

July 2015

## Intergalactic Leadership: Practical Tips for Leading Where No One Has Gone Before

Peg A. Lonquist  
*University of Minnesota*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://pubs.lib.umn.edu/ijps>

---

### Recommended Citation

Lonquist, Peg A. (2015) "Intergalactic Leadership: Practical Tips for Leading Where No One Has Gone Before," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 7. Available at: <http://pubs.lib.umn.edu/ijps/vol2/iss1/7>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

The *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* is published by the University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. Authors retain ownership of their articles, which are made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial license (CC BY-NC 4.0).



## INTERGALACTIC LEADERSHIP: PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LEADING WHERE NO ONE HAS GONE BEFORE

Peg Lonquist, Ph.D.

### Abstract

Most of the transformational, inclusive, partnership leadership literature, while brilliant and inspirational, does not provide day-to-day ideas for practitioners. Drawing on several key leadership theories and theorists (Kouzes and Posner's five core behaviors of successful leaders, the Athena Model based on research on women leaders, Centered Leadership from the McKinsey Project, the Research-Productivity and Engagement Model, Burn's and Bass' Transformational Leadership Theory, Riane Eisler's partnership leadership, multicultural leadership theorist Juana Bordas, and feminist leadership theorists), the author describes how she has translated and implemented day-to-day leadership practices which she calls Intergalactic Leadership.

**Keywords:** Leadership, women, equity and diversity, social justice, intergalactic, higher education, partnership

**Copyright:** ©2015 Lonquist. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Noncommercial Attribution license (CC BY-NC 4.0), which allows for unrestricted noncommercial use, distribution, and adaptation, provided that the original author and source are credited.

For the past forty years, I have read the works of many forward-thinking leaders and leadership researchers, who dare to go beyond the hierarchical top-down leadership archetype to promote *power-with* paradigms<sup>1</sup>. These brilliant thinkers inspired me to strive to be a leader who contributes to the cultural transformation needed to generate effective solutions for our complex and critical challenges, and to help us move toward a more equitable, sustainable, magnificent, and caring world (Potter, Eisler, and Lewis-Hunstiger, 2014). In concert with some excellent staff input, I try to

---

<sup>1</sup>Many of these best leadership practices were formally labeled feminist (which includes people of all genders) leadership. Though anyone can practice participatory leadership, it is said that due to socialization most women have an easier time understanding and enacting this practice. However, we all know people of different genders who practice leadership well, and those who are not our ideal leaders.

enact those theories and walk my talk as a leader every day. In my workshops, I began to call the leadership practices I use “Intergalactic,” because the term helps people think expansively and audaciously. I tell participants that “Intergalactic Leaders” strive to engender the following characteristics: visionary, integrous, intentional, empowering, celebratory, justice-focused, research-based, and competent. Intergalactic Leaders aspire to be persuasive advocates for social change, or innovative and socially responsible business people, or socially-conscious parents, and always, to lead people “where no one has gone before” (a nod to the creativity and peaceful solutions inspired by Gene Rodenberry’s *Star Trek* series).

Over the years, my staff told me that as a result of my leadership practices, their knowledge of equity and diversity has quadrupled; that they have gained innovative leadership skills and increased their self-confidence; that they felt creative, productive, and supported; that they learned about strategic thinking; that they got a jumpstart toward their life goals; and that they even “felt happy at work.” Former staff often write back about how unique our office culture is. Some went on to experience old-school “Viking” leaders - those whose worldview is about the fear of sharing power and control, and the need to be viewed as invincible (Brown, 2012) - or just leaders who did not reflect on how their leadership choices created the working environment. Those former staff members had come to understand that a leader does not have to follow the stereotypical dominator style, and that culture “is dynamic, not static - that it is created by human beings and can therefore be changed by human beings” (Abuya, 2014).

In addition I co-teach workshops, primarily for women leaders,<sup>2</sup> to help increase the number of effective women leaders in higher education. The curriculum, designed

---

<sup>2</sup> Women currently make up more than half of the college and university student population in the United States, however, just 23% of college and university presidents are women (American Council for Education, 2010, p. 1), and just four percent are women of color. The majority of women administrators occupy low- and mid-level positions that often lack institutional authority and professional and monetary advancement tracks (Edghill, 2006). Many of the issues that have created barriers for women still exist (lack of child care assistance, discouragement in most STEM fields, etc.). Northouse (2004) observed that “although many executives and managers prefer to believe that

with several colleagues, eschews the traditional leadership paradigms of individual gains in power and prestige and encourages empowering others to act, impacting long-term equity through systems-level, organizational changes. We have not found many other institutes with this philosophy<sup>3</sup>. As I describe the daily practices I use as I try to be an Intergalactic Leader and change-maker, participants lament that most of the literature about leaders (people who effect change toward a shared vision at any level of an organization), though inspirational, does not include concrete details about how to actualize these practices in a day-to-day setting. They often ask me to write them down so that they can use them. I understand why not much is written at this level - describing daily leadership practices seems trite at times and academia does not reward this kind of detail. As a response to the continual requests from workshop participants and former staff, I now offer my ideas for putting Intergalactic Leadership practices into everyday action.

### **Key Leadership Theories and Models that contribute to Intergalactic Leadership**

Recent research shows that successful leaders select practices from across a spectrum. The leadership practices I draw from are often described as participatory, ethical, authentic, charismatic, transformative, values-guided, servant, full-range, and/or feminist. These theories/models, briefly recapped below, reveal common core practices despite gender, culture, age or other variables.

*The Kouzes and Posner Leadership® Model* (1987) names five observable core practices, skills or behaviors common to all successful leaders: They Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart.

---

organizations are objective about merit and are gender neutral,” repeated research findings indicate that this is not the case (p. 267). Bias against women now just tends to be less overt, resulting from historical structures, patterns of behavior, and stereotypes (Bielby, 2000). In addition, women must also overcome the socialized internal biases that prevent them from even considering themselves as leaders.

<sup>3</sup> Two that I know of are: The Center for Partnership Studies at <http://www.partnershipway.org> and Standing in Our Power: Transformational Leadership Institute for women of color at <http://spiritinaction.net/siop-transformative-leadership-institute-2013-2014/>.

***The ATHENA Leadership Model®*** (2010), developed through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, identifies eight distinct attributes or tenets that are reflective of women's contributions to leadership: Authentic Self, Celebration and Joy, Collaboration, Courageous Acts, Fierce Advocacy, Giving Back, Learning, and Relationships.

***The Centered Leadership Model*** from the McKinsey Leadership Project (2011) research on successful women worldwide distilled their model to five dimensions: Meaning (finding your strengths and putting them to work in service of an inspiring purpose); Managing Energy; Positive Framing; Connecting (building stronger relationships); and Engaging (finding your voice, becoming self-reliant and confident by accepting opportunities and the inherent risks they bring, and collaborating with others).

***The Research-Productive Department: Strategies from Departments That Excel*** (2004). University of Minnesota researchers Carole Bland, Anne Marie Iber-Main, Sharon Marie Lund, and Deborah Finstad cite specific, useful recommendations for academic leaders seeking to promote high levels of research productivity, including: having clear goals, creating a participatory culture, hosting collaborative mentoring and climate-building activities, ensuring fair distribution of fiscal as well as human resources, promoting diversity and recognition, and brokering professional development opportunities.

***Transformational Leaders***, who are ultimately concerned with fostering intentional, values-based change, were initially labeled by Burns (1978) and subsequently elaborated on by Bass (1998). Research evidence shows that groups led by transformational leaders have higher levels of performance and satisfaction than groups led by other types of leaders, (Bass and Riggio, 2006) because transformational leaders believe that their followers do their best and develop their leadership

capacity, leading group members to feel inspired and empowered. The individual qualities of Transformational Leadership include self-knowledge, authenticity, empathy, commitment, and competence. The group qualities of transformational leadership include collaboration, shared purpose, division of labor, disagreement with respect, and a learning environment (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

**Partnership Leaders.** Riane Eisler (2005) describes *partnership leaders* as those who use leadership to inspire, engage, and empower others, rather than to control or dominate others, and to accelerate the shift from a domination system to a partnership system fostering a more humane and balanced approach to civilization. In a partnership model of society, difference is valued; so-called feminine qualities are valued and incorporated into the operational system. The partnership model rejects inferiority/superiority thinking, beginning with the real or alleged differences between women and men, but also including race, tribal or ethnic origin, and belief system. Eisler encourages partnership leaders to look to the Bambuti, !Kung, and Tiruray people of Africa and the Phillipines, respectively, as well as the Scandinavian countries, for trends toward the partnership direction.

**Multicultural Leadership.** Juana Bordas posits eight principles of *multicultural leadership* in her book, *Salsa, Soul and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age* (2007). Her themes include: *Sankofa* (learning from the past); I to We (From individualism to collective identity); *Mi Casa Es Su Casa* (the spirit of generosity); A Leader Among Equals; Leaders as Guardians of Public Values (a tradition of activism); Leaders As Community Stewards; All My Relatives (*la familia*, the village, the tribe); and *Gracias* (gratitude, hope, and forgiveness). It is important to note that early leadership studies did not examine multiple aspects of identity such as race, ethnicity, cultural heritage, class, ability, sexual orientation and expression, country of origin, or role within an organization, and how these identities interact and impact a leader's style and effectiveness. Nickles and Ashcraft (1981) were among the first to point out that masculine and feminine typecasts of leadership styles differ across borders, stating that traits that are stereotypically feminine in the U.S. are valued

among Japanese men. Many current leadership theories are working to include research and perspectives of leaders of all identities, as well as the need for leadership theories that will resonate with followers from all backgrounds. This literature encourages people to seek full-range leadership (Smith, Matkin, & Fritz, 2004), choosing transformational or transactional leadership behaviors when appropriate and at a desired frequency to optimize organizational effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 2010).

***Feminist Leadership.*** The call for *feminist leaders* to be egalitarian is where this whole journey started for me. By the 1980s, feminists realized that the traditional “power over” leadership style did not allow people to develop or contribute their skills, nor lead to a caring, holistic organization that many envisioned. Earlier models of leadership tended to reflect the views and experiences of those traditionally in positions of power, i.e., a predominantly white, male, upper-middle-class, heterosexual orientation to leadership (Amey & Tombley, 1992; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Such traditionally male models of leadership were exemplified by, among other characteristics, individuality, hierarchical power, depersonalization, persuasion, and control (Kerr & Gade, 1986). Feminists, and others, painted a different image of leadership - a more participatory, relational, and interpersonal style in which leaders tend to emphasize responsibility toward others, empower others to act, and deemphasize hierarchical relationships (Astin & Leland, 1991; Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1987). This collaborative model of leadership, once labeled as a women’s leadership style, is becoming more common among leaders of all genders. “In today’s world, the executive’s job is no longer to command and control but to cultivate and coordinate the actions of others at all levels of the organization” (Ancona, Malone, Orlikowski, & Senge, 2007, pp. 92-93). And this pattern, “more participative and less autocratic, [is] a pattern ill-suited to 21st Century global organizations” (Northouse, 2004, p. 273).

These theories/models are summarized in Figure 1 to provide context for the Intergalactic Leadership core practices.

**Figure 1. Eight Core Practices of Intergalactic Leadership from Key Leadership Models**

**INSERT FIGURE HERE**

## **Eight Core Practices of Intergalactic Leaders with Everyday Leadership Ideas**

From the above-mentioned theories/models in the literature, and my visions and values, many long and rich discussions of leadership, and my own leadership successes, challenges and failures, I arrived at eight core practices of Intergalactic leaders. I have found that great leaders use all of these practices and behaviors across a spectrum - i.e. going beyond what is on the surface or traditionally visible and choosing the leadership practice that works best in a particular situation, as long as it aligns with their ethics. Below, I describe day-to-day actionable ideas from each core practice.

### ***Core Practice One: Inspire a Shared Vision which includes the greater good.***

Every one of these leadership models stressed the importance of a shared vision. Bass (1998) states that transformational leaders have a clear vision that they are able to articulate to followers and help followers experience the same passion and motivation to fulfill these goals. A great deal is written about generating brief, clear mission statements that create an image of the organization that everyone can articulate. A shining example is the Disney mission statement, which is simply, “We create happiness for all” (Kinni, 2011). Some of the literature calls for a vision that is big, hairy, and audacious, such that it inspires and motivates everyone. Feminist, transformational, and partnership leaders stress that equity, transformation, and working for the greater good need to be front and center in the vision. The popular video character “Kid President” characterizes this vision as a joyful rebellion - as “living differently not because you’re mad at how things are, but because you are swelling with joy at the thought of how things could be. When you joyfully rebel against your circumstances, against mediocrity or negativity, you invite others into something really beautiful” (Montague & Novak, 2015, p. 18).

***Implementing this core practice:***

- As many staff as possible are included in creating or dreaming of the mission. If this is done well and sincerely, it is inspiring and empowering for staff. If employees were not part of the vision/mission development because they are new hires, they can be part of planning how the vision and mission are implemented in our unit and in their position. Although not everyone enjoys thinking about the larger picture, many staff have remarkably imaginative ideas about the vision and how to put it into action.
- The dilemma is that often stellar visions and missions are created with some flourish and then put on a shelf. I make sure the vision and mission are posted, preferably artistically, where all can see it daily. Our mission is listed at the top of our agenda for each staff meeting, and employees are asked to describe ways in which they are furthering it. Stories of how we are achieving the mission are inspirational to all of us, and highlight some of the daily work of employees that may otherwise be overlooked.
- I make naming steps to achieving the mission part of everyone's annual review. If this is hard to articulate, the vision or mission may need to be re-written.
- I let my staff know that I believe our unit *can* be an ideal place, and that together with our colleagues, on campus and worldwide, we can make a difference toward the mission.

***Core Practice Two: Walk The Talk.***

Great leaders seem to possess deep self-awareness and ethics of fairness that they must follow. Ethics may flow from particular spiritual beliefs, one's culture(s), or an overwhelming value to treat others with respect. Because Intergalactic Leaders want to empower others, they are keenly aware of their power and think continuously about their leadership behaviors, their interpersonal behaviors, and how they treat their peers, employees, and clients, such that they "walk their talk." Leaders who model ethical behavior are trusted, respected, and emulated (Bass & Riggio, 2008). Intergalactic Leadership goes beyond a passionate vision to an understanding of the

need to embody the vision and to build sustained collaborations with others with similar hopes and dreams.

The dynamics of power are complex, and traditional notions of leadership result in power-over, dominating, unjust, and undesirable work environments. Feminist, partnership, and other leadership theorists have explored ways to structure organizations and use power that lead to effective, empowering work environments without abdicating power. These leaders intentionally plan to create ethical, diverse, courageous, socially just, “power with,” learning environments. This is not an abdication of hierarchies, but rather “hierarchies of actualization” (Eisler, 2005).

***Implementing this core practice:***

- First, leaders need to take time to increase their self-knowledge, knowledge of their historical privilege, and understanding of their emotional intelligence. This exploration takes a lifetime, and we are busy people. For a few years, I met monthly with my own success circle, and now I have started listening to books on tape on this topic in the car daily and journaling on my leadership successes and challenges.
- I have found that being upfront with staff about my goal to be fair and empowering is a great start. Inviting their feedback has been a useful practice in improving my leadership and ensuring that I walk my talk. Who knows better how I act daily than my employees! However, many employees have heard about “open doors” and supervisors wanting feedback before, only to find out that it was not really true.
- So, I teach our staff how to assertively (i.e. respectfully) give feedback. And, when they provide that feedback, I listen, and thank them for helping me to grow.
- At conferences we discuss salary equity, knowing that the research is clear that women still get paid less for the same work and that for women of color that gap, whether intentional or not, is even greater. I don’t set the salaries for my staff, but I have advocated successfully for them with my supervisor. I have also taught them how to negotiate for higher salaries when they sought other positions.

- In a recent hallway meeting, a colleague told me that her staff was going through an unwanted merger of two departments. She asked them to be “gentle with each other,” and that has made a huge difference in their attitudes. Then, she instituted an admittedly corny trophy of a fish - when they “catch” each other doing something thoughtful, they pass it on to that person at their bi-weekly staff meeting.
- Finally, I try to eliminate bureaucratic barriers to forward action, and give staff the power to make decisions and problem-solve in areas which are their responsibility (with expectations for consultation and good communication).

***Core Practice Three: Initiate Intentional, Values-Based Change (including systems change).***

Because Intergalactic Leaders hope to improve the organization and the world, they must question the way things have always been done. This does not mean that all of the traditional ways of doing things are wrong, but rather that it is healthy to examine whether some practices still fit with evolved ethics, and if those behaviors are in line with the current mission and goals.

Transformational leaders promote intentional change toward a future condition which is inherently values-based (Astin & Astin, 200). However, challenging the status quo and trying out innovative ways of doing things is a risk, and can be scary. Thus leaders need to be courageous (Athena Model) and be open to the inevitable disappointments of this risk-taking, seeing them as learning opportunities. Given the systems of oppression that still exist in our organizations and beyond, great leaders need to explore ways in which their leadership behaviors can intentionally help eliminate, or inadvertently further, institutional and/or benevolent racism, sexism, and heterosexism.

***Implementing this core practice:***

- Fostering intentional, values-based change flows from the first two core practices of holding an inspiring shared vision and walking the talk. I have tried to foster challenge to our status quo by taking time at each of our two annual retreats to brainstorm alternative ways of doing things to help us have a greater impact, and by inviting additional creative thinking all year.
- Second, I must be willing to model standing up and speaking up for our values, even when it may not be the popular viewpoint, and even when I'm shaking in my veritable boots.
- Training and practice in respectful communication helps our staff carry out this practice. Some of our younger Women's Studies student staff have learned to try erudite arguments, but since that makes others feel uneducated, it thus has the undesired consequence of pushing people to defend their current schema or way of thinking. I encourage them to try out their new assertive "wings" with each other in our unit.
- Finally, I facilitate a workshop on women's equity that includes discussing a range of strategies for furthering equity, starting with our own behaviors.
- The concept of enjoying discussing multiple perspectives is further reinforced by a ten-minute "hot topic" discussion at each staff meeting. The staff meeting facilitator selects a current hot topic related to our intentions and goals; we set the timer for ten minutes and proceed to have a healthy, respectful discussion in which we rarely end up in total agreement. Usually we are left wanting more time to discuss the issue, and do so later.

***Core Practice Four: Empower Others to Act.***

This practice is accomplished through an intentionally-designed participatory leadership structure and by systematically training and supporting my staff to gain the skills to carry out the mission and to be positive, transformative social change leaders. At the University of Minnesota, we say that equity and diversity is everybody's everyday work. Too often people forget that in order to model and spread that concept well, we must first educate our own staff and volunteers about

the knowledge bases related to social justice and institutional systems of oppression. It has been helpful for me to explain in a staff meeting how I try to practice equity and justice in my own everyday work, and at times, how I fail, pick myself up, and continue on. If the other full-time staff and I don't teach each other and model for our student workers and ourselves, who will? Frances Hesselbein (1999) puts it this way, "Culture does not change because I desire to change it. Culture changes when the organization is transformed; the culture reflects the realities of people working together every day" (p. 7).

Successful leaders take time to think about how to structure or re-structure their organization for impact, but also how to structure a culture that truly reflects their values, and that includes ongoing, thoughtful training and developing of their staff so that they can be efficient and confident in accomplishing their tasks. Our structure is not the flat organization that some feminists have promoted, but rather a web of inclusion (Helgesen, 1990) or a hierarchy of actualization (Eisler, 2005) rather than the bureaucratic pyramid model. Ongoing training also helps build a work environment or culture of trust and supportive relationships. People are hard-wired for connection, curiosity and engagement; they want to make contributions, and they want to be appreciated for their talents, ideas, and passion. Research indicates that the brain operates with more of its magnificence when we feel supported (Goleman, 2007), but work environments or cultures of this ilk are not automatic, and perhaps not common.

When I attend conferences, discuss leadership in our institute, or talk with colleagues about our attempts to "walk our talk" as Intergalactic Leaders, it is this practice of "enabling others to act" in which people most keenly seek ideas for day-to-day implementation. Therefore, I have expanded on this practice the most.

***Implementing this core practice:***

- Empowering others to act starts with "putting the cast first," as Disney proposes (Kinni, 2011). The goals of our staff trainings and meetings are similar to other

departments and organizations: to welcome new staff, to introduce them to their responsibilities, and to teach them the operational procedures. I have found that it pays off enormously all year if our training also includes effective interpersonal communication and conflict resolution, critical thinking, time management, non-sexist language, how to deliver our elevator speeches, and an introduction to a social justice framework addressing racism and white privilege, heterosexism, disability services, an awareness of mental illness, and intersectionality—i.e. all of the values we say we stand for and the skills we know they need. Recently I added training on how implicit bias works (Valian, 2009), especially as popular media continues to minimize sexism, as demonstrated in an *Atlantic Monthly* headline, “The End of Men: How Women Are Taking Over Everything” (Rosin, 2010). Staff members tell us that they appreciate the training in all of the values and skills they need in order to be competent contributors. First, they have the skills to use, but they also appreciate the attention to their professional development. Our trainings include a two-day fall retreat, a one-day spring retreat, and monthly professional development meetings during an abbreviated staff meeting.

- Monthly/ongoing training. In our office, we repeat our trainings annually due to yearly student turnover, but returning staff members benefit from revisiting, teaching, or expanding on all of the critical training elements, especially the mission and our goals for creating a supportive, energizing social justice climate. In addition, there are constantly new ideas and skills workshops that can help an organization function well, or a team work together well (e.g. Fish! Philosophy, the curse of knowledge/cognitive bias, paradoxes in decision-making, and the Myers-Briggs Type inventory® personality inventory).
- My workshop on self-confidence is delivered early in the year, at one of our first monthly professional development trainings, as research shows that people who are more self-confident are more open to divergent thinking and different perspectives (Swan et al, 2004). As a result of talking openly about how to increase self-confidence, staff tend to find and express their gratefulness for assistance as well as social justice actions that they observe in one another. I also often call staff “radiant beings,” an expression I picked up in the 1980s. It is

quirky but feels good when you hear it and it continues to foster a positive environment.

- Getting to know one's cast. "Cast First" implies that leaders must get to know their followers and their capabilities and aspirations so that they can help them reach their full potential. This can happen more quickly if leaders take time to get to know people via retreats and introductory exercises at staff meetings. At every meeting the facilitator leads a quick energizer: A favorite is, What superpower would you choose? In addition, staff are asked to bring their professional development plans to each one-on-one meeting, and I occasionally initiate a lunch meeting or just stop by people's offices to say hello or gather perspectives for a decision.
- I am intentional about co-creating a positive work environment in which I "walk our talk." Discussions about what work climate we want start at the fall retreat. The questions posed include: How can we create a social justice culture? What would make working here a "10"? What would make ours a supportive and joyful working environment? Staff tell us what traditions they want to enact; e.g. say hello and goodbye to everyone each day (students are part-timers so there is a lot of coming and going all day), notice each other's good work, staff meeting treats, end-of-the-year party, and staff t-shirts.
- An idea inherited from early feminist practices has proved to be an easy and effective way to develop staff: rotate the facilitator role at each staff meeting. It adds a welcome creative change from the traditional manager-led meetings. A basic template ensures that key elements are always included (review of guidelines, a brief check-in for community-building, a review of work toward the mission, discussion or decision items which can come from the manager or staff, professional development time (ten-minute hot topic or 60-minute monthly training), a brief evaluation of how we can work better together, and an upbeat closing quote or poem. This template has changed little over the years, and has earned continual positive feedback from staff that they feel empowered, committed to the mission, and able to offer suggestions for change knowing that some may be implemented.

- Everyone helps. We discuss what it means that someone may have primary responsibility for a task, but that during large events or crunch times (not poor planning times), everyone is needed to help in the success of our unit.
- Celebrations. Our staff meeting agenda template now has a time for employees to highlight milestones in their lives (birthdays, births, new homes, awards, graduation). The staff have also started naming their peers or supervisors for supportive comments or advice given.
- Give responsibility. I also try to give increasing responsibility to student workers and interns, so that they can truly experience being the primary leader for some events, at the same time purposely acknowledging the fact that tasks that may seem small, like creating nametags that are accurate, also support our mission.<sup>4</sup>
- Clear lines of communication also empower others to act. In addition to a weekly staff meeting, we hold weekly one-on-ones with our supervisees, keep our doors open when possible (except for private subject matter), and send emails with clear subject lines. Open lines of communication allow for the sharing of fabulous new ideas.
- Providing clear job descriptions and reviewing them at the first meeting with the supervisor seems basic, but has proven to enable staff to feel focused and excited about their role. This is also a good time for staff to set goals for the skills and knowledge they would like to gain during the year. They are also asked to present ideas on how they might proceed in reaching their goals, either within or outside the organization. I include our values in the job description, as they are critical to our operation.
- In addition to positive, constructive informal feedback at the weekly one-on-one meetings, I implemented a mid-year informal review that mirrors the annual review—except that it is not filed. Employees have found this meeting helpful, as it prevents surprises later on and allows for intentional course correction should it

---

<sup>4</sup> I hosted an intern who devalued name tags and did not create one for our Vice President and misspelled the name of the Provost and several other guests. Clearly, that did not support our goal of helping everyone at the event feel valued and included.

be needed. Additionally, it allows the supervisor to be even more aware of accomplishments, providing another opportunity for support and celebration.

- Empowering others also involves developing and leveraging the power of collaborative relationships with other units and offices. To emphasize our work toward intersectionality, each staff member chooses to be a liaison for a particular office or organization and identity (e.g. Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence, the Center for Women and Public Policy, or sustainability ideas) and to speak for them at each staff meeting, mentioning upcoming events of interest and helping us include their perspectives as decisions are made.
- Whenever possible, I include all the staff in overall direction/strategic thinking. I believe this work inspires them and trains them to think from a big picture frame and to continue to look for win-win solutions after they leave us. I host formal semi-annual strategic planning sessions that generate other creative ideas. Disney provides a place for their cast to send ideas, and management selects the top ideas annually, implements them, and rewards those staff with a free trip or cruise. Higher education doesn't spring for cruises, but we laugh about how I would like to send my staff on a cruise for their latest great idea! Since we are a small unit, I'd also like to discuss how we want to divide our jobs as I heard Volvo did successfully (Carlson, A. & Fredriksson, H., 2005, p. 10).
- Our structure and practices also include following or exceeding University policies about creating a family-friendly workplace; e.g. supporting staff with young children and encouraging staff working on master's degrees.
- It is important to remember what we all learned in group dynamics class: simple things like sitting side-by-side or at a smaller table in supervision meetings, noticing facial expressions to anticipate when staff need further explanation, and simply asking staff how their day is going. These are little things that make a big difference in our office climate - and they just make sense given our mission, values. and goals.
- Finally, effective organizations have a system for internal leadership development (Sen, 2003). Staff create a professional development plan that we review semi-annually, and do a monthly check-in on their progress toward those goals. I also

send staff emails detailing opportunities related to their goals when they cross my desk. I ask staff to tell me what position they want next in life and what skills are needed, and we figure out how to help them gain experience in that area. For example, I have arranged for staff to gain supervisory experience as well as budget experience when those were not in their original job descriptions.

### ***Core Practice Five: Encourage Celebration and Joy!***

Every leadership model suggests some variation of celebrating victories. Leadership researchers concur that the once gender-linked “feminine”<sup>5</sup> values and behaviors such as caring, considering the whole, engaging others in decision making, developing relationships, collaborating, and celebrating are effective leadership practices - and that people of all genders can utilize these human values and behaviors. Some companies bring celebration into their spaces through “employee of the month” plaques; others reward employees with bonuses and trips; and some provide increased professional development training. Recently I was introduced to Harvard researcher Shawn Achor’s work on the happiness advantage (2010). Achor outlines how increasing positive mindsets in the work leads to significant increases in engagement, productivity, sales, resiliency, and long life!

#### ***Implementing this core practice:***

- Our budget is small. But even in for-profit settings, which tend to have more funds, celebrations feel unattainable and too rare. Each year, staff discuss how we might weave celebration into our practices. Our staff meeting agenda template now has an item for employees to highlight progress they helped make, or saw another staff make, toward our mission.
- An annual staff outing to an educational banquet, and an end-of-the-academic-year celebration are other ways we celebrate our staff’s contributions.

---

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that stereotypically gender-linked “masculine” traits and behaviors should be left behind. Some traits defined as “masculine”, such as quick action in emergencies and risk taking, are needed as part of a multi-spectral leaders’ toolbelt.

- As a supervisor, I consciously try to notice successes and mention them in staff meetings or in one-on-one meetings. Since the goals of individual and institutional equity are complex and time-consuming, it has worked well to set and celebrate interim goals, small victories that we can achieve and recognize along the way.
- Throughout the year, we talk about many issues that are extremely painful and at times depressing. Examples include the continued unbelievable number of rapes and assaults on campus and around the world; women in science who are still told that they should not follow that field; women of color being spoken to very slowly by professors on the assumption that they don't speak English even though they are third-generation students; women who are not paid fairly for their contributions even at the University, etc. At times, we all feel like it is one step forward, then one step back toward equity. I try to weave in a sense of the history of movements that have made significant change—but acknowledging that it often takes a long time and we can't always see if we are making a difference. I have long been drawn to the spiral view of progress. Suffragist Frances Willard observed, "This seems to be the law of progress in everything we do; it moves along a spiral rather than a perpendicular; we seem to be actually going out of the way, and yet it turns out that we were really moving upward all the time" (Willard, 1895, p.33).
- Staff have often told me that just the act of regularly saying "thank you" makes our environment 100% better than most of their former work environments.
- Finally, I consciously try to weave respectful humor and joy into our work, because our brains work and learn better when they are relaxed, and because it is fun. Humor is often absent from social justice work, as some feel it trivializes the topic. But I'll always remember the time I had the privilege of translating for Nobel Prize winner and indigenous activist Rigoberto Menchú, and she said the opposite. "Enjoy your freedom, laugh and enjoy each day—it is one of the gifts of freedom. And . . . please use your freedom and voice to help stop the atrocities and make the world better for those who cannot easily speak for themselves" (Menchú, 1985, personal communication). I share some of the cartoons I find (in

fact, there are many that are funny *and* respectful), and staff in turn share many cartoons, videos, and blogs adding to an increasingly fun climate.

***Core Practice Six: Advocate fiercely for liberty and justice for all.***

The term “fierce advocacy” comes from the Athena Model, and refers to supporting and acting on one’s passion and “creating an unstoppable force for the greater good” (Mertz, 2010, p.113). Leadership training often focuses on empowering individual leaders, on developing one person’s strengths and skills. Although this is an important part of leadership, an Intergalactic Leader goes far beyond that and strategizes, takes risks, and perseveres in efforts to create long-term system-level changes. My hope is that greater focus on how leaders can create systems change will accelerate the progress toward a time when organizational structures actively operate to enable citizens to develop and draw from all their talents. However, working at the institutional level against imbedded, systemic oppressions such as racism, sexism, and homophobia is complex (Kirkham, 2005).

Working toward the “greater good” and “liberty and justice for all” is a lifetime philosophy. In addition to being the right thing to do, more and more businesses are finding out that it also improves retention and profit. The University of Minnesota Systemwide Academic Task Force on Diversity (Mendoza, 2006) posited, “Diversity and academic excellence are inextricably intertwined. The University will only be successful if it can be a global leader in advancing a comprehensive and complex understanding of diverse people and their myriad ways of being, knowing, and learning” (page i-ii). In other words, in a culture of excellence, diversity is intrinsic and intertwined - not *either/or*, but *both-/and*.

Intergalactic Leadership requires self-knowledge, including incorporating all of one’s own identities, but also honoring and drawing from others’ multiple identities and fierce advocacy for the intersectionality of identities. It is truly impossible to separate multiple identities; as Patricia Hill Collins, African-American feminist scholar

and leader (1991) asserted, all facets of our identities are interlocking and interactive. For example, for women of color, the three constructions of gender, race, and class form an umbrella of dominance (hooks, 1989; Smith, 1987). Women with disabilities, from diverse religious backgrounds, or with other subordinated identities have long expressed the importance of honoring the whole person, and Intergalactic Leaders actively promote this.

***Implementing this core practice:***

- I believe that fierce advocacy starts with education about existing institutional structures and learning about some of the leadership methods that have been used to transform systems. I include this as a topic in our leadership training, and host an annual summit for equity leaders that I hope will help move our organization toward this goal.
- “Fierceness” in this context also means understanding one’s competition (Sheetz-Runkle, 2011), and the ability to be assertive; to speak up strategically when needed, and to continue to learn about ways to foster a more balanced civilization (Eisler, 2005). Ongoing professional development provides these skills for us. Staff also share current articles, blogs, and educational events that help us learn and grow. (We have had to add a discussion on how to handle the email overload generation so that we can still get work done too!)
- Leadership training must combine critical gender justice work with a thoughtful exploration of multiple identities, privilege, and implicit biases, though at times that can be challenging and uncomfortable. This training begins in our retreat and continues in staff and one-on-one discussions throughout the year.
- At the unit level, I revisit our strategic plan and mission with our staff formally semi-annually, and informally work to encourage this bigger picture thinking. The strategic plan is circulated, and the action elements (job responsibilities) are listed on post-it notes on a board that can be easily revisited and changed to increase our impact. Visitors are also impressed with our “garden,” (i.e. post-it notes which list some of the top action steps I have heard about and would like to

implement if our staff increases in the future or if we decide they would have a greater impact than one of our current initiatives).

***Core Practice Seven: Continually assess for impact, inclusion, and joy.***

Although not articulated by most leadership models, it seems important to state that ongoing assessment of effectiveness is a wise practice. Assessments help us know if traditional leadership practices are working, as well as if new creative, exploratory practices are having the desired effect. Ongoing assessments should make it clear if we are making any impact, and if our organizational structure, behaviors, and action steps are meeting the goal of creating an inclusive, joyous, productive learning environment. If I am truly open to continuous improvement ideas from all staff, I need to build in systems for that to occur. And I need to build in the often-forgotten systems for acting on the results of those assessments.

***Implementing this core practice:***

- I ask my staff at their mid-year and end-of-the-year assessment to tell me two things I do well as a supervisor and one suggestion for improvement. Although it seems as if this feedback would be superficial, in fact I have received some of the best ideas for improving my leadership from these comments, and also the subsequent ones they offer randomly because this door has been opened. Who better to offer advice than people who see your leadership every day?
- Although we administer surveys after each of our programs, conduct focus groups with former participants, and are developing a more comprehensive evaluation plan (trying to connect each goal with an assessment), some of the most useful information has come from the five-minute assessment we do at the end of each staff meeting.
- One of the difficult parts of personal leadership assessment is having the strength to admit our mistakes, to our staff and sometimes publicly. But I have found that when I reveal that I don't have all the answers, or I apologize for interpersonal

mistakes, or I jointly analyze a program when I did not reach an interim goal, the staff seem to admire me more - and they are more willing to make and admit mistakes that may have great impact down the line.

***Core Practice Eight: Become competent.***

Competence in basic skills is rarely mentioned in leadership models or leadership development courses. I believe it is assumed. The Research-Productive Model (Bland et al., 2004) names this core practice; it seems like a “no-brainer”, yet time and time again I hear of people who do not state nor hire for the skills (e.g. budgeting, marketing, strategic planning, etc.), key values, or aptitude they need in their employees. Beyond shared values, staff want to be hired into an organization in which they own a certain level of competence and/or the ability to quickly learn the skills. It is up to the leader to hire people who are competent, and to make sure they get the training needed to learn any additional skills.

***Implementing this core practice:***

- A clear and complete job description is important, and my staff work hard to edit the full-time and student intern descriptions to avoid surprises about the duties. I have also been very intentional about selecting a knowledgeable search committee and making sure they understand the skills and attitude we seek in future colleagues.
- During their first few weeks on the job, I ensure that staff have complete training in their job, and/or the resources to help them feel competent quickly. I also try to clear my calendar as much as I can, as thousands of questions are inevitable in learning to work in a large system, and I believe a great start pays off for their entire career with us.

**Conclusion**

The current proliferation of literature about inclusive, holistic leadership models is thrilling. And we desperately need eloquent speakers and wise visionaries to inspire

us and to coordinate magnificent and bold events. But if our everyday actions—at work and at home—do not reflect the caring and equitable environments and behaviors that we are working toward, then systemic change will never arrive. I hope that the ideas described here, that flow from these eight core practices I have labeled Intergalactic Leadership, will help leaders to walk their talk in their day-to-day work; to dare to be effective, caring, Intergalactic Leaders; and to aggressively increase people’s transformative capabilities and thus more quickly shepherd in a partnership civilization. “Ultimately, leadership is about how we shape the future that we truly desire” (Senge et al, 2008, p. 208). I look forward to working with you to go where no one has gone before—creating an inclusive, green, creative, energizing, effective, peaceful, joyful, and radiant future.

## References

- Abuya, K. (2014). Leadership for cultural transformation in Kenya: Addressing female genital mutilation. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* 1(1), article 10.
- Achor, S. (2010). *The happiness advantage: The seven principles of positive psychology that fuel success and performance at work*. NY: Broadway Books.
- Ancona, D., Malone, T. W., Orlikowski, W. J., and Senge, P. M. (2007). In praise of the incomplete leader. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(2), 92-100.
- Astin, H. S., and Leland, C. (1991). *Women of influence, women of vision: A cross-cultural study of leaders and social change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Barsh, J., Cranston, S., Lewis, G. (2011). *How remarkable women lead: The breakthrough model for work and life*. McKinsey & Company, Inc.
- Bass, B. M., and Avolio, B. J. (December 2010). Re-examining the components of transformational and transactional leadership using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 72(4): 441-462. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1348/096317999166789/abstractleadershipquestionnaire>. Consulting Psychologist’s Press.
- Bass, B.M., and Riggio, R.F. (2006). *Transformational leadership*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bielby, W. T. (2000). Minimizing workplace gender and racial bias. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29(1), 120-129.
- Bland, C., Iber-Main, A.M., Lund, S.M., and Finstad, D. (2004). *The research-productive department: Strategies from department that excel*. Retrieved from <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/training/e2/research/index.html>

- Brown, B. (2012). *Daring greatly: how the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent, and lead*. NY: Gotham Books.
- Budworth, M. H., & Mann, S. L. (2010). Becoming a leader: The challenge of modesty for women. *Journal of Management Development*, 29(2), 177-186.
- Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. NY: Harper and Row.
- Carlson, A. and Fredriksson, H. (September 2005). Bachelor's Thesis: Production organization at Husqvarna AB. Retrieved from <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:24444/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Edghill, V. (2006). Women of color in the administrative pipeline: Where are we? *On Campus With Women*, 35(2). Retrieved from [http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume35\\_2/national.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume35_2/national.cfm).
- Eisler, R. (November 17, 2005). The power of partnership: Inspiring transformative leadership. *World Business Academy* 19(6). Retrieved from <http://worldbusiness.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/tr111705.pdf>
- Eisler, R. (2005). *Building a just and caring world: Four cornerstones*. Retrieved from <http://www.partnershipway.org/learn-more/articles-by-riane-eisler/partnership-culture/building-a-just-and-caring-world-four-cornerstones/?searchterm=Four%20Cornerstones>.
- Goleman, D. (2007). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. NY: Random House.
- Helgesen, S. (1990). *The female advantage: Women's ways of leadership*. NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.
- Hesselbein, F. (Spring 1999). The key to cultural transformation, *Leader to Leader*, Issue 12 (1-7).
- Kinni, T. (2011). *Be our guest: Perfecting the art of customer service*. Disney Editions.
- Kouzes, J. and Posner, B. (1987). *The leadership challenge: How to keep getting extraordinary things done in organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Madsen, S., Longman, K., and Daniels, J. (2012). Women's leadership development in higher education: Conclusion and implications for HRD. *Advances in Human Resources* 14(1), 123-128. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.
- Mendoza, L. (2006). *University of Minnesota's Report of the System-wide Task Force on Diversity*. Retrieved from [http://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/5640/diversity\\_exec\\_summ.pdf?sequence=1](http://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/5640/diversity_exec_summ.pdf?sequence=1).
- Mertz, M. (2010). *Becoming Athena: Eight principles of enlightened leadership*. MMM Publications.
- Northouse, P. G. (2004). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.
- Nickles, E. & Ashcraft, L. (1981). *The coming matriarchy: How women will gain the balance of power*. NY: Seaview Books.
- Potter, T., Eisler, R., and Lewis-Hunstiger, M. (Fall 2014). Welcome to the interdisciplinary journal of partnership studies. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies* 1(1). Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/a/umn.edu/ijps/home/vol1-iss1-art1>.

- Rosener, J. B. (1990). Ways women lead. *Harvard Business Review*, 68(6), 119-125.
- Rosin, Hanna. July/August 2010. The end of men. *Atlantic Monthly*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/07/the-end-of-men/8135/>.
- Senge, P., Smith, B., Kruschwitz, N., Laur, J., and Schley, S. (2008). *The necessary revolution: how individuals and organizations are working together to create a sustainable world*. NY: Doubleday.
- Sheetz-Runkle, B. *Sun Tzu for women: The art of war for winning in business*. Avon, MA: Adams Business.
- Smith, K., Matkin, G., and Fritz, S. (2004). A review of gender and full-range leadership research and suggestions for future research. *The Journal of Leadership Education*, 3(2), 52-68.
- Valian, V. (January 2009). Beyond gender schemas: Improving the advancement of women in academia. *Hypatia A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 20(3):198-213.
- Willard, F. (1895). *Wheel within a wheel: A woman's quest for freedom*. NY: Revell Company.
- Wheatley, M. (2009). *Turning to one another: Simple conversations to restore hope to the future*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Peg Lonquist, PhD, is Director of the Women's Center in the Office for Equity and Diversity at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Correspondence about this article should be addressed to Peg Lonquist, PhD, at [pegquist@umn.edu](mailto:pegquist@umn.edu)

<b>Figure 1. Eight Core Practices of Intergalactic Leadership from Key Leadership Models</b>								
<b>Eight Core Practices of Intergalactic Leaders</b>	<b>Kouzes &amp; Pousner's Five Core Practices</b>	<b>Athena Model</b>	<b>Centered Leadership</b>	<b>Research-Productivity &amp; Engagement</b>	<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	<b>Partnership Leaders</b>	<b>Multicultural Leaders</b>	<b>Feminist Leaders</b>
<b>Inspire a Shared Vision</b> (includes the greater good)	Inspire a Shared Vision.	Giving Back.	Meaning.	Clear Goals.	Shared Purpose.	Shift from domination to partnership system.	Leaders as community stewards.	Shared Vision.
<b>Walk The Talk</b> (Exercise integrity, self- and spiritual knowledge)	Model the Way.	Authentic Self. Learning		Decentralized organization.	Self-Knowledge. Authentic. Committed.	Cooperation and healthy competition.	A leader among equals; <i>Sankofa</i> - learn from past.	Participatory Open re: power. Less autocratic.
<b>Initiate Intentional Values-Based Change</b> (incl. systems change toward partnerships)	Challenge the Process.	Courageous Acts.	Positive Framing.	Brokered opportunities.	Fostering Intentional, Values-Based Change.	Foster humane and balanced approaches to civilization.	Leaders as guardians of public values – activist tradition.	Work toward systems change toward equity.
<b>Empower Others to Act</b> (Intentionally create ethical, diverse, socially just, power with, learning environment)	Enable Others to Act.	Collaborate. Relationships key.		Culture/climate. Diversity/mentor. Communicate. Resources.	Collaborate. Division of Labor. Disagree with respect. Learning culture.	Inspire, engage, empower. "Hierarchies of actualization."	We to We - from individualism to collective identity.	Collaborate. Work toward social justice for women and everyone.
<b>Encourage Celebration and Joy!</b>	Encourage the Heart.	Celebration & Joy.	Managing energy; Connect or build stronger relations	Rewards	Empathetic	Foster humane and balanced approach to civilization.	<i>Mi Casa Es Su Casa</i> - generous; <i>Gracias</i> - forgiveness.	Caring for people, planet. Profit not key driver.
<b>Advocate Fiercely</b> for liberty and justice for all (includes understand competition, strategize)		Fierce advocacy. Act. Passion. Create force for good.	Engage voice, confidence. Accept opportunities, risks. Collaborate.				All My Relatives – <i>la familia</i> , the village, the tribe	Dare to be powerful. Work toward fairness for all.
<b>Continually Assess</b> (for impact, socially just climate, happiness)				Assess for impact.				
<b>Become Competent</b> (Hire/train people with holistic values and skills.)					Competent in basic skills needed.			Urged to learn skills needed. Mentor.