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Experiences of Leadership Development

**A Case Study on how a Leadership Development Program can
contribute to the Participants experience of Leadership
Development**

Master thesis in the Master of Management-program

**Study Program: Relational Leadership;
Counselling, Motivation and Coaching.**

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I am convinced, however, that any book that goes beyond the range of merely technical matters or abstract psychological theory should benefit also all those who want to know themselves and have not given up struggling for their own growth. Most of us who live in this difficult civilization are caught in the conflicts described here and need all the help we can get.....I still believe that with untiring effort we can ourselves go a long way towards disentangling our own conflicts.

Karen Horney, 1945

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN FIVE CHAPTERS

1) I walk down the street.

There is a huge hole in the sidewalk.

I fall in.

I'm lost...hopeless.

It's not my fault.

It takes forever to get out.

2) I walk down the same street.

There is a huge hole in the sidewalk.

I pretend that I don't see it.

I fall in again.

I can't believe that I'm in the same place again.

But it's not my fault.

Still, it takes me a long time to get out.

3) I walk down the same street.

There is a huge hole in the sidewalk.

I see it.

Still I fall in...it's a habit.

My eyes are wide open.

Already I know where I am.

It's my fault.

I climb out quickly.

4) I walk down the same street.

There is a huge hole in the sidewalk.

I walk around it.

5) I walk down a different street.

Portia Nelson

Abstract

In this thesis a case study is conducted to inquire into whether a targeted intervention; a leadership development program, can contribute to the participants experience of leadership development. The case is a ethical program with a leadership development component conducted from February to December 2011, in The Norwegian Armed Forces Medical Services. In this thesis I only focus on the leadership development component of the program. The program had eight participating leaders. I interviewed four of these through qualitative in-depth interviews.

Through analysis of data from the interviews, there emerged the following categories and sub-categories: "Conditions", "Developmental motivation" and "Change". In the category "Developmental motivation", three sub-categories emerged: "Primary source of professional satisfaction and self-esteem", "Emotional tone used when assessing oneself" and "Leadership ideals-expectations/contracts prior to the program". In the category "Change", two sub-categories emerged : "Self-awareness/consciousness" and "Future goals".

To discuss these categories, I mainly drew on constructive developmental theory by Joiner and Josephs (2007), Kegan and Lahey (2009), Torbert(2004), and Horney (1945).

In the leadership development program that constitutes the case in this thesis, we use different types of tools to adress changes that the participants want-not only state the present situation and leave it with that. One tool is the 360 feedback profile, to bring to the surface key opportunities for developmental growth. This focuses on the dimensions that reveal the relationship between internal motivating assumptions and patterns of action. Other central tools we use are the Immunity to change-learning platform in the program as well as individual coaching, to address change by trying to unlock our mental immune system's grip on our perception so we have an opportunity to see it in action (Kegan et Lahey, 2009). Our aim in the program is to enable a development of a greater awareness and sensitivity to the full range of levels of consciousness available to the participants. We also focus on taking an adaptive approach to adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994), as well as enabling the participants to gain consciousness into their reactive patterns (Horney, 1945).

The participants point to the experience of the program being able to provide them with ways of using their everyday experiences for development. I found that the tools we use in the program can enable the participants to experience developmental processes, which the informants describe further.

Preface

There are many people, as well as organizations, who have contributed in significant ways for this research-project to happen. This is my way of offering my genuine gratefulness to you.

The Norwegian Armed Forces Medical Services (hereafter called NAFMS) opened up their organization for the development of a pilot ethical program with a leadership development component, in an impressive and courageous way. They agreed to include the research of this thesis in the program, and that four of their participants could deliver data. My gratitude goes to Major General John M. Steineger, chief of NAFMS. Without the next two persons this would not have come to be ; first I want to thank Major Hanna Hagen Brow, chaplain in NAFMS. She was able to make our combined ideas and wishes of doing research fit together with us developing the pilot program. Hannas energy, optimism and just general way of being with people enabled all of this to come through. It was such a pleasure to co-teach the pilot program with Hanna, she has a way of getting everybody, including me, to feel relaxed, safe and happy. The next central person is Commander Kari Furulund, senior staff officer in NAFMS. In her calm, organized and practical ways she has taken care of all the administrative parts of realizing the program. She has many times impressed me with her both strategic and realistic way of making things happening. It has been a privilege for me to be able to co-operate with Hanna and Kari, thank you both!

Next I want to thank my four referants! It has been such a learningful and interesting project to be able to listen to you reflect upon your own lives and development, and to be able to use these statements of yours in the analysis afterwards. This research-project is based upon the time and effort you took during the interviews, thank you!

The next person who holds the unquestionably most influential role for this project to happen at all, is my supervisor, Jonathan Reams, at NTNU. It would be hard to over-estimate the influence I have been able to receive from him, from that first day in September 2009 when I walked into the classroom at NTNU at one of the courses Jonathan teaches as part of my specialization. In order to start doing this type of work; trying to teach and coach developmental processes, it is in my experience absolutely necessary to have at least one role-

model who can show how this can be done. Jonathan has been such a role-model to me, and has made me realize that this type of work can be done, and that actually also I can do this. This Master-thesis is a result of these processes, as I grew interested in conducting a research-project in a real-life organization. Jonathan has supervised the project in an impressive way, always with guidelines, reflections and contributions to add quality, as well as incredibly quick and thorough responses to my questions along the way. I am impressed with Jonathans contributions and guiding, and feel genuinely happy and privileged to have been able to have him as my supervisor and teacher. It is invaluable to have someone believe in transition in oneself, and Jonathan has both believed in, and supported, my own transitional processes. Thank you!

In Norwegian we have the saying "thank he who should be thanked". The biggest thank you for enabling me in all practical ways to take up a Master-study in my forties, including the huge amount of time and work that is needed to conduct a research-project like this, goes to my husband Torkel. I will always be grateful to you for this opportunity in life!

Last, but certainly not least, I also want to thank my both parents, Kirsten and Jan, for all their support during my life, which to me had one of many tops when I told them that I wanted to take up a Master of Management-study at the age of 41, and move a bit away from my career as it had been up to then. While I received, understandably, many different comments to this plan, my both parents gave me their undivided support, and thought it was such a good idea. At that confusing and difficult phase in my career, their support meant the world to me, and has continued to be unvaluable to me. Thank you!

Margrethe Waage

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