

Chapter 2

Definitions Of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a type of leadership style that leads to positive changes in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process; they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well. It is a leadership style where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Downton, 1973).

Bass (1998) defines transformational leadership as leadership that creates valuable and positive change in the followers. A transformational leader focuses on “transforming” others to help each other, to look out for each other, be encouraging, harmonious, and look out for the organization as a whole. In this leadership, the leader enhances the motivation, moral and performance of his follower group. Transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and the mission of the group and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group.

The History Of Transformational Leadership

James MacGregor Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of transformational leadership in his descriptive research on political leaders, but this term is now used in organizational psychology as well. According to Burns, transformational leadership is a process in which “leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation”. Burns related to the difficulty in differentiation between management and leadership and claimed that the differences are in characteristics and behaviors. He established two concepts: “transformational leadership” and “transactional leadership”. According to Burns, the transformational style creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values, changes expectations and aspirations of employees. Unlike in the transactional style, it is not based on a “give and take” relationship, but on the leader’s personality, traits and ability to make a change through vision and goals.

Another researcher, Bernard M. Bass (1985), suggested a transformational leadership theory that adds to the initial concepts of Burns (1978). According to Bass, the extent to which a leader is transformational is measured first in terms of his influence on the followers. The followers of such a leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect to the leader and they are to do more than they expected in the beginning. The leader transforms and motivates followers by charisma, intellectual arousal and individual consideration. In addition, this leader seeks for new working ways, while he tries to identify new opportunities versus threats and tries to get out of the status quo and alter the environment.

The researchers, Bass & Avolio (1993), made an empirical study, which mapped the frequent leadership styles of managers and commanders. They located the two categories (transformational and transactional leadership) on a continuum and created more stages at the passage between those to leadership styles. This model is called

“The full range of leadership”.

The full range of leadership introduces four elements, traits or components of a transformational leader (4 I's):

1. **Individualized consideration** (mentoring) - The degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. The leader gives empathy and support, keeps on open communication and place challenges to the followers. This also encompasses the need to respect and celebrate the individual contribution that each follower can make to the team. The followers have a will and aspirations for self-development and have an intrinsic motivation for their tasks.
2. **Intellectual stimulation** - The degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits followers' ideas. Leaders with this trait stimulate and encourage creativity in their followers. They nurture and develop people who think independently. For such leaders learning is a value and unexpected situations are seen as opportunities to learn. The followers ask questions, think deeply about things and figure on better ways to execute their tasks. Intellectual stimulation means inspiring people to think differently or creatively by suggesting new ways of looking at things. Transformational leaders challenge the status quo.
3. **Inspirational motivation** - The degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand. Followers need to have a strong sense of purpose if they are to be motivated to act.

Purpose provides the energy that drives a group forward. The

visionary aspect of leadership is supported by communication skills that make it precise and powerful. The followers are willing to invest more effort in their tasks, they are encouraged and optimistic about the future and believe in their abilities.

4. **Idealized Influence/Charisma** – This is the highest level of transformational leadership. The leader provides communal design of vision and purpose, values and norms that gives meaning to the work. By inculcating pride and feelings of mission within the stakeholders and providing personal example, the leader enhances the stakeholders performance capabilities. The followers trust and emulate this leader, identifying with the goals. They internalize the attitudes and goals and act in this “spirit” even when the leader is not around. Being charismatic is like having a dynamic, energetic and commanding presence. We idealize such people. Martin Luther King is a great example.