definition of authentic leadership is the symmetry between what a leader says and what she does. Furthermore, it is a conscious decision to be open and genuine. Laura epitomized authenticity in her jocular frankness about her shortcomings,
her deep awareness of and reflection on who she was, and her commitment to her core values. Naddaff’s (2005) description of how women are attracted to authenticity reflected Laura’s perspectives. “[Women leaders] have a more insistent desire to make time to discover who they are, what they really want, what they really feel and believe. And they have a more insistent desire to be able to fully express themselves in the environments and relationships where they live and work” (p. 302). Laura’s commitment to herself and to others is paramount to her career. She said she wanted people to know her as the whole person she was and not one-dimensional.

Another equally revealing example of authenticity is [Name withheld] who worked for an institutional president oblivious to her skills and abilities as a woman leader. Naddaff (2005) explains that women leaders face two barriers to authentic leadership. The first is a woman’s desire to care for others first and the second is gender bias in her organization. The woman leader I interviewed had encountered both of these issues, and it was clear that she was struggling to be her authentic self. She implied that while she was struggling, she would not be defeated, and her battle for authenticity would continue.

Authenticity was a predominant dimension of Belenky et al.’s (1997) idea of the constructed knower. Women who feel passionate about their own knowledge value the unique ways that they come to this knowing—their own epistemological journey. In the same vein, Straub (2005) suggests, “The degree of passion you sustain in your work is equivalent to how real you are” (p. 95). The respondents in this study revealed a clear passion for knowing themselves and for knowing the ways they came to know
themselves. This is, in one sense, a clear indication of their commitment to authenticity. Their passionate search for meaning, purpose, and connection, as with previous discussions, also revealed the spiritual dimension of their journey to authentic leadership. By seeking to understand themselves and their relationships to others, their development became a spiritual quest for their authentic core.

**Theme Eight: Spirituality**

Theme eight, spirituality, was not identified in specific terms as a relevant concern in the written narratives, and was directly identified as a religious guiding principle by two women leaders. It was clear, however, that while the precise language of spirituality tended not to be utilized, these women spoke of their movement towards authentic leadership in what could only be defined in deeply spiritual or transcendent terms. Christa Metzger’s (2003) study addresses this issue and suggests that the language of self/inner development be adopted in lieu of using spiritual/religious vernacular in order to allow people to access this important inner dynamic without being trapped by the loaded and, sometimes contradictory, language of spirituality and/or religiosity. This strategy was utilized until later in the interview process when the researcher was able to articulate a more precise clarification of terms.

This turned out to be a wise choice because even toward the end of the interviews, all four women leaders were reticent about the use of some version of spirituality or religiosity to describe their evolution toward authentic leadership. One woman described herself as *religious* but said she was not *spiritual* because she had not been attending church regularly. Another woman said she was not particularly *religious*, but felt pleased
that I would describe her as *spiritual*. A third woman said she was *religious* but did not like the term *spiritual* because it suggests something mystical. The fourth woman did not use the term *spiritual* until the final minutes of the interview. She then revealed that she was very *spiritual* but felt it was an extremely private spirituality that she rarely shared with anyone.

Utilizing Michael Sheridan’s (personal communication) definition of spirituality: “how a person understands her search for meaning, purpose, and connection with self, others and the universe,” I asked the women leaders if they would equate their development to spirituality. While they were not originally comfortable with the use of spirituality to describe their developmental processes, when presented with this definition, all four women concurred that their development was spiritual. Since one of the purposes of this study was to tap into this important construct for women leaders, I asked how they would feel about being described as spiritual. Two of the women who had earlier declined to self-identify themselves as spiritual now humbly shared that they would be honored if I referred to them as *spiritual*.

[Name withheld] shared an example of how her spirituality had informed and comforted her in a compelling personal tragedy. She was forced to face the potential death of her husband. After difficult days of anxiousness, deep-seated fear, and pain, she had a revelation. In that moment, she discovered a deep, abiding faith that everything would end favorably. This spiritual moment of faith discovery illustrated some of the important developmental milestones describes by James Fowler (1981), perhaps the best know modern theorist to do extensive work on faith development. Struggling to come to
terms with his own death, Fowler suggested that faith “was a coat against this nakedness...undergirding us when our life space is punctured and collapsed...It is a person’s way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces that make up our lives.” (pp. xii, 4)

This leader suggested that her new discovery of a deeper faith carried over to her work at the college, and she began to relate differently to her circumstances and to the people she encountered. Her propensity to feel intense fears and anxiety over her work at the college transmuted into calmness and peace that she now passes on to other women leaders.

Our previous discussion of one respondent’s retirement experience also suggests an equally powerful spiritual connection. As this woman prepared to retire, she reflected on how the spiritual side of her leadership skills had impacted others and how it would linger long after she was gone from the institution. Her spiritual awareness and the way in which it led to deeper connections with others and the sense that its impact would continue after she had left the institution resonates with the definition of authentic spirituality described by Vaughan (1995). “Authentic spirituality implies awareness of who we are as whole human beings—including body, emotions, mind, soul and spirit—existing in a web of interdependent relationships with the universe” (p. 5).

The spiritual self-reflections of these women leaders were an important contribution to this study. It was clear that while the descriptors and attributions of spiritual depth varied from woman to woman, each of these respondent’s spiritual journeys and discovery processes had had a profound impact on students and staff.
end, it was the degree to which their spirituality led to greater interdependence with others that was the most significant manifestation of their unique and very personal journey of the soul.

**Theme Nine: Courage and Tenacity**

This final theme, courage and tenacity, was cited eight times in written narratives and discussed extensively by each of the four women interviewees. Courage and tenacity were repeatedly referred to as describing the relationship these women leaders had with their work and their personal lives.

Courage and tenacity are deeply engrained personality traits these women carry with them to help them cope with the challenges they face at work and in their personal lives. Astin and Leland’s (1991) monumental study of women’s leadership revealed that women in positional leadership often exhibit a great deal of courage and tenacity. The women in their study showed “an appetite for challenge, problem solving, and risk taking; [experienced] obstacles and personal setback to accept and overcome” (p. 126) and they described themselves as strong, decisive, speaking their minds, and willing to take risks.

It has become apparent to this researcher that women leaders in this study are a unique breed of leader who are willing to make the difficult decisions and yet do it with a caring sensitivity for their staff. The price these women paid to lead is phenomenal, but as they developed as leaders they resonated with a deep awareness of their own power that says, in the words of one respondent: “Soldier on, Sweetheart!”
Themes' Parallels to *The Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women's Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development*

The previous nine themes correlate well with the model of spiritual and authentic leadership development I created from an extensive review of the previous theoretical literature. The connections between the thematic categories just reviewed and *The Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women's Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development* (Figure 1), provide a new theoretical framework for beginning a fresh dialogue of women's authentic leadership. This visual analog is iterative and circular and is not intended to be understood in a simple linear manner. For purposes of this study, the following table is provided to assist the reader.
Table 7

Correlations Between Research Themes and the Model, the Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development

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<tr>
<th>The Interrelated Systems and Processes of Women’s Spiritual and Authentic Leadership Development</th>
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<td>Systems</td>
<td>Processes within the Systems</td>
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<td>Enstatic/Internal</td>
<td>Willingness to risk</td>
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<td>• Changing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Courage and tenacity</td>
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<td>Reflections towards self-knowledge</td>
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<td>• Self-reflection and learning from experience</td>
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<td>Character/Values</td>
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<td>• Commitment to a core set of values</td>
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<td>• Self-care and balance</td>
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<td>• Authenticity</td>
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<td>Intuitiveness/knowing</td>
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<td>Ecstatic/External</td>
<td>Interconnectedness to self and others</td>
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<td>Heightened awareness/synchronicity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Heightened awareness of gender themes</td>
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The table lists the model’s two enstatic and ecstatic system categories in the left column and their corresponding processes in the center column. The nine research themes are in the right column and it is shown how they correspond with multiple processes nested within the enstatic and ecstatic system categories.
For example, the theme of "changing" is represented in three processes. The internal process of "willingness to risk" indicates the dynamics of the cognitive and affective decision-making process of the women leaders. Through years of therapy, one respondent contemplated the impact her husband's alcoholism had on her family and professional life. Her cognitive and affective decision then became external, both relationally and behaviorally. She attempted to get her husband into therapy. When he refused, she made the decision to divorce him and move on with her life. The theme of "changing" reflects her "articulating and acting on her vision" which was to work on the marriage. Her subsequent decision to divorce her husband and move on with her life reflects her "willingness to change." This personal decision greatly impacted her professional life because with her new-found freedom and her willingness to change, she completed her doctorate and became a higher education administrator.

In addition to the theme of "changing," considerable replication also exists in the themes of "courage and tenacity," "self-care and balance," "authenticity," and "care of others." These replications provide insight into how women leaders internally determine their values and then translate them into the external realm by acting on those values.

Obviously, this visual analog cannot clearly articulate or easily illustrate the way that each respondent uniquely defines and has experienced her development toward authentic leadership. It does provide a strategic reference point whereby structural inferences can be made between general thematic categories and broader internal and external processes of development. Authenticity for one woman may have come early in her life while another woman may have struggled for many years with finding ways for
better self-care and balance—important components in the emergence of authenticity.

What is significant about these women’s stories is the unique and very personal contribution each woman brings to a collective understanding of women’s spirituality and its relationship to authentic leadership development.

**Research Questions**

While the four research questions of this study were tacitly reviewed as part of the preceding thematic discussion, a general summary of conclusions is provided.

**What beliefs and/or practices contribute to the participants’ conception of spirituality?** Women leaders’ internal beliefs and external practices contribute definitively to their spirituality. In their search for meaning, women leaders internally reflect on the meaning and purpose of their lives. They identify values that mirror who they are and these values drive their purpose. They practice those values through their relationships with themselves and others.

Some women leaders identify their values as coming from their familial background, others see them as experiential, and still others relate their values to God. Regardless of what internal beliefs and external practices they possess, most of the respondents saw the processes as relational, a way towards an interconnectedness to themselves and to others. At one point in women’s development, they may value others over themselves, and in our culture that is often seen as the ultimate expression of love. But, at some point there is a shift away from merely an **other-focus** to an interconnectedness which also encompasses a **self-focus**. And it is in the interrelationship
of these two processes that these women discovered a more balanced and ultimately more rewarding relational dynamic began to emerge.

What role does gender play in the participants’ conception of spirituality? Two distinct gender literacy issues, gender inequity and gender identity issues, are important components to the emergence of spiritual awareness. Women need a heightened awareness of gender inequity issues to deal with the persistent, subtle barriers that continue to hinder their progress towards spiritually informed authentic leadership. These women may feel that they sometimes have to resort to humor or make attempts to ignore an offensive gender barrier in order to survive in a very competitive leadership environment. While preferring to invoke a spirit of connectedness, grace, and gentle confrontation, these women often felt that their only option was to adapt to the barrier. But, in so doing, they experienced a denial or minimization of their own spiritual core.

Many of the veteran women leaders have experienced this denial of spirit first hand. They seem desensitized, almost detached, from its effects. It is almost as if there is a belief that somehow the prominence (Erkut, 2001) of their current administrative position will protect them from gender discrimination. For the younger women, the struggle to come to terms with these competing dichotomies is more urgent. They do this by attempting to compartmentalize the pain. That is, rather, they compartmentalize the language of confrontation versus adaptation. Thus, there is a kind of awareness that younger leaders are freer to choose to either confront or adapt to gender barriers. And, there is a kind of misplaced feeling of safety that this heightened awareness presumably protects them, allowing them to foster more peaceful and spiritually informed leadership.
practices. I question both the logic and certainty of this viewpoint. But, I realize that, for some, it may be a necessary, if not fully consistent, way to cope with demanding personal and professional lives.

The second dimension of gender issues is the gender identity issues, and it is in this dimension women intuitively begin to reveal their inner core of spirituality. Their innate skills of connecting, nurturing and mothering others reveal the purpose for which many women leaders aim. Caring for others, valuing others, supporting and empowering others is a spiritual dimension these women respondents aspired to interject into their leadership. They do this with the hope that others might adopt a similar relational value and seek to emulate these values in their work environments. These women’s frequent use of a *mothering* metaphor to describe some of their leadership responsibilities is indicative of this deeper spiritual commitment.

**How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of authenticity?** Spiritual development is a lifetime endeavor that brings women closer and closer to their authentic core. This is a complex construct for women to come to terms with for two reasons. First, their constant reflective development brings them closer and more intimately towards their spiritual values of deeper connection to self and others. The difficulty is that the historical socialization of women continues to minimize the importance of nurturance and care for self and others. And, modern culture certainly does not easily understand this as an important part of a growing spiritual awareness. But, in this conflict lies the seed kernel of growth toward the core of their authenticity. As they struggle to move to higher spiritual levels of authentic development, they may
encounter a disconnect with their socialized gender roles and traditional perceptions of women’s spirituality. This can be a difficult time for women until they assimilate emerging new constructs and integrate a fuller sense of integrated sense of self and the connectedness to others. Once they resolve this internal conflict, they begin to discover the highest level of spiritual evolution, as an integration of caring for self and then others, freeing them to more fully express their authenticity.

The second reason this transformative process is challenging is that it often occurs in the world of educational leadership; a place not always receptive to spiritual quests and corresponding efforts to become more authentic. The choices can sometimes be painful for women leaders, and depending upon their level of development, they may cope with these difficult choices in a variety of ways—some helpful and some less so. However, the women respondents in this study showed themselves to be tenacious and courageous and their journeys will no doubt continue, undaunted.

How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of leadership? Women’s spiritual quest for authenticity may, at times, collide with their leadership, but it is more likely that they will find a way to meld spirituality and authenticity into stronger, more fully developed leadership capacities. Authentic leaders respect the dignity of others, model their values, and are fully aware that they must lead by example. Authentic leaders are servant leaders. And service is an authentic expression of their spiritual values and leadership commitments. Authentic leaders also model their value-laden path and their authentic leadership is no longer able to be silenced by the bonds of traditional management technique.
Observations and Recommendations

The results of this study produced several general observations and recommendations including:

1. language considerations
2. future research in the form of parallel case studies
3. educational leadership considerations, including a study of the educational leadership training available in the state of Iowa, specifically regarding higher education curriculum, local and state leadership opportunities, and the unique perspectives of leadership found in community colleges.
4. leadership networking

Language Considerations

Using spiritual and/or religious terminology in most public educational settings continues to be problematic and the use of such language should be considered carefully. Similar concerns were previously voiced by educational leaders in Metzger’s study (2003). Her recommendations informed this study’s language alteration from “spirituality” to “personal/self/inner development.” As the researcher, I discussed these changes with the women leaders at the conclusion of our interviews. They unanimously agreed with my decision that these alterations were critical for them to feel freer in voicing deeper metaphysical and transcendent concerns without being trapped by the sometimes negative, or at least differential, connotative meanings attached to the terms spirituality and religion. This helped achieve a more accurate and richly descriptive data
set. In higher education, presentation as well as perception is important. Participant perspective should be of utmost importance and should, therefore, be evaluated critically. In professional discourse fastidious attention to carefully crafted language will provide clarity without sacrificing purpose and meaning.

Parallel Case Studies

The four interviewees were women between the ages of 47 and 70, providing a distinctive perspective of women in this age group. However, further study is necessary to give voice to women and men leaders not represented in this study. Previous leadership studies indicate that women in minority groups—women of color, women with diverse sexual orientations, and women from non-dominant ethnic and social backgrounds face additional challenges. Professionals armed with a rich array of understanding of diverse leadership challenges are better positioned to construct their own authentic leadership capacities.

Additionally, longitudinal and intergenerational women’s leadership studies should also be undertaken to document diverse perspectives on the historical trajectory of and psycho-social dimensions of women’s authentic leadership development.

Finally, parallel studies of male-to-female leadership perspectives should be undertaken. This will help researchers and practitioners better understand both of the divergence and yet cohesive bond all leaders share—male or female—as they search for meaning, purpose and connection in their authentic leadership journeys.
Educational Leadership Considerations

Curriculum. Higher education leadership curriculum must be committed to an epistemology of leadership which moves beyond the purely rational and traditional. Educational leadership curriculum must also encompass the deeply contextualized and constructed expertise of women and how their voices and experiences contribute to a vast new body of knowledge. Educational leadership study must evolve from traditional prescriptive leadership models to a more holistic assessment of the interface between personal growth and authentic leadership development. A cogent study of leaders as persons, specifically women’s leadership, gender literacy, and spirituality, will lead to more informed and authentic leadership for all administrators.

Additionally, special attention must be given to women entering higher educational leadership programs. Robinson’s 1996 dissertation on women’s leadership, addressed the need to develop curriculum targeting the specific needs of women in educational leadership pursuits. Seven years later, Robinson (2003) continues to voice her ongoing concern, “Jagged edges in the glass framework can still cut the aspirations of a new generation” (p. 1). This dissertation shares similar concerns. While there are similarities for women and men in leadership, this study has shown that women bring a unique perspective to the way they understand struggles to be more fully authentic leaders which are likely to be dramatically different from that of men.

Educational leadership training. Concerted efforts must also be made by educational institutions, professional organizations, and individual institutions to provide opportunities for more personalized, authentic leadership training. As I was concluding
this dissertation, I received an email from Dr. Larry Ebbers, founder of Iowa State University’s community college leadership programs, LINC and CLIC. The email was an invitation to attend the first annual LINC and CLIC community college leadership conference and reunion for fall 2007. This type of gathering to share emerging insights and network with like-minded scholars and practitioner exemplifies necessary leadership advancements that should span all higher educational institutions.

Community college perspective. It is critical that women’s authentic leadership development be continuously evaluated, reconceptualized and applied to community college settings. Women in these settings must be given opportunities to pass on their leadership knowledge and its unique association to the community college. Those currently in leadership as well as those retiring from educational leadership in community colleges can provide essential mentoring to younger generations of women leaders. Women leaders must also be encouraged to publish in order to enrich the body of knowledge on things like gender literacy and women’s authentic leadership constructs. And, this must be encouraged in the context of a community college setting which has historically not placed heavy emphasis on the scholarly endeavors of faculty or administrators. Finally, women must be given opportunities to teach what they know about authentic leadership, to share their experiential perspectives on leadership development in higher education institutions—especially as it relates to the demands and exigencies of the community college.
Leadership Networking

Critical state-wide administrative networking currently exists to stay abreast of managerial issues such as governmental mandates and administrative issues that carry important legal implications. However, similar types of networks to discuss emerging knowledge in leadership and how personal development impinges on effective leadership practice are far rarer. Unfortunately, this kind of networking often lacks support and funding and can easily be dismissed as a "soft topic," or inconsequential.

This study has provided data and analysis about how women leaders care for others as well as themselves. A significant void appears to exist, however, in how these high profile women leaders network with and support one another. Opportunities must be created for these leaders, and others like them, to develop these kinds of networking systems. Laura echoed some of this sentiment. She wrote, "Talking with you about leadership has given me new perspectives on how I view not only my own leadership, but what traits I believe are essential for good leaders." She concluded with the hope that future opportunities would arise to nurture this development of her leadership as well as to network with other leadership from across the state.

Summary

This qualitative research study examined the role of women's leadership in Iowa community colleges. Administrative leaders from community college settings, recommended by their presidents, wrote narratives about effective leadership traits and from these narratives, four women leaders were selected and later interviewed. Key thematic categories were developed from the written and verbal narratives. The resulting
data set was then analyzed by a comparative case study approach. Emerging thematic categories were interpreted through the lens of four primary research questions addressing the relationship between gender, spirituality, and authentic leadership.

A plethora of issues surfaced from the data. Issues of gender and gender equality rose immediately to the surface. It became clear that women leaders' knowledge of and sensitivity to hegemonic leadership and historical gender biases was a catalyst that led to a deeper valuing of the importance of relationship in the way they ordered their leadership responsibilities and in their personal journey to a place of authentic leadership. Awareness of their own gender-specific leadership traits and qualities enabled respondents to understand more clearly and contribute more effectively to an emerging sense of authentic leadership. This assisted them in being better members of leadership teams as well as being more prepared to meet the unique needs of their employees. Their collective awareness of gendered issues allowed them to develop a gender literacy that informed their decision-making and their development towards more authentic leadership.

Spirituality and its role in personal and professional leadership development was a second important idea that arose from the data. Spirituality, defined as a search for meaning, purpose and connection, was shown to be an integral dimension of women's authentic leadership development. Development is not easily quantifiable nor was it necessarily described as a linear process by the respondents. Rather, it is the cyclical process of inner reflection and transcendence to the outer world of life's experiences, reflections, realizations, and choices. It involves a vibrant understanding of and
integration of all of life's experiences and choices. As women constructed and refined
the meaning and purpose of their life and began to forge more rewarding inter­
connections with themselves and others, they felt the corresponding pull to deeper levels
of authenticity in themselves and in their leadership roles. Adversity during this process
of discovery and refinement was not a deterrent but, rather, acted as a stimulant for
women to challenge and further hone their core values and their ensuing development to
a more authentic life.

The necessity of self-care and balance had crystallized for these women and they
were identified as important parts of their emergence into authenticity. Good self-care
and finding a healthy balance to all the competing demands of personal and professional
life led to more fulfilling relationships and more effective decision-making. Respondents
had discovered how important it was for them to find their authentic selves, and in
finding themselves they connected to their deeper purpose. These connections were not
just internal cognitive and affective patterns but also had an external relational and
behavioral dimension to them. Respondents attempted to live their connections, daily.
They demonstrated this in how they prioritized their time, where they put their energies,
and how they practical determined if their core purpose in life and leadership was being
fulfilled.

The critical role of spirituality in authentic leadership development (as redefined
on p. 208) is so closely intertwined that, at times, the two constructs become almost
indistinguishable. They tend to meld in the life of leaders who are seeking greater
meaning, purpose and connection while, at the same time, forging ahead toward the goal
of being authentic leaders. Women who believe in the possibility of authentic leadership see it as a calling and in this calling they discover a portion of their spiritual core. That core then further enlivens and energizes their work toward authenticity.

It's good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.

Ursula K. LeGuinn
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Powell, G. & Butterfield, A. (1984). If “good managers” are masculine, what are “bad managers?” *Sex Roles, 10*, 477-484.


APPENDIX A

LETTER TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

Dear President _______________________

I am a UNI doctoral student in higher education leadership and a counselor at Hawkeye Community College. Through my educational experiences and participation in the Iowa community college leadership program (LINC), I chose to write my dissertation on women’s leadership at Iowa community colleges. To study women leaders, I plan to collect data from each of the 15 Iowa community colleges.

As a key Iowa community college leader, your strategic position and unique perspective would lend credibility to my study. I am requesting your recommendation for a potential participant who fits the criteria as follows:

1. A woman administrator at your institution- manager, dean, director, vice president
2. Served approximately eight years in management/administrative experience in community colleges and/or higher education
3. An effective leader
4. Considered approachable by students, faculty, staff, community
5. Reflective and articulate in expressing her views

I greatly appreciate your thorough consideration of my request. If you would, please respond to my email with the name of the leader and her title. I would also like to request that you cc this email to the leader you selected.

Once I receive your response, I will email that leader, explaining that she was selected by her president based on the five criteria listed above. She will then be asked about her willingness to participate in the study. If her response is affirmative, she will be asked to write a description about her perspectives on leadership. Based on their written responses, four participants will be selected to do one-on-one interviews.

Sincerely,

Carol Hedberg, M.A.E.
Box 97
Troy Mills, IA 52344
(319) 350-7872 (c)
hedbuenzs@iowatelecom.net
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear Community College Leader,

I am a UNI doctoral student in higher education leadership and a counselor at Hawkeye Community College. Through my educational experiences and participation in the Iowa community college leadership program (LINC), I chose to write my dissertation on women's leadership at Iowa community colleges. To study women leaders, I plan to collect data from each of the 15 Iowa community colleges.

Recently, I sent an email to each Iowa community college president, requesting a recommendation of a potential participant who fits the following criteria:

1. A woman administrator at your institution—manager, dean, director, vice president
2. Served approximately eight years in management/administrative experience in community colleges and/or higher education
3. An effective leader
4. Considered approachable by students, faculty, staff, community
5. Reflective and articulate in expressing her views

Your president has selected you as a potential participant. I am requesting your participation in my study of women leaders in Iowa's community colleges. This part of the study has two levels of involvement. First, all 15 participants will be asked to write a description about their perceptions on leadership (See attachment). Based on their written responses, four participants will be selected to do one-on-one interviews.

Two points must be emphasized. First, at any time during this study, participants are free to withdraw as participation is voluntary. Second, confidentiality is a critical component of any research. If you choose to participate in this study, be aware that your name, campus, and any identifying information about you will be kept in strictest confidence, and pseudonyms will be used for you and your institution in the writing of the dissertation.

I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study of Iowa women leaders. However, if you choose not to participate, would you please email of your decision? I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,
APPENDIX C
ATTACHMENT TO PARTICIPANTS’ EMAILED LETTER

Women Leaders in Iowa’s Community Colleges
Attachment #1
Part Two: Written Responses

Name __________________ College __________________

May I call you if I have any questions about your responses? If so, please list your phone number ___________________.

Your official consent to participate in this study is required by the University of Northern Iowa. I have attached a copy of the Human Participants Review Informed Consent (see attachment 2) to explain procedures and participant involvement. In lieu of signing the document, your response to the two questions (below), will serve as your consent to participate in the study.

If you decide to participate, pseudonyms will be used in place of your real name. The summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. The researcher anticipates your participation will involve about 30 minutes of your time to write the responses, however, depending upon the individual time needed for reflection, the time commitment may be longer.

Please respond in detail to the two statement listed below. The statements are repeated on the next two pages. If you would, please type your responses on those two pages, save this entire document, and email it to me as an attachment. I will notify you when I receive your completed response.

Remember, all responses are confidential! However, feel free to create fictitious names and/or positions for the leaders you are describing.

The goal of this study is to understand what college leaders think; consequently, no right or wrong answers exist.

A1. Tell me a detailed story about an effective leader whom you greatly admire and with whom you can identify.

A2. Tell me a detailed story about an ineffective leader whom you do not admire and with whom you can not identify.
Would you be willing to participate in a 1 ½-2-hour interview at a location of your choosing if you are selected for the second part of the study?

_______ No
_______ Yes

If yes, would you please complete the following contact information?

Additional Phone numbers _________________________________________________

When is the best time to contact you? _____________________________________

If you are selected to be interviewed, where and when would you like to meet?

___________________________________________________

Thank you for your contribution to this study of women leaders in Iowa’s community colleges! I greatly appreciate your input!
A1. Tell me a detailed story about an effective leader whom you greatly admire and with whom you can identify.
A2. Tell me a detailed story about an ineffective leader whom you do not admire and with whom you cannot identify.
APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS REVIEW
EMAILED INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: The Role of Personal/Inner Development in Women’s Leadership at Community Colleges

Name of Investigator(s): Carol Hedberg

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your consent to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. Your response to the two questions (attached previously) will be verification of your consent to participate in the study.

Nature and Purpose: This research is important because a) women are a growing population in leadership which has historically been under-represented in research studies; b) research on leadership in middle management and in community colleges is sparse; and c) research is needed about leadership which supports styles and techniques for leaders to confront the challenges and barriers they face. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that contribute to perceptions of leadership among women leaders in community colleges.

Explanation of Procedures: As the researcher, I have contacted Iowa community college presidents via email, and requested recommendations for participants in the study who met the following criteria: a woman administrator at their institution- manager, dean, director, vice president who has served approximately eight years in management/administrative experience in community colleges and/or higher education. This leader is also someone the president considered an effective leader, considered approachable by students, faculty, staff, community, and one who is reflective and articulate in expressing her views.

You were selected based on these above criteria, and I am asking your willingness to participate in this study. If you agree, you will be asked to write out answers to two questions regarding your views on leadership. I anticipate your participation will involve about 30 minutes of your time to write the responses, however, depending upon the individual time you need for reflection, the time commitment may be longer. Based on responses meeting the criteria of the study, four to six leaders will be contacted to be interviewed regarding their perceptions of roles of gender, relationships, and spirituality with respect to leadership. You will select time and location for the interviews which will last from 1-2 hours.

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Upon completion of the interviews, I may have a few further questions, and so I may request a follow-up phone conversation at a time of your choosing.

Discomfort and Risks: Participation in this activity will involve no more than minimal risk. This study involves no more risks than those encountered in every day life.

Benefits and Compensation: There will be no direct benefits for you, but this study may help us learn about possible manners in which women leaders cope with the stresses of leadership.

Confidentiality: If you decide to participate, pseudonyms will be used in place of your real name. The summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. The individual interviews will be tape recorded for transcription purposes only. The tapes will be destroyed immediately following transcription. This information may be kept for several years to be compared with future surveys of similar information from similar groups of women leaders.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all.

Questions: If you have questions about the study, you may contact me at (319) 350-7872 or through my email address at hedbuenzs@iowatelecom.net. You may also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.
APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA
WRITTEN SCRIPT FOR PARTICIPANTS PARTICIPATION AND INFORMED CONSENT VIA TELEPHONE CALL

Hello, my name is Carol Hedberg, and I am the researcher who recently corresponded with you about my study on women’s leadership. I have completed the first stage of my research, and I am now selecting participants willing to be interviewed regarding their further views on their perceptions on the roles of gender, relationships, and spirituality in leadership.

Based on the quality of your responses to the two emailed questions, you have been selected to be interviewed, and I am requesting your participation in the interviews. Would you be willing to participate in an interview at a time and location of your choosing?

If yes, continue:

I would like to set up a tentative meeting time, date, and location. Can you suggest what works for you?

_________________________________________ (time/date)

_________________________________________ (location)

I am required to gain your written consent for this phase of the study. I would like to email you a copy of the Human Participants Informed Consent for your signature. If after reading the form, you choose not to participate, you may notify me by phone (319-350-7872) or by email (hedbuenz@iowatelecom.net). If after reading the form, you consent to participate, you may call or email me confirming our meeting time. I will bring to the interview an additional copy of the consent form for you to sign, should you need one.

I will also be emailing you a Participant Profile which will give me some initial information. You may choose to complete it and email it to me prior to our interview, or we can complete the information together when I arrive for your interview.

Do you have any questions?

I appreciate your willingness to contribute to my study, and I will see you ____________________ list time/date/location. Thank you very much!
Project Title: The Role of Spirituality in Women's Leadership at Community Colleges

Name of Investigator(s): Carol Hedberg

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

Nature and Purpose: This research is important because a) women are a growing population in leadership which has historically been under-represented in research studies; b) research on leadership in middle management and in community colleges is sparse; and c) research is needed about leadership which supports styles and techniques for leaders to confront the challenges and barriers they face. The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that contribute to perceptions of leadership among women leaders in community colleges.

Explanation of Procedures: The researcher has contacted Iowa community college presidents via email, and requested recommendations for participants in the study who met the following criteria: a woman administrator at their institution- manager, dean, director, vice president who has served approximately eight years in management/administrative experience in community colleges and/or higher education. This leader is also someone the president considered an effective leader, considered approachable by students, faculty, staff, community, and one who is reflective and articulate in expressing her views.

You were selected based on these above criteria and completed the two questions regarding your views on leadership. Based on the question responses meeting the criteria of the study, I have selected and am contacting four to six leaders to be interviewed regarding their perceptions of roles of gender, relationships, and spirituality with respect to leadership. You are one of those leaders. I am now asking for your participation in the interview segment of my research. If you agree to participate, you will select time and location for the interviews which will last from 1-2 hours.

Upon completion of the interviews, I may have a few further questions, and so I may request a follow-up phone conversation at a time of your choosing.
Discomfort and Risks: Participation in this activity will involve no more than minimal risk. This study involves no more risks than those encountered in everyday life.

Benefits and Compensation: There will be no direct benefits for you, but this study may help us learn about possible manners in which women leaders cope with the stresses of leadership.

Confidentiality: If you decide to participate, pseudonyms will be used in place of your real name. The summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. The individual interviews will be tape recorded for transcription purposes only. The tapes will be destroyed immediately following transcription. This information may be kept for several years to be compared with future surveys of similar information from similar groups of women leaders.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all.

Questions: If you have questions about the study, you may contact me at (319) 350-7872 or through my email address at hedbuenzs@iowatelecom.net. You may also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process.

Agreement: I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

(Signature of participant) (Date)

(Printed name of participant)

(Signature of investigator) (Date)

(Signature of instructor/advisor) (Date)
APPENDIX G

PARTICIPANT PROFILE (ASTIN)

These questions will be completed in conjunction with the interviews.

Your name__________________________________________________________
Your college and address_____________________________________________
Phone numbers_______________________________________________________
Age ______ Marital/Partner Status_____________________________________
Children and ages____________________________________________________
Race_______________________________________________________________
Highest Level of education completed_________________________________

What previous positions have you held prior to your current position?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title/Rank</th>
<th>Name in Institution/Organization</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

What is your present occupation/position?

______________________________________________________________

(Astin)

Please describe your current job. What are your current responsibilities? What is the position of your direct supervisor?
APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WOMEN LEADER PARTICIPANTS

Research Questions

Four research questions will be used to guide this study:

1. What beliefs and/or practices contribute to the participants’ conception of spirituality?
2. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of authenticity?
3. How and to what extent does spirituality contribute to the participants’ conception of leadership?
4. What role does gender play in the participants’ conception of spirituality?

“The goal of my study is to understand what you as a college leader think and the specific processes you go through to arrive at those thoughts. For this reason, I’m not looking for right or wrong answers, only your personal opinion.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A – Personal Leadership (Belenky and Naddaff)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1. Describe the leadership qualities you strive to possess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2. Tell me about a metaphor which best describes your leadership. (WatW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3. What are the greatest challenges you face as a leader?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section B – Values and Ethics Gleaned from Writings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1. You listed a high number of values or ethics in your writing. Tell me how they fit with your personal belief system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section C – Gender (Belenky, Naddaff, and Duerk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1. What does being a woman leader mean to you? (Bel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. (If any negatives, ask the following): What personal coping strategies have you found effective to deal with these?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2. How might your leadership have been different if you had been a man? (Duerk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. (If any negatives, ask the following): What personal coping strategies have you found effective to deal with these?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3. Can women be themselves at work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4. Can you tell me about any inappropriate things (i.e. discrimination, harassment, assault) that may have happened to you in a work setting related to your being a woman?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. (If any negatives, ask the following): What personal coping strategies have you found effective to deal with these?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section D - Coping and Stressors (Metzger)

This study focuses beyond the technical skills and knowledge required to be a woman leader. One way this is done is to look beyond the stressors and determine what you do to cope with the stressors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D1.</th>
<th>You've mentioned various challenges you've faced with your leadership. I want to understand how you've coped with these challenges.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. What suffers most in your life when you are under the stress of these challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. What personal coping strategies have you found effective to deal with these?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| D2. | How do you keep balance in your life?                                                                                     |
| D3. | Tell me about your life when it's balanced.                                                                                 |
| D4. | What personal coping strategies do you use to meet the challenges and maintain balance in your life?                         |
| D5. | How do you know when you're balanced?                                                                                    |
| D6. | How do you take care of your own personal development?                                                                    |
| D7. | What do you do in your daily activities that keep you alive, refreshed, and able to cope effectively with these stressors? |
| D8. | What strategies for self/personal development do you practice?                                                             |
| D9. | What led you to begin to develop yourself (precipitating event)?                                                          |
| D10.| What practices and/or activities do you use to cope with stress, get away from it all, nurture your soul, replenish your spirit, create balance in your life, and attend to your inner life? |

### Section E - Self/Personal Development (Metzger)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E1.</th>
<th>Self/Inner Development means very different things to different people, but I want to understand your concept of it. How would you describe your personal concept of Self/Inner Development as it is today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Behaviors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| E2. | Based on your definition of Inner Development, what role might it play in your leadership?                                  |
| E3. | Would you tell me a story about the role Inner Development played in your leadership? What does this mean to you?          |
| E4. | I want to go back to the challenges you mentioned you face as a leader, and how have you coped with these challenges. (Choose between a and b based on their previous responses): |
|     | a. You’ve mentioned how Inner Development has been a part of this coping. Would you share a story about this?                |
|     | b. What role might Inner Development play in your coping?                                                                   |
| E5. | Are you aware of the current trend in the management and leadership literature, to use words such as “heart, soul, spirit” and to focus attention on inner (“spiritual”) dimensions of leadership? |
| E6. | What thoughts do you have about this? |
| E7. | Tell me about your comfort level at reflecting these views as a leader. |
| E8. | How does your *** (inner development/spirituality) contribute to your concept of leadership? |
| E9. | How does being a woman impact your *** (inner development/spirituality)?  
   a. In what ways might your *** (inner development/spirituality) be different if you were a man? |
| E10. | How does your *** (inner development/spirituality) contribute to your concept of being yourself as a leader? |
| E11. | Some of the literature (including Metzger, 03) suggests a correlation between a leader’s self-development and organizational effectiveness.  
   1. What are your thoughts on this?  
   2. How might this relate to you? |

---

**Section F - Conclusion (Belenky)**

| F1. | Are there any other questions that I should have asked you, that would have thrown some light on these issues we have discussed...that is, women’s leadership, being yourself as a leader, and dealing with stressors, personal and/or inner development? (Bel) |

In order to ensure accuracy of my interpretation of your statements in this interview, may I contact you at a later date?
APPENDIX I
GRID OF IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGES, PRESIDENTS, AND WOMEN LEADERS

Columns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>1-</th>
<th>2-</th>
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<th>4-</th>
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<th>8-</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Des Moines Area Community College President/CEO</td>
<td>Dr. Robert J. Denson <a href="mailto:rjdenson@dmacc.edu">rjdenson@dmacc.edu</a> 515/964-6638—-800/362-2127 Fax #: 515/965-7022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Iowa Community College District</td>
<td>Dr. Patricia Keir <a href="mailto:pkeir@eicc.edu">pkeir@eicc.edu</a> 563/336-3304-----800/462-3255 Fax #: 563/336-3303</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chancellor Administrative Center 306 West River Drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hawkeye Community College President Administrative Center</td>
<td>Mr. Greg R. Schmitz <a href="mailto:gschmitz@hawkeyecollege.edu">gschmitz@hawkeyecollege.edu</a> 319/296-4201-----800/670-4769 Fax #: 319/296-4220</td>
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<td>Indian Hills Community College President Administrative Center</td>
<td>Dr. Jim Lindenmayer <a href="mailto:jlindenm@indianhills.edu">jlindenm@indianhills.edu</a> 641/683-5102-----800/726-2585 Fax #: 641/683-5160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa Central Community College President Administrative Center</td>
<td>Dr. Robert A. Paxton <a href="mailto:paxton@iowacentral.com">paxton@iowacentral.com</a> 515/576-0099 x2200-----800/362-2793 Fax #: 515/576-7207</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa Lakes Community College President Administrative Center 19 South 7th Street Estherville, Iowa 51334</td>
<td>Dr. Harold Prior <a href="mailto:hprior@iowalakes.edu">hprior@iowalakes.edu</a> 712/362-0434-----800/242-5106 Fax #: 712/362-3505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa Valley Community College District Chancellor Administrative Center 3702 South Center Street Marshalltown, Iowa 50158</td>
<td>Dr. Tim Wynes <a href="mailto:tim.wynes@iavalley.edu">tim.wynes@iavalley.edu</a> 641/752-4643 x322-----866/622-4748 Fax #: 641/754-1336</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Western Community College President Administrative 2700 College Road, Box 4-C Council Bluffs, Iowa 51502-3004</td>
<td>Dr. Dan Kinney <a href="mailto:dkinney@iwcc.edu">dkinney@iwcc.edu</a> 712/355-3204-----800/432-5852 Center Fax #: 712/355-3424</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirkwood Community College President Administrative 6301 Kirkwood Blvd. SW, Box 2008 Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406-2068</td>
<td>Dr. Mick Starcevich <a href="mailto:mick.starcevich@kirkwood.edu">mick.starcevich@kirkwood.edu</a> 319/398-5500-----800/332-2055 Center Fax #: 319/398-1037</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>President Name</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
<th>Fax Numbers</th>
<th>Email Addresses</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Iowa Area Community College</td>
<td>Dr. Michael C. Morrison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:morrimic@niacc.edu">morrimic@niacc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast Iowa Community College</td>
<td>Dr. Penelope H. Wills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:willsp@nicc.edu">willsp@nicc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest Iowa Community College</td>
<td>Dr. William G. Giddings</td>
<td></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:william@nwicc.edu">william@nwicc.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeastern Community College</td>
<td>Dr. Beverly Simone</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Southwestern Community College</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:crittenden@swcctiowa.edu">crittenden@swcctiowa.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Iowa Tech Community College</td>
<td>Dr. Robert E. Dunker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:dunkerr@witcc.edu">dunkerr@witcc.edu</a></td>
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APPENDIX J
THEMES WITH NARRATIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Themes</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Narrative-Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflects on uncertainty of whether “admiration” is operative (significant?) term in her life</td>
<td>Relate to him as a person</td>
<td>I am not sure admiration is an operative term at this point in my life, but I respect the effectiveness of the leadership provided to our college by our current president. In contrast to his successor, I can relate to him as a person, and for the first time, I have entertained thoughts that would lead me to consider such a position. I think it is important to identify with a person who is in a position in which we aspire; otherwise, we do not think we could ever perform in that position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertaining notions of presidency cuz of identification w/ someone she admires</td>
<td>courage</td>
<td>I admire Fred’s courage more than anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s evolved in her thinking of him from – to+</td>
<td>Frank-doesn’t mince words</td>
<td>I used to think he was too bold and too forward, and shared too much, but he certainly does not “mince words.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies larger picture</td>
<td>Quick to assess people xxx- (quick to anger)</td>
<td>He is quick to assess a person’s political savvy, and is at times quick to anger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees downside +/-</td>
<td>Unafraid of what others think xxx- (not concerned about others’ feelings)</td>
<td>He proceeds ahead unafraid of what people will say about him, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has changed as she’s gotten to know him</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees +/-</td>
<td>Gets job done</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees both sides of person</td>
<td>Lead with his personality</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic</td>
<td>Insatiable need to know about people xxxxNegative- stereotypes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We lead with personality</td>
<td>Real, Person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not afraid to show real emotions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX K

### SAMPLE OF LEADERSHIP TRAITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Leadership Traits</th>
<th>Ecstatic/External Processes</th>
<th>Enstatic/Internal Processes or Indication of self-care</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frank—doesn’t mince words</td>
<td>Relate to him as a person</td>
<td>Real, Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quick to access people</td>
<td></td>
<td>Courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx— (quick to anger)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not afraid to show real emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unafraid of what others</td>
<td>Generous with praise/credit</td>
<td>Not afraid to be vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think xxx— (not concerned</td>
<td>to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>about others’ feelings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gets job done</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead with his personality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insatiable need to know</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>about people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows others chance to risk</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initially brusk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Showed uncertainty (how to deal with woman)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraged her to complete degree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm contagious</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentored others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outgoing, friendly, worked a crowd</td>
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<td>Ability to take time for RGR</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Values, likes, respects others</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Supports, empowers others</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lives by value system-role model</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Cares for others</td>
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<td>Collaborative; relation-builder; engages others</td>
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<td>Visionary</td>
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<td>Courageous, risk-taker</td>
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<td>Honest, trustworthy</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vulnerable; laughs at self; open to criticism</td>
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<td>Mentor</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Humor</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Learns from experiences</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Organized</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Energetic; enthusiastic</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Good listener</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quantity of items listed</td>
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**APPENDIX M**

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### APPENDIX N

**CODING THEMES AND EXAMPLES**

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<td>The theme “heightened awareness of gender issues” can be seen in the way the women discuss gender and its role in relationships and leaderships. Their language may identify knowledge of historical gender-related issues. The excerpts may also identify disparaging language based on gender, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and misogyny towards women in leadership positions.</td>
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| Ex   | Men, women, gender, Good-Old-Boy Network, discrimination, harassment |

| Sent | 1. *I am the only woman on cabinet, and when we have cabinet meetings, I’m never really sure when the meeting is over. We discuss the agenda, and then they sit around talking about the game or golf. In the midst of that talk come other topics. The meeting isn’t really over, they are just diverting. That was a very difficult thing to get used to—that small talk is part of the on-going [topic]. It’s like a “smoke break” before they get back to the topic. You have to be willing to sit through those smoke breaks.* (C) |

| 2. *Men are assumed to be leaders until they prove otherwise. Women have to start with the assumption that they have to prove that they have the ability to lead. It has to be a deliberate decision.* (C) |

| 3. *Being a woman leader used to mean being a maverick, out there on the edge.* (C) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Def</th>
<th>Commitment to a Core Set of Values</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The theme “commitment to a core set of values” is revealed in the way women talked about their collective set of beliefs. These values and beliefs may have originated from families of origin; life experiences; and/or religious and/or spiritual commitments. When the women talk about their values, they allude to them as the essence of their lives and their relationships which form a type of moral compass. A commitment to following these values and beliefs is essential to them, and when this capacity is compromised, for whatever reason, they experience difficulties on a number of levels. While this theme identifies how women discussed their collective set of values and beliefs, women also identified individual values and beliefs. These individual values and beliefs are differentiated from the collective set as they are subsets that identify particular qualities within the women’s value system. Because this theme may involve a reflective component (such as that seen in theme three), it may mirror a process-oriented theme. The distinction between the two can be seen as the collective values resulting from a time of reflection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Values, ethics, character, standards, integrity, morals, commitments, beliefs</td>
<td>1. Anyone who knows me will tell you that I don’t compartmentalize my life. I don’t have my personal set of values and my work set of values. They bleed into one another, and like most women and many men, I’m working while I’m at home and thinking about working, I’m talking to my kids on the phone at work and thinking about home. I don’t know how I could have a different set of beliefs for work and personal life and not be bipolar. (L)</td>
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**Def**  
The theme “Self-reflection and Learning from Experiences (Internal)” is described in the interviews as an internal cognitive and affective process women leaders experience. They use language to describe how they seek a realistic understanding of their unique strengths and weaknesses, irrespective of how others may define them. They describe seeking time to assess and reflect upon what they have learned from past experiences, how they responded in difficult or stressful situations, and what important decisions they determine are best for themselves, their families, and their work. Finally, they describe how this reflective time has improved their awareness and knowledge about themselves and their experiences. As mentioned previously, self-reflection may result in a reforming of values; however, the distinction between this theme and the collective set of values suggests this theme may be more of a reflection on a particular event or circumstance.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Internal reflection, process, understanding, time out, learning, solitude, contemplation, growth, experience, control issues, counseling, prevention, reliving decisions, self-assessment</td>
<td>1. I want to treat every student how I'd want my daughter to be treated. How do you deal with a person who has probably been beaten up, beaten down, who actually has no regard for authority? Here's a teachable moment. I honestly believe there are teachable moments in people's lives and sometimes they come at the most odd times. When you're expecting somebody to give you holy hell and demean you and put you down and instead they treat you kindly but are still firm with you. How does that change a person? They can't hate you. They can't think the institution doesn't care about them. So they have to think about something else. [I hope they think that] maybe they are responsible for their behavior. I always hope that maybe they got more out of it than they were caught drinking in the dorms and-- it's a stupid rule-- and we're kicking [them] out. (C)</td>
</tr>
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2. It's essential in dealing with stress that I step back and create some distance. If I can't create some distance, my decisions aren't as effective. One of the things I found hardest to learn was not to make instantaneous decisions, especially when it seemed most imperative and emotional that I do so. But the more stressful and emotional the situation and the harder the decision, the more important it was to say, I really appreciate all this information. I'll get back to you on Wednesday.

The theme of “Self-reflection and Learning from Experiences” was frequently followed by the theme of “Changing.” Women leaders described their recognition that particular situations or practices did not achieve desired results. They then described how they progressed from conscious decisions to change to some action-based implementation of these changes. They also described lessons they learned about themselves personally and professionally when they reflected upon how difficult situations became a catalyst for change. They often described these lessons as empowering them towards greater wisdom and strength.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Def</th>
<th>Growth, reflections towards awareness, change, defining time, empowerment, lessons</th>
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1. I would say the Serenity Prayer three or four times a day as I was trying to figure out how to cope with things. I would make lists of traits or personalities: lists of things so I could see the various aspects of it on paper. That would help me think about what I needed to do to change myself. You have to change yourself before you can change anybody else.

    I went to AA religiously. I went to counseling. These things helped me sort out things and change. That was not easy to do. But out of that I grew, and became maybe less controlling, less demanding of myself.

2. You learn over time what makes you the best person you can be. As a woman leader, you can easily spend 80 hours at work a week, giving constantly. You give your time to work, but you don’t want your family to suffer, so you go home and give and give and give. And then you suffer [from not enough time for you.] You get crabby, impatient, intense, and competitive. You lose your perspective at work and lose your temper with your children.

    Now, I’m figuring out that I don’t have to give myself to everybody and not take some time for me. So I run. I kick box, and I lift weights. I’ve become insistent on carving that out.

    [I’ve also learned] I’m a better person if I take the time to be introspective. [During my 30-minute commute], I used to spend it all on the phone, but now I use that precious time for me. I no longer feel one iota of guilt when I leave [work] early to go to my kid’s basketball game.
The theme of “Self-care and Balance” suggests women discussed how they determined the value of holistic self-care and balance. They discussed how self-care and balance needed to be an on-going assessment of their core needs as well as finding ways to proactively integrate self-care strategies. They also may have explained how their self-care and balance became a catalyst for living a more-balanced life: emotionally, physically, spiritually, familially, socially, and professionally.

### Examples

- Physical, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, familial, social, professional, solitude, balance, self-care

### Sentences

1. *I keep balance by [being a weekend warrior]. It’s totally contrary to my Type-A personality.* (C)

2. *(My greatest challenge as a leader) is maintaining the kind of perspective that I need to be a good leader. I’m a firm believer that leaders should be very good role models, which means that they should be calm, rational, and listen, and take in what they need to take in before they make decisions. We [women leaders] make important decisions and they affect people’s lives, to some huge extent. I think in order to do that, we have to maintain a very balanced perspective on our lives. And that’s hard to do sometimes—when it’s easy to work in this job 80 hours a week. When I do that, my family suffers and things get out of whack. Then I get short or crabby or don’t always take the time to make the kinds of decisions I need to make [or I] let little things go. For me, the greatest challenge is remaining very, very balanced and when I’m very balanced, I’m a good leader and I make good decision. I consider all the things I need to consider. I take care of the little things as well as the big things.* (L)

3. *What suffers with Wendy when she’s not balanced is her “ability to connect with people the way I want to connect with them, whether it be my adult children, my husband, or coworkers. I become very irritable and short with them. I can’t get down to that very relaxed level.” Wendy then starts to notice other behaviors such as being overly critical of her children and spouse, not exercising, using food to deal with stress, and not being able to sleep through the night.* (W)

### Care of Others

The theme, “care of others” is one of the values these women discussed and can be explained in a number of ways. They discuss internally how they seek to heighten their awareness of and appreciation of the inherent worth of people and their needs. Externally, their writings reveal a sensitivity practiced by nurturing, helping, and treating all people with respect.

- Golden Rule, “Mothering” metaphors, nurturance, mentoring
1. I value paying attention to others, recognizing things that they do or things they are as individuals. I try to focus on the individual whether it's a student [or staff]. "Hey, you look nice today"! or "You did a nice job with that"! (C)

2. I don't think anyone should be a leader if [they] don't value people. I [observed a job candidate] who interviewed well but was rude to our switchboard operator. [That's not] the kind of person I want as a friend or colleague. (C)

3. I really love dealing with students, even the problem ones. I've had students in my office that I'm expelling from the dorms. They'll say, I can't believe you're evicting me. I know you like me." I say, "Of course, I like you, but I'm not your mother. I don't have to be upset you're being evicted from the dorms. I think you're a great kid. You just can't live by community rules, [even though] you've had three chances. You're not a bad person; you've just got to live somewhere else." (C)

| Def | The theme of "authenticity" is reflected in the text when the woman leader suggests symmetry between what she says and what she does. They often describe authenticity as a conscious choice to be open and genuinely themselves, regardless of the consequences. |
| Sent | 1. [I'm a] very honest person with a lot of integrity. I have the same value system at home or work, being a mother, neighbor or friend. [If I couldn't be myself at work] I'd be performing every day. I don't think I would be approachable: [I'd be] two different people. I think the authenticity or the lack thereof would show up. [Others would say,] "She's just feeding me a canned line." I'm very genuine. (W)  
2. I don't think those [values to be authentic] change that much. If you're [so] guarded that you are guarding [yourself, there's a problem]. I'm lucky that in my job, I haven't been punished for allowing myself to be flawed. I'm not sure you ever can get beyond that. People will see through you. (C)  
3. You have to be yourself at work or you'd hate your job. You are here more hours in the day than you're awake at home. [However, I'm not sure anybody can be totally themselves at work. We all have so many dimensions of our lives that we can't bring to work with us. (C)  |

| Def | The theme of "spirituality" is reflected in how a woman described her understanding of her search for meaning, purpose, and connection with herself, others, and the universe. |
| Ex | Spirit, spiritual, religious, faith, transcendence, meaning, purpose, interconnection, integration, synthesis |
1. [Spirituality] gives me the strength that I need and the bravery that I need to make the tough decisions and to persevere. When I’m with a student I’m having to discipline, I really think about how can I do this and still have the person keep their self-respect. I honestly believe that’s a gift that is sent through my spirituality at that moment of disgust or anger or frustration. I want to treat every student the way I’d want my daughter to be treated. (C)

2. I think everyone can be replaced, but I think that there will be a part of me that is missing from the organization when I leave. Until someone replaces that part, they won’t even know what is missing. But something will be missing. I hadn’t seen somebody step up with that particular part. Things will thrive, but they won’t even know what’s missing until somebody comes and replaces it. It could be one person. It could be several people, who jointly provide that. I’m not even sure how I identify it, but I do know that the organization has my fingerprints on it. (C)

Courage and Tenacity

The final theme of “courage and tenacity” is a collective theme encompassing two distinct concepts. First, these women describe a mindset towards difficulties which rarely includes quitting or giving up, regardless of the consequences. Their language also describes a persistent drive through difficult experiences.

- Persistence, drive, determination, insistence, tenacious, courage, fortitude

1. Some have called me a bulldog [because] I’m not afraid of challenges. I can be stubborn and strong. (W)

2. I think women are greater risk-takers than men. They don’t mind if something doesn’t work. They just regroup and try something different. If men fail at something, it’s a real bad thing. If women fail, they just try it again a different way. Women are not afraid. (W)

3. Developing myself has helped me persevere. (W)
APPENDIX O

SAMPLE VOICE VERIFICATION EMAIL TO WOMEN LEADERS

Dear Wendy,

I am nearing the end of my data interpretation, and I need your help once again. The most critical issue that needs addressing is whether or not I have reflected who you are as a woman leader, but I also had a few additional questions to ask you. Would you have time in the next few days to read and respond to the questions? Would Monday, March 26 give you enough time?

**Part I: Case Study of Wendy**
The attachment is your case study. Please read it critically, and determine if I have misrepresented or misconstrued anything you said to me in the writings or in the interviews. You may make corrections right in the document if you indicate these corrections with highlighting or a colored font or you can attach a separate page; however you choose to do so. Please read and respond to the three questions, below:

1) Have I represented you accurately? If not, please identify.
2) Did I misconstrue anything you said? If so, please clarify for me.
3) Is there anything that you feel would reveal your identity? I've tried to cover up dimensions of who you are but do you see anything I might not have seen or might not have known about you?

**Part II: Additional Questions**
I have a few additional questions or clarifications I’d like to ask you. If you would, please write out your answers.

1) Could you share any realizations about yourself you may have had as a result of what you said and what you thought about during the interviews?
2) While I’m fairly certain I know what you were trying to say, would you explain the phrase “It doesn’t matter how much china we have to break.”

*I think I’m a leveler, I level people. You know, you get the really nice people that um won’t address conflict address issues that need addressing because they don’t want to hurt anybody’s feelings. And then you get the real strong-willed people and I think in both cases, they come my way to figure out the solution-solving mechanism. And so I think I can bring the ones who are really high energy and go after the problems- it doesn’t really matter how much china we break in the process. You know, we’re going to get this resolved. And then we have the nice ones that deal with the issues and I can bring them up to the place where I can make them do the difficult jobs of my coaching and prodding and those types of things, so we’ll go back to that.*
3) Do you remember the name of that book you told me about—you said when women get their kids raised, they move into high gear. I'd like to get a copy.
4) Did you ever confront your president about the barging incidents?

Wendy, it has been so incredible getting to know you like this. I've read your transcript and heard your tape about a dozen times, and I feel such a bond with you! Thank you so very, very much for sharing your life with me! It has become a treasured gift!!

Thanks again, Wendy!

Now go get that doctorate!!!!!!

Carol
Carol Hedberg
319-350-7872
FIGURE 1
THE INTERRELATED SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES OF WOMEN’S SPIRITUAL AND AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT