

MHA 5420

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Collective Leadership Reflection

As I began to read about collective leadership and other terms closely associated with collective leadership, I began reflecting on my various leadership experiences in both formal and informal leadership roles. Maybe it is that I want to fit myself in the collective leadership box rather than the traditional leadership box, but I feel as a leader, most of my experiences are more closely aligned with collective leadership. I don't necessarily think that one has to choose one over the other but a combination of the two may be necessary. I've always considered myself a participative or servant leader and wrote some papers to that effect during my time at CSU Global. I have never been someone that lords my position over people and am finding more and more that I don't love the traditional hierarchical approach to leadership and really like the Māori perspective on collective leadership.

I feel that working together with the collective and having various leaders shine through as they are needed is a great way to get many things accomplished. In our project management book, when the authors speak about project management they do it from an informal leader perspective and use those four foundational behaviors as a guide. To me, each of these four behaviors is part of collective leadership. In several of the articles I read, the authors spoke about communication, listening, and clarifying as crucial aspects of collective leadership. I think parts of the Leadership Challenge even lend itself to collective leadership such as the shared vision and values, fostering collaboration and more but there are also some parts of it lend itself to more traditional leadership as well.

I feel like most leadership training whether formal or informal leads toward traditional hierarchical leadership and individual traits. The concept of collective leadership, while not new, seems to go against most leadership training and courses I have taken up to this point. We just had a leadership training with the leadership team at Trustpoint and it did focus on being better

individual leaders in the traditional hierarchal sense. However, we also took a DISC profile assessment prior to the training not only to learn about our own leadership styles but to know how we can work more effectively with the other leaders and other employees in the organization which tends to lean toward collective leadership at least slightly.

In thinking about my formal roles, I think some of it is or has been hierarchal such as the supervision and performance management pieces, but I also think parts of it has been or is currently collective in nature. As I stated, I tend to be a participative/servant leader and I like to have everyone's input and work together with my staff before making a decision. Sometimes it is a collective group decision while other times the decision must come from me, but that doesn't mean I don't seek input from the others before making it. In my informal roles, like when I spoke about the running group in Chattanooga or the various committees I've served on, generally those have demonstrated collective leadership. The vast majority, if not all of those informal roles, did not focus on individual leadership traits or leader behaviors but working together with everyone for the good of the group and bringing everyone out to shine and contribute however they are best suited.

Studying about collective leadership has opened my eyes to new possibilities. It is not a new concept and turns out I have already been using a good bit of collective leadership. I now am better prepared to look at leadership through a collective leadership lens in any future leadership roles and opportunities I may have. This was my favorite quote from all the articles I read on collective leadership and it exemplifies how I personally feel about leadership and is worded much better than I ever could have, "to be a leader, a Rangatira, then, is to excel at weaving people together, to encourage or inspire others to go on a journey together, to exercise agency, and to light the way toward a world in which all flourish" (Spiller et al, 2020).

### References

- Spiller, C., Wolfgramm, R.M., Henry, E., Pouwhare, R. (2020). Paradigm Warriors: Advancing a Radical Ecosystems View of Collective Leadership from an Indigenous Māori Perspective. *Human Relations*, 73(4), 516-543.  
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