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The Leader's Experience of Relational Leadership: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Leadership as Friendship

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THE LEADER'S EXPERIENCE OF RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP:
A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP AS FRIENDSHIP

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To my husband, Ronald, who stepped aside as I was stepping up, and to my parents who patiently waited as I progressed through another growth spurt.

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Abstract

There are many ways to lead others, all of which involve a relationship among parties. However, the heartbeat of leadership may be a leader's relational sensibility. This research explored the leader's experience of relational leadership and the extent to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship described its qualities. It also explored whether actual friendship between leaders and followers was possible with this form of leadership. The topic of relational leadership was approached through a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology to explore the lived experiences of six women leaders. Their experience of relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship represented their experience was the vantage point for this study. Using an inverted pyramid structure, in-depth interviews were conducted in three rounds consisting of six, three, and two participants for a total of 11 interviews. This research augments the leadership literature by describing the leader's experience of relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship captures its qualities. This research concluded that leaders can, and do, find ways to lead with friends, to lead with characteristics one finds in friendship, or both. It demonstrated that leaders can have actual friendships (with each other and with their followers or subordinates), provided boundaries are maintained. The electronic version of this dissertation is available in the open-access OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd

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Chapter I: Introduction

> Whatever the cause, our failure to take on the matter of friendship has impoverished our relationships as deeply as it has our discourse. For our language of friendship and our conceptions of it affect the way in which we actually experience friendship: our expectations, our hopes, our fears, our satisfactions, and our disappointments. It seems clear that friendship has been relegated to the cultural attic as much out of fear of sentimentality as out of a sense that it can easily be explained away as self-interested. (Sharp, 1991, pp. 32-33)

As Sharp (1991) asserts in the lead quote, the fullness of experience we could expect from our relational lives is lost because the mutual assistance, approval, and support that friendship promises is not fully realized in our relationships and, as such, has resulted in a somewhat anemic discourse. Considered sentimental and selfish, friendship is dismissed as inconsequential, and then stored away with other matters abandoned and forgotten. Sharp's metaphor of the *cultural attic* implies that, along with an accumulation of the lost and discarded, lays the treasure of friendship whose value is yet to be discovered. In addition, Sharp is also inviting us to shed socially ingrained notions and to reexamine our beliefs about friendship in order to realize richer relational lives. By recovering friendship from the cultural attic, friendship can be brought to the forefront of awareness even in the area of leadership. Doing this will require a discourse that renews both our understanding and appreciation of leadership and friendship.

Friendship is not typically a concept associated with leadership. One exception is Perreault (2005), who, through metaphor, likened leadership to friendship in her description of the relational aspects of leadership: "using friendship as a metaphor for leadership provides a way to convey a view and practice of leadership in which connection and relationship are basic" (p. 3). Her view is that the inclusive nature of friendship bears similarities to leadership. Perreault offers this metaphor as an alternative to war metaphors already interwoven with our language of leadership. Perreault's metaphor provides a way to imagine, describe, and do leadership relationally. Other theorists, such as Fletcher (2007), Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), Miller (2006), Murrell (1997), Regan and Brooks (1995), Sinclair (2007), and Uhl-Bien (2006), have also recognized the importance of the relationship shared between leaders and followers and have offered their portrayal as well. For instance, relational leadership encompasses a full range of actions, such as caring, trust, and collaboration, which demonstrate connectedness suggesting that a leader's responsibilities includes relationship development (Pless & Maak, 2005). Because of transformational leadership's (Burns, 1978) attention to the relationship among leaders and followers, some consider it a springboard for relational leadership (Eagly, 2007; Geller, 2005; Sinclair, 2007) and have connected it to feminist leadership practices (Rosener, 1995).

This research project is another step toward appreciating the relational richness of the professional lives of leaders. Starting with the belief that the heartbeat of leadership may be a leader's relational sensibility, this study contemplated the relational practices of six women leaders. The vantage point was their experience of relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship represented their experience.

Situating the Researcher

Over the years, I worked in two distinct circumstances, each representing a different approach to leadership. In the first iteration, individual accomplishment was both valued and strived for—leaving little room for collaboration. The second approach to leadership valued both individual accomplishment and collaboration. These situations taught me that leadership comes in as many forms as there are organizational environments, and that different situations may call for diverse leadership expressions.

My experiences in each of these contexts, as well as my participation as both follower and, in later years, as an appointed leader, have contributed to a personal theory of leadership which fully embraces a more relational form of leadership and appreciates the value of people at all levels of the organization. I believe that each person has a rich reservoir of ideas and abilities. Some may wish to keep these qualities to themselves, but those who would share if they believed their ideas were valued deserve nothing less. Organizations exist because of the efforts of many people and can usually support both individual effort and collaboration. Fostering the growth of others, deferring to their expertise, and obtaining resources to help them do their jobs are all responsibilities of leadership.

The relational form of leadership that I encountered continued to intellectually and emotionally tug at me. I was intrigued by how many tasks could be done collaboratively rather than competitively. The strong connections I had witnessed between the relational leaders in the collaborative context stood in contrast to what appeared to be the more common individualistic practices. I saw the ability of these relational leaders to connect with others as central to their role as advocates and agents of change. They led through connection, caring, sharing, and striving toward a greater good. Their actions were not without self-interest nor were they devoid of competition for resources needed to accomplish tasks. The difference was that followers and peers were treated with respect, empathy, and as valued contributors to organizational goals. Accomplishment was a result of the relationships and friendships these leaders forged.

Competition between other departments and other agencies for program funding, and individualism were still evident; yet, these leaders found a way to work with other leaders toward the same or similar goals, using cooperation, collaboration, and connection interwoven with competence, determination, and persistence. All of these leaders were women who were leading relationally with an esprit de corps epitomizing friendship.

As I considered the direction my studies would take me, I was drawn to the idea of relational practice, especially how friendship fits into the leadership equation. I reflected on what appeared to me to be a type of friendship occurring in the workplace among the women leaders I had worked with and found myself repeatedly going back to this concept. Why not look at the friendship-leadership connection? And, why not look at this dynamic among leaders within the broad arena of human and social services where I witnessed its existence? This also meant that because I had noticed this friendly leadership among women, that they would be the most likely participants. As my interest area was beginning to crystallize, Carolyn Kenny, Professor of Human Development and Indigenous Studies, Antioch University, shared an article by Perreault (2005), who offered the metaphor of friendship as leadership as another way to conceptualize leadership, as well as proposing an alternative vocabulary for leadership. Perreault suggested that friendship describes a type of leadership that is the essence of relational practice. Despite the apparent polarity in the two concepts—friendship and leadership—Perreault's insight provided the impetus to begin this study.

Positioning

My interest in a more relational form of leadership began when I was working the government sector in a department that oversaw human services for a county in New Jersey. During this nine-year period, I interacted with many women in the field. There was a level of caring, concern, and respect for others that I had not experienced before—leadership that simultaneously considered others along with the task. At the time, I did not have a vocabulary for what I was observing between the women leaders in the field and believed it to be friendship. I had not questioned my observation or tried to name what I was observing. As the years advanced, I became more relaxed in this environment and my authentic self began to emerge. I also learned that my work relationships were important to me, even if they were only for that moment in time. My current studies have resulted in reflection on this time and have furthered my exploration in self-discovery along with a discovery about leadership theory. I was drawn to ideas that focused more on the collaborative experience of leadership rather than the individual. Even though the leadership literature was intellectually stimulating, there was something missing. Where was the leadership I had witnessed? Where was the relationship? The leadership and relationship I was searching for were found in the area of relational leadership and in the metaphor of leadership as friendship. With this study, I looked at the practice of relational leadership, and where and how friendship fits. I have chosen phenomenology as a method requiring that the researcher bracket (epoché) her beliefs in order to allow the experience of the participants to be heard. This is where my journey continues.

Purpose of the Study

There were two goals for this study. First, I wanted to uncover the lived experience of women leaders who draw on friendship concepts or actual friendship in their leadership practice. My goal was to understand the essence of the relational practice of leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship captures its qualities. My understanding came through discovering meaning, structures, and contexts. I also wanted to learn about the conditions and propensities that favor relational leadership and the relationship of friendship to leadership as a metaphor, or as a practice. In the context of leadership as friendship, friendship supports both individuality and connection. Within the leadership relationship, I wanted to understand how the leadership-friendship connection operates on a deep and personal level. As a starting place, I hoped to reveal the experiences of women who are relational leaders.

Second, I wanted to contribute to the discourse about leadership by considering whether friendship has a role in leadership as experienced by women leaders. The goal was to study the lived experiences of women leaders whose practice of leadership is relational and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship captured its qualities. Recognizing the variability of individual experience, my quest was to investigate both the experience and essential themes that epitomize the leadership as friendship metaphor. I explored this topic through hermeneutic phenomenology, which is the interpretation of the life world (Schwandt, 2001). Due to my use of hermeneutic phenomenology as the basis for inquiry to obtain "rich textual descriptions" (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007, p. 616), the sample size was small. I described the experiences of six women leaders, identified by others as relational leaders, and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship captures the qualities of their leadership experience. I also intended to ascertain the meaning they ascribe to these experiences. How does a leader experience relational leadership and does friendship describe their experience? The answer can be found in the meaning they assign to their experiences, their lives, their realities, and their stories. Discovering who they are and how they came to find their authentic self provided the opportunity to discover new ways of seeing and approaching the world, including leadership.

Gaps in the Leadership Literature

The literature was reviewed in five theoretical categories: relational cultural theory (RCT), positive work relationship theory (PWR), friendship, relational leadership (RL), and gender. Regardless of whether the focus is on women's personal or professional lives, the themes presented by each of these theories are similar. Each of these areas addresses an aspect of connection to others that adds a dimension to Perreault's (2005) leadership as friendship metaphor. The gap in the leadership literature that this research seeks to fill is to connect Perreault's theory to practice. The literature set seemed to make sense to me. There was already a connection between two of the areas—RCT and PWR—which represent the private and public spheres respectively. The leadership as friendship metaphor conjoined relational leadership and friendship, and both areas correlated to PWR.

Relational leadership is beginning to be recognized as a leadership practice (Uhl-Bien, 2005). However, the leader's experience of relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship describes its qualities has not been researched. This study seeks to elicit leaders' experiences and the meaning they ascribe to those experiences. This research also explored whether leading relationally extended beyond the metaphor into actual friendships between leaders and followers.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The inquiry was a qualitative study using a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology. As such, I sought to understand how women leaders experience relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship describes their experience, as well as the meaning they ascribe to their experiences. I inquired as to whether a leader would refer to leadership as friendship and whether a leadership ever resulted in actual public sphere friendships.

I was interested in the impact the research relationship had on the study participants and me, which is consistent with the qualitative approach. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. These researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry" (p. 8). In addition, qualitative study is not generalized to the larger community. My interest is in capturing the depth of experience rather than the breadth, so I interviewed only six participants who are, or were, appointed leaders within the human and social services field. My goal was to describe the experience of these leaders in order to understand the essence of their experience with relational leadership and friendship rather than to sample many leaders. My intent was to limit the scope of this exploration to the leaders' experiences of leadership and friendship. This represents another limitation in that I only interviewed leaders, rather than dyads or groups.

How was the question of leading as friendship answered? I relied on the "participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8), by conducting a qualitative study using hermeneutic phenomenology. Phenomenology looks to the "lived experience" (van Manen, 1990, p. 9) of participants or to the "essence of consciousness itself" (C. Kenny, personal communication, March 22, 2008) where essence is the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). The result of this approach is a rich description of the experiences of women who are relational leaders. Their stories appear in chapter 4.

Criteria for Evaluation

The evaluative criteria for this study are the two multifaceted criteria for the constructivist interpretive paradigm: trustworthiness and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Trustworthiness suggests that both the inquiry and results are reliable. It is measured by the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the research. Credibility refers to the accuracy of the participants' perspectives and the interviewer's interpretation. Thick description of research methods, research site, and participants assist readers in determining whether the results of this study are transferable to the readers' situation. Confirmability suggests that another researcher conducting the same study would be able to confirm the results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Authenticity is characterized by fairness and the validity of ontological, educational, and tactical standpoints. Fairness implies that there is an even representation of perspectives. Ontological authenticity implies that participants experience an increased awareness as a result of the research. Educational authenticity suggests that participants gain an appreciation and understanding of the ideas of others, and tactical authenticity involves participant empowerment (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Chapter Summary

This study includes six chapters. The first chapter outlined my position and gaps in the literature. The chapter also established the foundation for the remainder of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature in several areas. Relational cultural theory, positive work relationship theory, friendship and relational leadership, and gender are woven together to suggest a topography for the friendship-leadership relationship. Each knowledge area is reviewed separately, but is nonetheless part of the whole.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. It also describes the research design, research protocols, selection of participants, data collection procedures, interpretation, and significance of the study.

Chapter 4 provides a review of the findings of the inquiry. I recount the experience of the participants. Their stories represent an interpretation of their experiences with friendship in the leadership relationship as they lived it and the meanings they ascribed to these experiences.

A discussion of the results of this study is presented in chapter 5. This was achieved through the themes that materialize from the interview process. In this chapter, similarities in stories, as well as my interpretations are explored.

Chapter 6 completes this study with a discussion of the research process. This chapter is reflective in nature. I considered the implications for leadership theory and practice, and future research. I also reflected on how this research has impacted my own leadership.

Chapter II: Literature Review

"Using friendship as a metaphor for leadership provides a way to convey a view and practice of leadership in which connection and relationship are basic" (Perreault, 2005, p. 3). The focus of this research study was to discover the relational practice of leadership as friendship as experienced from the leader's point of view. I agree with Kahn (2007) in his assessment that a person's "lived experiences at work shape how people think, how they feel, and what they do" (p. 189). This idea is foundational in attempting to understand interpersonal dynamics within the professional context of work. Given the requirements of organizational life, a significant amount of time is allotted to work and work related tasks, such as preparing for, and decompressing from, work—leaving little time for socialization outside of family (O'Connor, 1998). This is especially true for women who work and still retain a significant percentage of the workload of caring for the family. As a consequence, organizational life holds the possibility for the work being the focus of socialization wherein friendships emerge among organization members. Within the organization, relationships are the conduit for realizing the organization's purpose. Relationships also form the basis for individual experience—both positive and negative—as they set the stage for collaborative or competitive action.

This study explored the lived experiences of six women leaders in the field of human and social services who lead relationally through friendship. As this literature review demonstrates, there are aspects of leadership in the workplace that have been understudied. The dissertation is grounded in the conviction that the metaphor of "leadership as friendship" (Perreault, 2005, p. 1) is an expression of relational leadership. To do so, this literature review constructs a composite of the essential components of leadership as friendship. Within the public sphere (professional work context), this review examined current theory and research on positive work relationships, friendship, and the range of work focusing on relational leadership. Each of these types of workplace relationships has bearing on this study of leaders' relational practices. In addition to the central metaphor, the metaphor of relational constellations (later discussed in detail) assists in elaborating the leadership as friendship theme. I chose a literature set that I believed tied together the concepts and envisioned them in deeper and deeper levels of understanding.

My interest is in the positive aspects of leadership as friendship congruent with the recent shift in scholarly research on positive work relationship theory (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). Theories related to this idea include relational cultural theory (private sphere), positive work relationships (public sphere), relational leadership, and gender. It can be argued that both relational leadership and friendship are forms of positive work relationships. They are reviewed here separately for purposes of clarity with the understanding that each area is ultimately a component of the overarching blueprint of leadership as friendship. Running through each of these topics is the notion of gender in part because of the literature set, but also because the responsibility of relationship building is considered the responsibility of women (Fletcher, 1999). Each theory, and the field of literature that supports it, can be viewed as a concentric ring, framing the central theme—leadership as friendship—which is embedded in elements of all the other rings. Relational cultural theory is presented as the outer most ring, followed by positive work relationships, friendship, and relational leadership with leadership as friendship at the core.

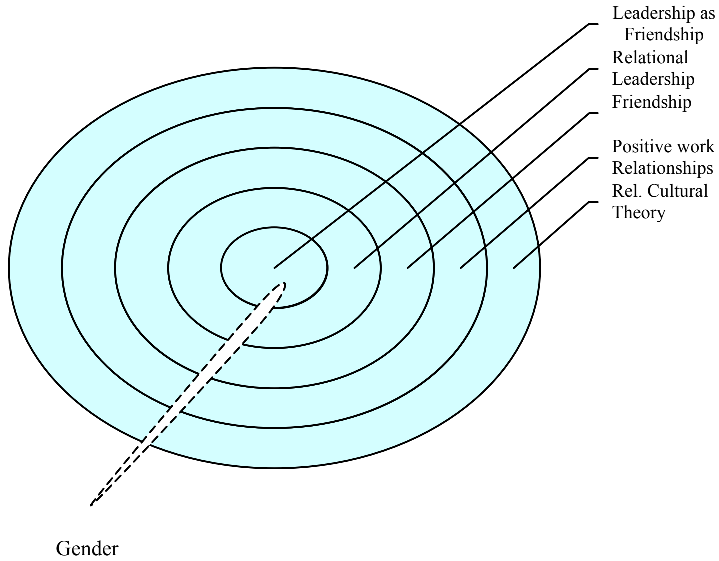

Figure 2.1. Conceptual ring of literature.

Relational Cultural Theory

"Our conception of the self-in-relation involves the recognition that, for women, the primary experience of self is relational, that is, the self is organized and developed in the context of important relationships" (Surrey, 1991, p. 52).

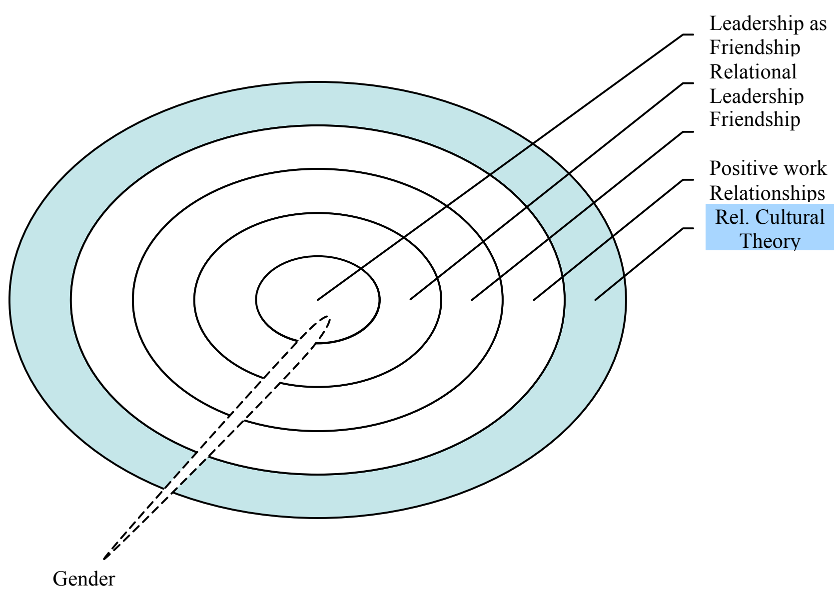

Figure 2.2. Relational cultural theory conceptual ring.

Because relational practice is the heartbeat of this study, it is necessary to understand the theoretical background for relational practice. The relational perspective is rooted in the field of psychology with a collection of writings from Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey (1991) who stitched together the self-in-relation model known as the stone center relational theory, conceptualized, in part, as a result of Baker Miller's insight on women's mental health and human growth and development (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). The self-in-relation model evolved as a result of consistent relational themes gathered from women in therapy. Given that existing theory, based on men's development, which seemed to pathologize women's relational tendencies rather than recognize them as strengths (Fletcher, 1999; Gilligan, 1993; Jordan, Kaplan, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991), the self-in-relation theory was presented to represent women's experience.

Jordan, Kaplan, et al. (1991) present a composite of self-in-relation—empathy, mutuality, empowerment, self-esteem, and influence—that interweaves the themes of the relational self, connectedness, interdependence, moral development, responsibility, and caretaking. The central idea is that both women and men develop their sense of self in relationship. Despite this, however, there are two types of expressions of self. Miller (1991) distinguishes between the *man-made* self-construct emphasizing differentiation and the connected self that is born into and grows in relation to another. Man-made refers to a representation of the ideal experience of men (not women) asserting, "prevalent models are prescriptions about what *should* happen" (p. 12) rather than the actual experience of all men. As suggested, approaching others relationally may be a natural approach for either sex. Conversely, the same can be said about the idealized approach to others typified by differentiation. For this study, relational propensities are a core consideration.

One classic example of the self-in-relation model, as it relates to the public sphere, was presented by Fletcher (1999) who studied the ways in which six female engineers working within a male-dominated field engaged in relational practice and the degree to which their actions were devalued, made invisible or, as Fletcher has categorized it, disappeared. Additionally, Fletcher identified four types of relational practice—preserving, mutual empowering, self-achieving, and creating teams—that preserve, perpetuate, facilitate, and initiate organizational work and activities.

Fletcher (1999) stated that the health of the organization and its projects and initiatives cannot survive without these same relational activities, which may be espoused as a value such as teamwork and collaboration, but with little thought as to how these activities will actually be carried out. As such, the female engineers, who were the subject of Fletcher's study, practiced their relational skills despite the fact that their male peers, as well as the organization, failed to see the relevance or even acknowledge the existence of these practices. You might ask why the women in Fletcher's study were relational given that relational skills were ignored or disappeared. The answer lies in the belief that both personal development and organizational effectiveness can be positively impacted by relational practices. Relational practice is a conscious choice. Even when perceived as an unconscious gendered expression, the benefits to the people and organizations do not diminish.

Fletcher (1999) regards what emerged from her research as representative of the larger culture where women are expected to carry out relational activities that are necessary, essential, and desirable, and are simultaneously devalued, dismissed, and, in some cases, disdained. The paradox experienced by the engineers "is a contradiction inherent in the public/private split that the power-knowledge system of patriarchy works to suppress: *relational activity is not needed and women must provide it"* (p. 112).

Fletcher (1999) notes that the term *feminine* became connected to ideas about devotion to the family and self-sacrifice, which are often in conflict with the public arena of work. This separation has lead to different impressions about the fundamental components of each area (public and private), which are socially constructed and sustained, as well as gendered. This "discourse (social practice, structures, and language) continues to create, reinforce, and textually represent them as separate and dichotomous" (p. 29). While relational practice disappeared within this context, Fletcher contends that empowered workers need relational skills to assist the organization in its change efforts, as well as to compete globally. Further, Fletcher's two-pronged recommendation to counter disappearance focuses on the individual (support groups and more visibility) and organization (reassignment of human resource functions to males, encouraging use of private sphere skills, and connecting promotions to family or community involvement).

Around the same time that Fletcher (1999) was studying the relational practices of female engineers, Crozier (1999) was theorizing about the career development of women with a relational inclination. Referencing Holland's (1997) themes in his theory of career choice, Crozier (1999) noted that women's career preferences might be social (e.g., caretaker, counselor, social worker), artistic (e.g., artist, musician, art therapist, dance therapist), or conventional (e.g., secretary, receptionist, clerk, retail worker) because these fields held the strongest possibility for relational inclinations to be satisfied. She further explained "choosing these occupational fields would provide opportunities for developing relationships and serving others which would attract an individual with a relational sense of self and probably also match the individual’s already developed skill set” (Crozier, 1999, p. 235). Women in these fields would be less likely to experience the role/proclivity discord, but it is still possible that their relational skills might have been disappeared at worst, or, at best, devalued. As Crozier noted:

> Accepting women’s relational identity as a premise for the development of concepts regarding women [sic] career development allows for a recognition of the significance that relationships and context play in the lives of some women and influence career choice, decision-making, and development. (p. 244)

Being relationally inclined may not mean that people act on their inclinations. The catalyst could be almost anything such as the work, the organization, individual needs, some event, or situational or positional requirements. It is the catalyst that allows relational practice to emerge. Currently, relational skills have been connected to relational leadership, discussed later in this review.

Recently, the stone relational theory, with the notion of connection, or self-in-relation, at its core, was “renamed relational cultural theory” (RCT) (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007, p. 347) to “highlight the point that relational interactions must always be understood within the broader social context in which they occur” (p. 378). The name change recognized the collective experience of women as relational beings and regarded gender, power dynamics, and social identity as cultural phenomena. This is not to say that men are not relational; rather, it suggests that the relational dynamics of men are often modulated by culturally accepted understanding of masculine individualism, just as a relational inclination is rooted in roles and expectations of women. As Fletcher and Ragins noted “the concept of self-in-relation holds that all individuals are selves-in-relation and what varies is the extent to which we either accept and enact that reality—or deny it and operate as if we were discrete beings independent of others” (p. 380). Socialization is the means by which women and men learn about themselves, as well as the desirable gender roles to effectuate (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006; Miller, 2006). Culture, then, implies a broader context for human activity dynamically interacting with a “man-made” (Miller, 1991, p. 14) culture. RCT then, may provide an opportunity for greater individual progress. Nakash, Williams and Jordon (2002) noted, ‘by taking a relational-cultural approach, we are committing ourselves to critically analyzing and transforming the systems of power, domination, subordination, and stratification that impeded the health, growth, and development of all people” (p. 2).

While not specifically included in RCT, another effect of honoring relational competency is that women’s voice is added to the human dialogue, thereby more fully representing the human experience (Gilligan, 1993; Surrey, 1991). The relational voice refers to moral reasoning, psychological, economical, and political connections within relationship, sustaining bonds, and finding one’s self in relation to others (Gilligan, 1993). The relational voice also refers to the ideas espoused by other feminist theorists and researchers regarding personal authenticity and affiliation (Matusak, 1997) and “caring, respect, appreciation, and patience” (Helgesen, 1990, p. 82). Voice can also be a metaphor about intellectual and ethical growth (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). Women’s voice was added to the dialogue about moral reasoning and growth through the contributions of Belenky et al. (1986), Gilligan (1993), Jordan, Kaplan, et al. (1991), and Jordan (1997), Noddings (1984). Their views move the concept of caring for others into the open.

Another feature of RCT is that it views the human relational experience through a feminist theoretical lens. It interweaves relevant attributes of women’s development—the relational self, connectedness, interdependence, moral development, responsibility, and caretaking (Jordan, Kaplan, et al., 1991). Viewed from a feminist perspective, empathy, mutuality, empowerment, self-esteem, and influence are seen as relational strengths. Miller

(1991) posits that a key aspect of women's sense of self may be associated with "doing for other(s) within a relationship" (p. 17).

The central theme in RCT is that "self is organized and developed in the context of important relationships" (Surrey, 1991, p. 52) rather than in separation. Further, Surrey emphasized "relational competence" (p. 53), which she describes as including mutual growth, commitment, and responsiveness. Relational competence is enabled through the exchange of "growth, commitment, and responsiveness" exchange of empathy, sensitivity, care, and empowerment (p. 53). Additionally, RCT requires a mutual exchange—each party exchanging some valued measure—rather than an equal exchange of the five attributes of mutuality, self-esteem, empathy, empowerment, and power.

Mutuality implies personal transformation as both parties affect and are affected by each other, which results in self-esteem developed through shared understanding and regard (Jordan, 1991b). It includes empathy, developed through early life experiences with emotional closeness and boundary flexibility (Surrey, 1991), which is the ability to perceive and feel another person's verbal and nonverbal affective cues, as well as to communicate empathetically (Jordan, 1991a). Another component of empathy is self-empathy expressed through self-achieving (Fletcher, 1999).

Empowerment is also connected to the idea of mutuality—it is the power of connection or relationship (Surrey, 1991). This notion of empowerment is also consistent with the difference between power with and power for: "working with the other—to satisfy mutual needs" (Graham, 1995, p. 25) and being an instrument for change. Within the public sphere, empowering is "behavior intended to enable others' achievement and contribution to the project" (Fletcher, 1999, p. 55). Influence or power—the capacity to produce a change—is a final aspect of self-in-relation and involves both personal and political power (Miller, 1991).

From the vantage point of leadership as friendship, RCT offers a view of the human dynamic that both acknowledges and respects the notion that relational practice is an expression of how individuals interact with each other, as well as the ways in which they accept or disregard relational interdependence. From a cultural perspective, RCT also recognizes the role of social context and the interplay of gender, power, and identity. Where friendship defines the leadership relationship, connection is implied as is mutuality and growth.

Now that the relevance of RCT's original focus on women's personal growth and development in relation is clear, it will be important to connect this to women's professional life. Each of the RCT themes—empathy, mutuality, empowerment, self-esteem, and influence—presents itself in some form in positive work relationships, friendships, and relational leadership. The RCT themes will now be explored more fully along with their relevance to this study, as well as what is missing from the current leadership literature.

Positive Work Relationships

"Work relationships are central not only for how work gets done, but also for the quality of our lives" (Ragins & Dutton, 2007, p. 3).

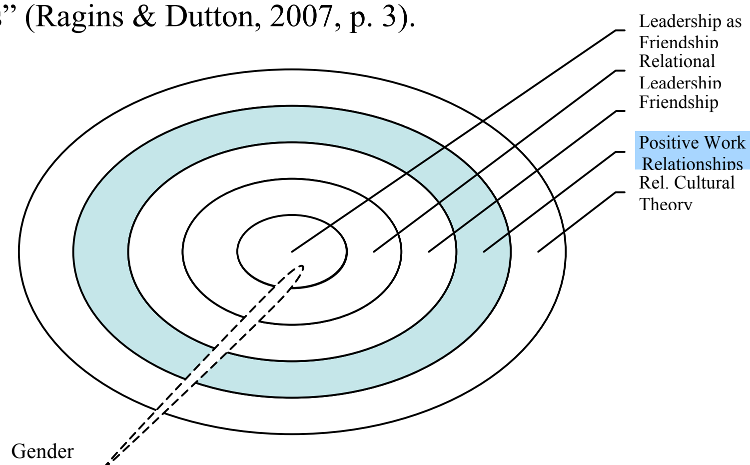

Figure 2.3. Positive work relationships conceptual ring.

While their form differs depending on context, relationships exist in both the private and public domain. The literature on relationships in the public sphere distance it from the more commonly held romantic notion of relationships. While romance is external to this study's focus, there are some broad concepts (e.g., empathy, trust, etc.) that can inform our understanding of work relationships. In the framework of the public domain, relational dynamics take place within the realm of professional schema. Ragins and Dutton (2007) posited that public sphere relationships have been both contemplated and studied at various levels of social complexity—"individual, dyadic, group, organizational, and community" (p. 7). Dyadic relationships include peer-peer, coworker-coworker, manager-subordinate, leader-follower, and mentor-protégé relationships, while group relationships manifest as teams and workgroups. Ragins and Dutton theorize that these relationships are described as positive as a result of the quality of the encounter, "positive relationships at work can [also] be defined in terms of processes, experiences, and outcomes" (p. 12).

The field of positive organizational scholarship, within which positive work relationship theory (PWR) is a part, made its emergence with Dutton and Ragins' (2007) collection of scholarly perspectives, one of the first to explore the topic fully. The authors presented their views on how people's "instrumental, expressive, cognitive, identity, growth, and relatedness needs" (Kahn, 2007, p. 194) are satisfied within the work context. In fact, Ragins and Dutton (2007) suggested that a person's work relationships have consequences that extend into a person's personal life: "Work relationships are central not only for how work gets done, but also for the quality of our lives" (p. 3). Many of these authors reference the value of relational competence as an indispensable skill for professional life and the global arena, thus drawing from the work of relational theory. The articles focused on positive relationships, which Ragins and Dutton assert have been underrepresented in the literature despite the fact that "positive relationships at work are a type of relationship that exists within the context of organizations, work, and careers" (p. 9). For Blatt and Camden (2007), positive relationships at work facilitate a sense of community: "community refers to a feeling of belonging together and commonality that can form between people even when they do not interact regularly, meet face to face, or share organizational memberships" (p. 246). These authors recognize the virtual world of work along with the physical world of work.

From the perspective of benefits for the individual, PWR theory mirrors RCT in that positive work relationships provide an opportunity for connection, mutuality, trust, self-disclosure, sense of identity, and the capacity for growth. Roberts (2007b) proposes that work relationships serve the cultural function of role identity and conformity as individuals self-regulate and self-define (Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). Numerous aspects of PWR are discussed below.

High quality connections produce energy to accomplish tasks through the exchange of something of value, through identity creation, through the growth that comes from a sense of being held in esteem, and through the learning that results from mutual understanding (Quinn, 2007). These concepts present a way to understand interpersonal dynamics within the professional context of work and are foundational to PWR theory. Also, the many components, such as the energizing affects of connection (Quinn, 2007), authenticity (Kahn, 2007), trust building through conflict (Pratt & Dirks, 2007), the potential for learning about self and others (Davidson & James, 2007), and relational growth and development (Roberts, 2007b) presented in PWR theory offer possible elements of a leader's experience as a relational practitioner.

The public domain can provide an opportunity for positive relationships to emerge as people attempt to accomplish tasks in and for the organization. The strong sense of identity a person gains from positive private relationships is mirrored in her connection to work relationships. Positive relationships at work "provide the context for self-definition as well as direct feedback about our strengths, weaknesses, similarities, and differences" (Roberts, 2007b, p. 29). They also enable "individual development and growth throughout successive life and career stages" (Kram & Isabella, 1985, p. 111).

With a significant number of hours spent at work, the workplace can foster an opportunity for a network similar to the one Gilligan (1993) suggested where the connection to others is both recognized and honored. Similarly, the work environment presents an opportunity for individuals to meet their relational needs in what Kahn (2007) calls a "*relational constellation* . . . [which occurs through the] intersection of circumstance, opportunity, chance, and individual agency" (p. 195). These constellations are shaped by environmental and individual dynamics and can differ in size (number of people) and intensity (depth of connections).

For the relational leader in a position of authority in an organization or workplace, relational constellations are connections between people at different levels within the organization and for varying lengths of times. These constellations change as people move in and out of the organization along with aspects of diversity, which includes "background, perspective, and life experience" (Davidson & James, 2007, p. 137) and the many issues and challenges associated with human dynamics. According to Davidson and James, "people in organizations are constantly dealing with difficult relationships as so many dimensions of difference become increasingly salient in organizational life" (p. 137). Relational constellations can be viewed as an embodiment of Gilligan's (1993) ideas about relational networks and elements of care as well as Miller's (1991) notion of relational complexity and its connection to self-growth.

The idea of relational constellations, or relational stages, originated in the work of Kram and Isabella (1985), who conducted a mixed-gender, grounded theory study of peer relationships as an alternative to mentor relationships. They identified three types of relational constellations—information peer, collegial peer, and special peer—with their own distinctions. According to Kram and Isabella, "each type [of peer relationship is] characterized by a particular set of developmental functions, a unique level of trust and self-disclosure, and a particular context in which the relationship had evolved" (p. 118).

The first constellation, information peer, involves a friendly exchange of information with minimal self-disclosure, low trust, and can include many people. Kram and Isabella (1985) assert "such relationships demand little, and appear to offer a number of benefits derived from the information shared" (p. 119). With collegial peers, the second constellation, both disclosure and trust increase along with emotional support, job strategizing, feedback about work, and friendship. Collegial peers provide an addition level of support. "In this kind of relationship, the information sharing function is joined by increasing levels of emotional support, feedback, and confirmation. Individuals are likely to participate in more intimate discussions of work and family concerns" (p. 119). Collegial peers are usually limited to less than five people. The third constellation, special peers, is a very rare level of intimacy and bonding with room for only one to three people who are considered friends. Special peer relationships are developed over several years and tend to be strong enough to withstand the stress of change and transition. Peers within the last two stages were considered friends. These three stages can be viewed as friendly, friendlier, friendliest, or as referenced in private sphere as casual, close, and best friend (Yager, 1999).

While the Kram and Isabella (1985) study focused on peer relationships, it is relevant to the leadership relationship in that leaders may also create relational constellations with supervisors, peers, followers, and subordinates that may also be categorized as information, collegial, and special. Leaders may also engage in other relational constellations with organizational stakeholders who are external to its operations and may provide a way to conceptualize the multifaceted nature of leadership as friendship. Relational connection can be assessed using several criteria: degree of affectivity (Quinn, 2007), emotional characteristics (Kahn, 2007), level of trust (Pratt & Dirks, 2007), and openness to learning from and about others and the self (Davidson & James, 2007).

For degree of affectivity, Quinn, (2007) has suggested that the worth of an interaction can be evaluated through:

> (a) its carrying capacity (the intensity and range of emotion that a connection can handle), (b) its tensility (the degree of adverse experience that the connection can handle), and (c) its connectivity (the degree of openness to new ideas or influences and generativity people find in the connection (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003)). Mutual awareness and social interaction are both necessary for connection. (p. 77)

For the leader, this means that each relationship within their individual relational constellation has a different degree of affective potential and authenticity. The more meaningful the connections, the more engaged individuals will be in the work.

Meaningful connections "enable individuals to personally engage in their work—that is, to be authentic, present, and intellectually and emotionally available as they go about their work" (Kahn, 2007, p. 190). It would, therefore, be important to understand the relational constellations of leaders' experiences, and this has not yet been addressed in the literature.

Relational constellations have not been specifically connected to workplace leadership, or to leadership as friendship. (See Figure 2.4 for a visual depiction of the degree of affectivity in a relational constellation.)

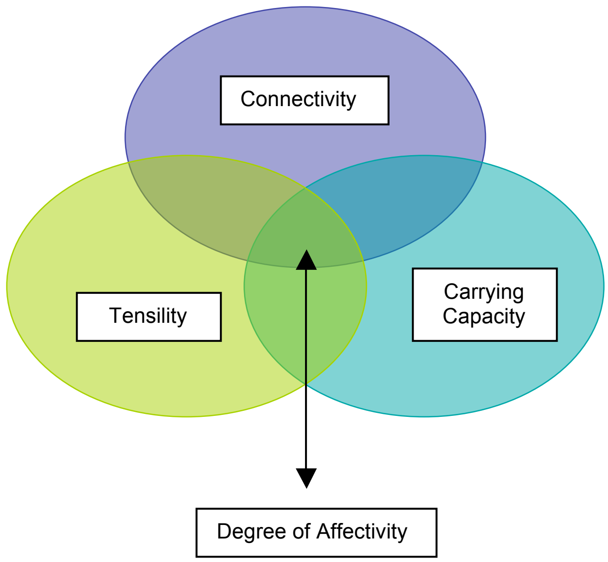

Figure 2.4. Interactive features of relational constellations: Degree of affectivity criterion.

The second criterion to understand the significance of connections to others at work is the emotional aspect of meaningful connections conveyed through a sense of being "supported, helped, understood, and worked with in nonsuperficial ways" (Kahn, 2007, p. 190). Kahn suggests that meaningful connections encompass the concepts presented by social network theory: "communication, advice, support, friendship, and influence" (Ibarra as cited in Kahn, 2007, p. 191), as well as dimensions from organizational behavior theory: "task accomplishment, career development, sense making, provision of meaning, and personal support" (p. 191). Relationships also play an important role in the degree of authenticity a person displays in a professional setting. The more closely the work aligns with an individual's identity, the more likely the person's authentic self will emerge (Kahn, 2007). This form of disclosure is grounded in the choices people make relative to the work environment and associated opportunities. Due to the fact that work relationships are conditional, relational concepts such as trust and caring are contingent upon realities of professional life.

The third criterion for connection is trust, which is a critical ingredient of any relationship including those in the public work sphere. Trust invokes “resilient and generative” qualities within the relationship and assists in overcoming conflict and disagreement (Pratt & Dirks, 2007, p. 117). But, as Pratt and Dirks noted, even positive relationship are not immune to conflict and disagreement. Pratt and Dirks began with the theoretical lens proposed by Brickman (1987) of relationship-based commitment and compared and combined the attributes of commitment and trust from the interpersonal perspective of the relationship.

Commitment includes the dualistic constructs of light and dark, or positive and negative, creating a more inclusive picture of the fluid and interactive influence of feelings, approaches, and conduct on the relationship. Trust shares the positive and negative features (e.g., solace and apprehension) of commitment. It also shares an aspect of ambivalence, vulnerability, and choice (Pratt & Dirks, 2007). The coupling of these two concepts is what Pratt and Dirks call “commitment-based trust” (p. 125).

When trust is compromised, Pratt and Dirks (2007) suggest that repair hinges on each party’s capacity and readiness to restore the relationship to equilibrium. Growth through conflict was also a theme in RCT. The basic premise is conflict that can strengthen relationships. “Conflict is a necessary part of relationships, essential for the changes that must be made so that the relationship and each person in it can change and grow” (Kaplan, Klein, & Gleason, 1991, p. 124). Conversely, there are times unresolved conflict leads to “disconnection, or separation . . . characterized by indifference, withdrawal, diffidence, or ‘false compliance’”

(Kaplan, Klein, & Gleason, 1991, p. 124). This can occur when the people involved are unwilling or unable to resolve issues, problems, or complaints (Yager, 1999). Davidson and James (2007) contended that conflicts are a result of substantiated or breeched expectations about the other. They suggested that, if left unresolved, tension could progress to behavioral expressions of the conflict or result in active or passive discontinuance of the relationship. A third possibility is for the parties to address the conflict so that they can learn about the other (Davidson & James, 2007).

Pratt and Dirks (2007) stressed the importance of handling conflict properly and proposed three possibilities for reducing the resulting inflammation of fractured trust: "(a) minimizing the perceived magnitude of negative events, (b) removing some of the negative elements from the violated party, or (c) reevaluating the positive elements the violator brings, relative to the negative" (p. 128). If successful, the result may be a deeper trust, which may lead to a more generative relationship. This is relevant to the focus on leaders' experience of friendship in the workplace—the complexity of the workplace includes diversity, described as "background, perspective, and life experience" (Davidson & James, 2007, p. 137), requiring that the leader not only mediate over the disagreements of others, but also be perceptive of conflicts and disagreements that result from organizational requirements, as well as the leader's decisions and actions.

The fourth criterion of positive relationships is the openness to learn about and from others. This is especially true when the relationship is between individuals with diverse backgrounds, perceptions, values, and personalities, which are abundant in the workplace. A noteworthy collection of research addresses the many benefits of relationships that support dyads within the workplace (Davidson & James, 2007), and suggests that relational conflict can provide an opportunity for learning, which, in turn, leads to a "high-quality relationship across difference" (Davidson & James, 2007, p. 138). The relationship between conflict and learning is comparable to Pratt and Dirks' (2007) ideas about commitment-based trust. Davidson and James (2007) outlined five central qualities of high-quality relationships across difference: "positive affect and rapport, . . . ongoing learning, . . . longevity, . . . resiliency, [and support within a] professional context [which require] intentional and sustained effort" (pp. 138-139). The opportunity for learning is presented as parties to the relationship offer their unique viewpoints and ideals to each other.

Using social identity theory as the basis for interpretation, Davidson and James (2007) suggest three possible outcomes of relational conflict: it can increase the conflict, result in relational disengagement, or lead to learning about individual differences. The latter of these approaches is a characteristic of high-quality relationships where the conflict is the catalyst for increased commitment. Learning involves a desire to obtain "new knowledge about a give context, person, or relationship" (p. 146). Learning competency is articulated through how well a person processes relational conflict. Additionally, Davidson and James identified five competency skills that are reflective, reflexive, and responsive: sorting out emotions, focusing on the common goal, promoting candidness, inquiring about assumptions and rationales, and encouraging feedback. The four criteria—affective, emotional, trust, and learning—are four legs of connections that provide a window into the relational dynamics at the core of leadership as friendship and they will appear later as this chapter more fully develops the themes.

As this section demonstrates, there are many ways in which positive work relationships can be viewed, as well as many ways in which positive work relationships benefit individuals and organizations. Each of these authors presents a view of the interpersonal dynamics that are possible when work relationships are positive. Whether it is energy to grow and develop (Quinn, 2007), the ability to show one's authentic self (Kahn, 2007), the capacity to turn conflict into trust (Pratt & Dirks, 2007), the potential for learning about self and others (Davidson & James, 2007), or the potential for relational growth and development (Roberts, 2007b), these concepts present a possible way to view how leadership as friendship might be practiced.

Key aspects of PWR are connection, mutuality, trust, self-disclosure, sense of identity, capacity for growth, and learning (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). This section of the literature evokes several questions. What is the lived experience of leaders who approach leadership as friendship? What are the positive work relationships they encounter? Do they resemble any of the concepts that comprise PWR theory? Do they maintain relational constellations, and how do they experience them? What meaning do they derive from these relationships? These are questions that I hope this research will answer.

Friendship

> The branches of these two flowering trees are intertwined, and their fallen petals blend together on the ground in their beautiful colors. It is as if heaven and earth are bridged by love. But they stand individually, each rooted in the soil in their own connection with the earth. In this way they represent the essence of true friends, mature, easy with each other, natural. There is no urgency about their connection, no neediness, no desire to change the other into something else. (Osho International Foundation, 1994, p. 100)

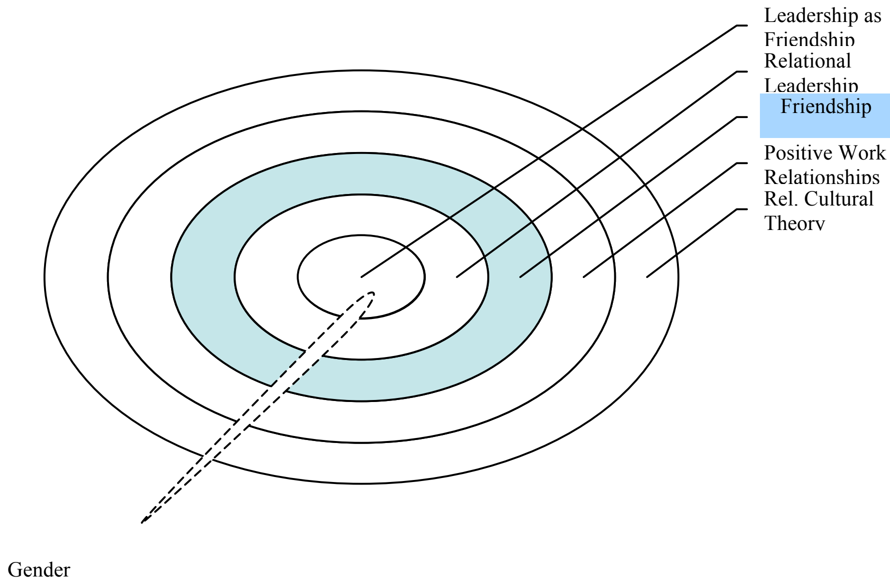

Figure 2.5. Friendship conceptual ring.

The focus of this review of relevant literature primarily explores relational research in the public domain. Friendship, while considered a private sphere relationship, has also been studied within the workplace. This section examines research on the general concept of friendship to determine its relevance to the study at hand. There are some concepts within the private realm which can be carried over into the public sphere with the possibility of some difference in definition or application.

Adult friendship has been considered and studied by theorists and researchers from a variety of perspectives such as the demarcations between the private realm of personal life and the public arena of work. Many theorists and researchers have focused on same-sex friendships occurring within the private sphere (e.g., Halpern, 1994; Hays, 1985, 1989; Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Johnson, Wittenberg, Villagran, Mazur, & Villagran, 2003; Kilduff, 1992; Kurth, 1970; Yager, 1999). Other theorists and researchers focused on friendship in the public arena (e.g., Bridge & Baxter, 1992; Grey & Sturdy, 2007; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Markiewicz, Devine, & Kausilas, 2000; Morrison & Nolan, 2007; O'Connor, 1998; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Song &

Olshfski, 2008). Regardless of the locative (private vs. public) qualities, friendship is still considered a personal phenomenon. When researched or theorized within an organization, friendship is considered between peers, rather than as a leadership dynamic as in this study.

Relational strengths of friendship. Until recently, friendship was best understood as a private subject with little relevance in carrying out the work of the organization or of benefit to individuals within the context of the organization. The dichotomy of private and public spheres was sustained by a conceptual framework that has been described as a male lens representing assumptions about how things are (reality) and how they should be (values) (Fletcher, 1999; Gilligan, 1993; Jordan, Kaplan, et al., 1991; O'Connor, 1998). The relevance for women is that their friendships were considered to be at the fringes of personal life outside of the primacy of the family and focused primarily on "intimate confiding" (O'Connor, 1998, p. 122). Intimate confiding or self-disclosure still has a place in friendship (Kurth, 1970; Markiewicz et al., 2000; Sias & Cahill, 1998). However, this may not represent the full picture of the individual and context dynamics of friendship, especially within the backdrop of the organizational life.

As demonstrated by Sias and Cahill (1998) in their research study, "workplace context does not function merely as a 'container' for friendships, but rather that it plays a significant role in the friendship development process" (p. 290). Through everyday interaction, the organization provides an opportunity for friendships to form (Riordan & Griffeth, 1995). Of interest to this study is Kurth's (1970) assertion, almost three decades earlier, about organizational barriers to friendship among people of unequal status. In general, friendships are acceptable between peers and are unacceptable between superior and subordinate. The question is what other qualities inform our understanding of public sphere friendship and which of these qualities embodies friendship as leadership? This question will be explored below.

Returning to the starting metaphor, leadership as friendship, the question is what are the essential components of friendship and how are these translated into leadership? Using Kövecses's (2002) explanation, "metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain [leadership] in terms of another conceptual domain [friendship]" (p. 4). In Kövecses's study leadership is conceptualized by considering attributes of friendship. The metaphor suggests that there is a correspondence between the properties of the two concepts. According to Halpern (1994), individuals have mental models or scripts that guide interaction. These scripts are both event and role focused. Where event scripts are procedural in nature, role scripts describe expected behaviors and characteristics of another person. Role scripts can be influenced by a number of factors such as mores and personal history (e.g., background, experiences). They can also intersect with each other, which presents the possibility that leadership and friendship role scripts can have overlapping threads. In addition, each of these concepts present the possibility for event scripts to also be represented.

What attributes are associated with friendship? First, friendship is a relationship. Like other relationships, friendship, can be understood through a complex set of expectations and by varying degrees of affection. Each degree represents the strength of friendship ties, as well as a way to describe the other party to the friendship. In the private realm, relationship strength is characterized as casual, close, and best friend (Yager, 1999). In the public realm, relationship strength is described as coworker, friend, close friend, and almost-best friend (Sias & Cahill, 1998), or, as in the case of Kram and Isabella (1985), as information, collegial, and special peer.

A parallel can be drawn from Kram and Isabella's (1985) relational constellation theory and Sias and Cahill's (1998) study of relationship strength:

> Kram and Isabella (1985) have highlighted the importance of peer relationships which provide employees instrumental and emotional support and alternatives to traditional

> mentoring sources. They also note that peer relationships can provide a source of intrinsic reward for employees, can buffer job-related stress, and can reduce job dissatisfaction and turnover. (Sias & Cahill, 1998, p. 273)

The research conducted by Sias and Cahill revealed reluctance on the part of participants to refer to their closest work friend as best. "In general, respondents felt uncomfortable describing their coworkers as 'best' friends. Most preferred the label 'best friend at work' or 'very close' or 'almost best' friend" (Sias & Cahill, 1998, p. 284). Perhaps this suggests a compartmentalization of private and public life with a strong association of friendship as part of private life, or this may describe the limitation of our understanding of friendship.

Looking at friendship from the private side of life, Kilduff (1992) and Kurth (1970) distinguished between friendliness and friendship. Friendliness implies parity and stresses avoidance of conflict (Kurth, 1970), whereas friendship suggests favoritism and obligation (Morrison & Nolan, 2007) and requires an investment of the self (Kurth, 1970). The difference between the two relationships is variability in commitment, intensity, trust, and self-disclosure (Markiewicz et al., 2000). Even friends have different levels of familiarity with the possible costs and benefits (Hays, 1985) increasing in tandem with changes in the relationship. Because friendliness is the starting point for friendship, it is a significant marker for friendship development. Figure 2.6 depicts the relational constellations using Markiewicz et al.'s (2000) criteria.

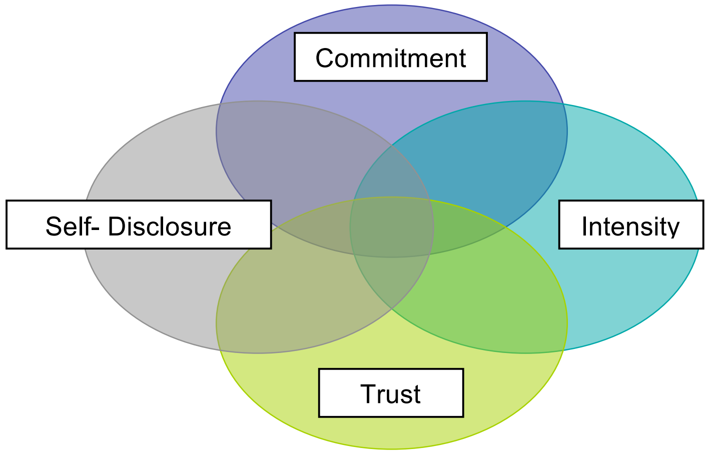

Figure 2.6. Relational constellation features (adapted from Markiewicz et al., 2000).

The fabric of friendship is woven together through trust or goodwill (Grey & Sturdy, 2007; Halpern, 1994; Holmes & Rempel, 1989), harmony, and caring, and is impacted by social norms, social similarity, and social cognition (Halpern, 1994), and often centers around some affinity (Pettinger, 2005). Caring is helping another grow and actualize.

> In caring as helping the other grow, I experience what I care for (a person, an ideal, and idea) as an extension of myself and at the same time as something separate from me that I respect in its own right. (Mayeroff, 1971, p. 7)

Further, Mayeroff's (1971) concept of care is pivotal to the notation of friendship fostered around the common purpose of the organization, which is the tie that binds leaders and followers through "integrative unity" (Follett, 1925, p. 103).

Another aspect of friendship that parallels mutuality in PWR is reciprocal exchange (Grey & Sturdy, 2007; Halpern, 1994, Kilduff, 1992; Kurth, 1970), which Gouldner (1960) calls the "norm of reciprocity" (p. 9). Reciprocity implies an exchange of something of value without the necessity of an equal exchange. Within the leader-follower relationship, the reciprocal exchange is known as mutual reciprocal influence (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The notion of reciprocity is a point of commonality in RCT and PWR as well.

One point of departure from the RCT and PWR theoretical lenses is the belief that friendship is a voluntary relationship (Adams & Blieszner, 1994; Kurth, 1970; Markiewicz et al. (2000), Rawlins, 1993; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Yager, 1999). Friends are chosen based on the impression that parties resemble each other. Perceived similarities such as attitudes, values, and interests set the stage for friendships to develop and mature into deeper levels of closeness (Grey & Sturdy, 2007; Morrison & Nolan, 2007; Sias & Cahill, 1998). Similarity also includes gender, social class, race, income level, marital and maternal status (O'Connor, 1998), occupational status, age, and ethnicity (Adams & Blieszner, 1994). In their study of students and graduates, Marmaros and Sacerdote (2006) concluded that "geographic proximity and race are greater determinants of social interaction that are common interests, majors, or family background" (p. 79). Within the work environment, similarities can also include physical proximity to each other, roles, duties, responsibilities, and educational background (Morrison & Nolan, 2007), or, in the case of virtual organizations, opportunity to interact and frequency of communication can support friendship development.

Public sphere friendship. Public sphere friendship has been shown to have a positive impact (Song & Olshfski, 2008), as well as a negative impact (Morrison & Nolan, 2007) on both the individual and the organization. On the positive side, individual benefits include job satisfaction and involvement, positive work attitudes (Song & Olshfski, 2008), and organizational commitment (Rawlins, 1993), as well as high morale and low turnover (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Benefits from personal friendships with relevance for workplace friendships include emotional and informational support, task assistance, intellectual stimulation (Hays, 1989). In addition, workplace friendships may also "reduce workplace stress, increase communication, help employees and managers accomplish their tasks, and assist in the process of accepting organizational change" (Berman, West, & Richter, 2002, p. 217). For women, personal benefits may range from identity shaping, to an opportunity to satisfy the self-in relation inclination, to offering a form of status or power. O'Connor (1998) offers a full list of such benefits, which includes:

> assist in shaping their identities, . . . satisfy the self-in-relation inclination, . . . afford an opportunity for women to define and refine themselves in a women-centric environment, . . . appraise the male characterization of women, . . . provide an alternative to the "other-than-male" position in society, . . . offer a substitute to male defined ideas of femininity, . . . provide women with status or power, . . . offer sanctuary from subservience, . . . supply intimacy and emotional support, . . . provide self-affirmation, [and] . . . validate facets of their identity (wife, mother, daughter) not valued by the dominant (male) culture. (pp. 118-124)

Furthermore, women's public sphere friendships are not subject to the conflict of commitments of other social roles arising from the primacy of family and its inherent responsibilities. Friendships at work may manifest in a communal solidarity that can assist in key performance areas and goal achievement, as well as be used to advance women's interests (O'Connor, 1998). Given the numerous demands of competing personal roles, the workplace may be the only place where friendship attachments can exist with work as the common adhesive. In this way, the workplace functions as a type of holding environment (Heifetz, 1994) for friendship maintenance. Age and the roles one assumes in adulthood may also impact one's friendship activities in one's personal life. Brown (1981) posited "each new role cuts into the time available to devote to relationships with friends" (p. 37). Personal interactions become increasingly centered on kin, children, and career, thus, shifting priorities from friends outside the workplace to business associates (Brown, 1981).

From an organizational perspective, individual benefits of workplace friendship can translate into worker participation, increased productivity, and innovation especially in terms of supervisor-subordinate relationships (Song & Olshfski, 2008). "Workplace friendships have a positive impact on employees' work attitudes in both locations surveyed [New Jersey and Seoul]. The more opportunities for the subordinate to make friends with the supervisor, the more positive the subordinate's work attitudes will be" (Song & Olshfski, 2008, p. 164).

Contrary to these benefits, Morrison and Nolan (2007) found that public sphere friendships also hold the possibility for decreased productivity through work distraction, reduced work commitment, and the blurring of boundaries created by the incompatible demands of friendship and work roles. The idea of dual role conflict is supported by Bridge and Baxter (1992), who called the dichotomous roles of coworker and friend "blended relationships " (p. 201). Despite the possible benefits, such as trust and credibility, Bridge and Baxter maintain that the personal relationship of friendship and the role of coworker are contradictory, noting incompatible demands and expectations. When viewed from a lens that looks at friendship as a role, the concerns raised by Morrison and Nolan, as well as Bridge and Baxter, respectively, are possible in some situations. According to Bridge and Baxter:

> It would be naive to assume that the experience of blended friendship is alike in all organization settings. . . . Work associates who simultaneously are friends should experience more overall dual-role tension in a highly formalized organization because of its failure to legitimate friend-based interaction. (1992, p. 205)

Highly formalized organizations are interpreted here to imply hierarchal organizations where traditional notions of command and control are prevalent. This leaves open the possibility for possible role conflicts to be minimized in organizations that are less formalized.

Private sphere friendships. Looking at friendships in the private domain, Johnson et al. (2003) conducted a study of "turning points" (p. 3), which determined whether relationships developed or deteriorated. Using mixed-gender, mixed-race college students as participants, Johnson et al. focused on the dialectic nature of friendships hypothesizing that the linear view of friendship was inadequate to capture the many transitions within the relational dynamic. Their study categorized aspects such as personality, communication, and interests as important relational turning points with either a beneficial or adverse affect on the intimacy or closeness levels within the relationship (Baxter & Bullis, 1985). Turning points are pivotal interactions that strengthen or weaken the relationship based on how specific interactions are perceived (Baxter and Montgomery as cited in Johnson et al., 2003).

While not specifically conducted to understand work relationships, Johnson et al.'s (2003) study may provide a useful frame of reference for understanding changes in the nature of the work relationship. According to Johnson et al., internal and external turning points transform the relationship in some way especially in casual friendships as opposed to best and close friendships. Their results indicated that communication, opportunity to interact, and pursuit of common interests have the strongest impact on relational closeness (Johnson et al., 2003).

For this study, Johnson et al.'s (2003) study informs us about private sphere turning points that may have some applicability to the public domain such as personality, shared (work) activities, and opportunity to interact as a result of those work activities. Discovering whether turning points are relevant in the practice of leadership as friendship will need to be teased out through the research process. For now, it can be added to the idea of relational constellations, and points to the questions that follow. Do leaders experience turning points in their relational constellations? What is the result of relational ebbs and flows (e.g., increased/decreased trust, turnover, transfer, learning)? What meaning is assigned to turning points within relational constellations?

Leader-follower friendships. Most of the theory and research on work-based friendship deals with peer relationships. Three notable exceptions are Boyd and Taylor (1998), Song and Olshfski (2008), and Tse, Dasborough, and Ashkanasy (2008). Boyd and Taylor incorporated friendship literature and leader-member exchange (LMX) literature to formulate a developmental model of the leader-follower relationship. In their view, "some type of friendship between leaders and followers should be a natural phenomenon growing out of the forces existing in the organizational setting in which these relationships operate" (p. 4). They continue that LMX has been described by some theorists such as Bass (1990) and Dansereau, Graen, and Hago (1975) as an understanding between parties about expectations. According to Boyd and Taylor, the premise of LMX is that "a role is informally negotiated between each member of the work group and the leader, and an active exchange of inputs and outcomes occurs between the leader and each follower" (p. 4). Boyd and Taylor's model suggests that as the relationship between the leader and followers progresses there is more possibility, and opportunity exists for friendship to develop. However, this would depend on organizational culture factors such as soft boundaries around power and status. They propose that friendship stages would include casual and close, but do not suggest that leaders and followers would advance to best friends (Boyd & Taylor, 1998).

The approach taken by Song and Olshfski (2008) was to examine friendships between government managers and employees in Seoul City and New Jersey. Their study also used the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) as a foundation because of its use by other researchers to explain the connection between friendship and work attitudes. Looking at the opportunity for employees to form friendships with managers, Song and Olshfski concluded that there was a reciprocal relationship between friendship opportunity and positive work attitudes among employees. Their study, however, addressed positive work attitudes of employees and did not address the experience of managers.

Tse et al. (2008) also used LMX as the starting point for their study of 215 manager-employee dyads and added team-member exchange (TMX) to understand workplace friendship. Tse et al. noted a correlation between friendship development and an opportunity to openly share feelings about the work environment and their personal lives. Their findings point to a correlation between LMX, workplace friendship, and TMX, and that "workplace friendship has the potential to create a social system that affects work attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions in larger collectives of work groups" (p. 206). This suggested to Tse et al. that managers should encourage work-based friendships within teams. Interestingly, most of the managers (84%) and most of the employees (89%) were women. While this study did shed some light on the value of friendship at the workplace, there is still the question of the leader's personal experience of friendship and whether this translates into leadership.

This section has shown that the relational strengths for friendship include trust/goodwill, harmony, caring/growth, reciprocal exchange, emotional and information support, task assistance, and intellectual stimulation. Opportunity for friendship appears to be relevant for peers, as well as for people of unequal roles within the organization, and has the capacity to improve both the quality of work life, as well as the quality of the work product. This reinforces O'Connor's (1998) point that the public sphere is not only a viable place for friendships to emerge but, the organization may well be the most likely point of contact.

Relational Leadership

"Effective leadership is built on relationships, and the quality of relationships reflects the quality of leadership" (Ferch & Mitchell, 2001, p. 70).

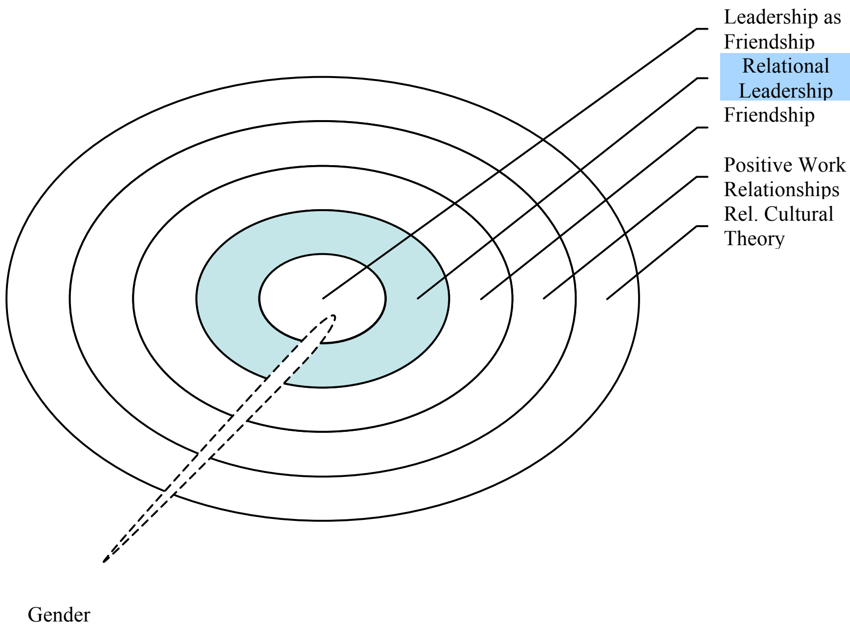

Figure 2.7. Relational leadership conceptual ring.

Now that we have explored the foundation of relational theory and its applicability to the public sphere, it seems appropriate to explore how relational theory has been incorporated into the literature on leadership. Relational leadership is more than a catchy title. It is imbued with a rich blend and contour of ideas, beliefs, and approaches that evoke a response from the realm of emotion. Its meaning, however, is ambiguous (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Despite this ambiguity, the implication of relational leadership holds a promise to span the breadth and depth of the organization through interaction and relationship. Relational leadership can be considered from a theoretical perspective (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Drath, 2001; Murrell, 1997; Uhl-Bien, 2006), as well as a practice perspective (Mathis, 2007; Regan & Brooks, 1995) and may also be referred to as a social relations model of leadership (Livi, Kenny, Albright, & Pierro, 2008), or social network approach (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2005). What is leadership and, more specifically, what is relational leadership?

Seminal leadership considerations. The idea of leadership as relational is not new. According to Uhl-Bien (2004), theory about leader relational or task orientation was studied in the 1950s. The conclusion was that the appropriateness of either approach depended on the organizational culture. Eight years later, Hollander (1958) theorized about the relational aspects of leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2004). This was followed by Burns (1978), Greenleaf (1977), Hollander (1978) and who individually, and simultaneously, theorized about the relational constructs of leadership. While their ideas about leadership were distinct, each would agree that leadership is an influence process with mutual, though not equal, reciprocity. Burns (1978) posited that, at its core, leadership is relational, collective, and purposeful, and, as such, is bound with the values, needs, and goals of followers. The leader-follower relationship involves a sharing of resources (ideas, skills, and contacts) and motives in pursuit of a common purpose. It implies the "exercise of mutual persuasion, exchange, elevation, and transformation—in short, of leadership" (Burns, 1978, p. 11).

Similarly, Hollander (1978) commented on the interaction between parties to a leadership relationship. "Leader-follower relationships are based upon a mutual dependence. Some give and take is, therefore, vital to the leadership process. This is essentially a social exchange in which something of value is given on both sides" (p. 69). Hollander noted that leadership involves influence and a high level of trust.

Greenleaf's (1977) approach was leading through service to others, as well as to society. Whether individual or institution, Greenleaf's focus was on the leader serving the greater good. As servant, the leader serves the common purpose, a cause, the organization, the community, family, and other individuals, and, in so doing, builds a better society. There is a natural desire to serve the self by serving others. The servant can lead or follow as needed and can be found at every level of society. "This is my thesis: caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 62).

The leader-follower relationship referenced in the theories noted above place the primary focus on the leader with a secondary focus the relationship between parties. The three interwoven threads that run through each of these concepts are relationships, influence, and unifying purpose, which are also threaded through feminist ideas of leadership. One early feminist idea about women's leadership came from Helgesen (1990) who suggested that the "female view that one strengthens oneself by strengthening others is finding greater acceptance, and female values of inclusion and connection are emerging as valuable leadership qualities" (p. 26). The result, according to Helgesen (1990), is a more collaborative leadership ideal. Theorists, such as Eagly and Carli (2003), acknowledged the "stereotypically feminine qualities . . . cooperation, mentoring, and collaboration" (p. 808), connecting these tendencies to a transformational leadership style while recognizing that these traits could be a disadvantage in male-dominated field. Later, Eagly (2007) augmented this argument. She recognized the contextual nature of leadership in that appropriate behavior is culturally defined. "Stereotypically feminine qualities of cooperation, mentoring, and collaboration are important to leadership, certainly in some contexts and perhaps increasingly in contemporary organizations" (Eagly, 2007, p. 2). Eagly reiterated the connection to transformational leadership, explaining that this type of leadership not only aligns with "feminist writing on good leadership" (p. 2), it is in accord with organizational needs.

As is common with philosophy, theory stands unquestioned until it is challenged with new ideas that confirm, augment, or disprove commonly held beliefs about what is true. There are other views of leadership that continue to be brought to light that focus on other ways to lead. Uhl-Bien (2005) recognized authors (i.e., Fletcher, 2004; Gronn, 2002; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Murrell, 1997), who have documented the recognition of leadership models that are more inclusive. These new models of leadership are beginning to focus on aspects of leadership that are relational, social, inclusive, and interactive. Along with this shift in attitude, there have been innumerable critiques of leadership theory from a feminist lens.

For instance, Alexandre (2007) provided an elegant critique of Burns (1978) noting a curious absence of women in his seminal work, *Leadership*. In addition, Alexandre's analysis explained that, while gender is explicitly missing from Burns' text, it is implicit in his theory of transformational leadership, which brings the values of reciprocity, mutuality, connection, and morality to the forefront, and which are concepts that some feminists have readily embraced. As Murrell (1997) aptly said, "it is possible to see relationships other than those built from hierarchy . . . and to envision transformational phenomenon where the social change process occurs well outside the normal assumptions of command and control" (p. 39).

The absence of women in these seminal works on leadership is mirrored in the fact that women are still under-represented in top leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Rhode, 2003). Feminist scholars, such as Rhode (2003), have theorized that women's underrepresentation in leadership roles is a residual of culturally accepted gender roles. At the same time, women have influenced a shifting consciousness about vital "aspects of our lives—work, family, sexuality, equality, and justice" (Rhode, 2003, p. 159). As a result, gender roles have evolved, yet, the disparity continues. Why? Rhode's meta-analysis of opportunity disparities, glass ceilings, and subtle biases suggests a subtle bias that belies law and organization policy against discrimination.

Some leadership theories may actually perpetuate gender stereotypes, such as Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership model. One of the more radical critiques of servant leaders is presented by Eicher-Catt (2005), who suggests that servant leadership is both paradoxical and brimming with gendered overtones. She believes that "it perpetuates a theology of leadership that upholds androcentric patriarchal norms . . . [and] negates its so-called revolutionary potential to advance genderless leadership" (p. 1).

Sinclair (2007) also noted the incongruence and difficulty in upholding the dissimilar dispositions required to be both servant and leader, asserting that the notion of servant leadership is difficult to maintain and may be viewed with suspicion for those who work at positions below the leader. It may be possible that some of this incongruence may be minimized in professions where the purpose of the organization is service, as in the case of the human and social services field. Despite the natural service setting, leadership differences are still prevalent.

Despite the concerns noted above, Burns's (1978) introduction of transformational leadership stimulated the outgrowth of current leadership models (Geller, 2005; Sinclair, 2007). There are elements that have emerged as underlying concepts from these seminal works, which can be understood using a relational lens that can, for the purposes of this study, be extended to women. Transformational leadership is described as a type of leadership that most closely aligns with "feminist writing on good leadership" (Eagly, 2007, p. 3).

For example, Rosener's (1995) study suggested that women endeavor to manage their work environment by practicing interactive leadership characteristics of transformational leadership. With an eye toward motivating subordinates to transform self-interest into the interests of the group, the leaders in Rosener's study encouraged participation of group members by sharing power. They operated from the belief that the best performance is possible when people feel good about themselves and are excited about their work, and that this combination is good for people, as well as the organization. Inclusion is carefully cultivated through interactions that encourage others to offer suggestions about decisions prior to their implementation, and contributes to a strong sense of group identification. Rosener notes that, while subordinates may be more engaged, there is a down side—more time is required to reach decisions, soliciting ideas could be interpreted as indecision, and some people have no desire to participate. The risk is that the woman leader employing this highly social form of leadership may be looked at as less competent than those who rely on a more authoritative form of leadership.

Components of relational leadership. What does relational leadership add to our understanding of leadership? It shifts attention from the leader or follower to the space between the two. This space is the relationship (Uhl-Bien, 2004, p. 1306). Relational leadership includes aspects of transformational leadership, which have been enriched by embracing activities that may be considered a woman's responsibility (Fletcher, 1999). It also differs from transformational leadership because the relationship is the focal point. Relational leadership is a process involving social influence or social capital, suggesting that relational leadership is an influence process with a type of currency (Russell, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2006). It may be distributed throughout the organization (Drath, 2001; Murrell, 1997; Uhl-Bien, 2006), or may reside with the leader (Mathews, 2006). Relational leadership also has the capacity to be liberating (Sinclair, 2007) and can suggest a leader's willingness to cross borders: "physical, national . . . linguistic, socio-economic, familial, and emotional" (Sinclair & Wilson, 2002, p. 1).

Simply put, within the context of relational leadership, leadership is a result of relating which can be viewed at "different levels of analysis: the individual (both perceiver and the target), the dyad, and the group" (Livi et al., 2008, p. 235). "Thus, leadership has been shown to operate at the level of the relationship [which considers perceptual dynamics], the person (both perceiver and target), and the group" (p. 236). Relational leadership is also a collective process involving mutual influence (Murrell, 1997) and it can be shared (Hunt, 2004). A central aspect of relational leadership theory is relational constructionism, which posits "the processes of social construction, . . . processes as historical and social co-ordinations, . . . [and] assumes a relational ontology," (Hosking & Bouwen, 2000, p. 129). Focusing on relational processes bridges "individual, group, and organizational levels . . . [and provides for] reflection on one's own assumptions and constructions" (Hosking & Bouwen, 2000, pp. 130-131).

Relational leadership is defined as a "process through which emergent coordination (i.e., involving social order) and change (e.g., new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, and ideologies) are constructed and produced" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 654). It emerges as members of the organization interact (Uhl-Bien, 2005) and, as such, relational leadership is about cultivating relationships (Nuttall, 2004). Given this construct, leadership and relationship are conjoined. This allows the researcher to conceptualize a model of leadership that embraces fluidity, temporality, participatory, and connectivity as organizing principles for relational leadership. A relational focus:

> moves beyond unidirectional or even reciprocal leader-follower relationships to one that recognizes leadership wherever it occurs, is not restricted to a single or even small set of formal or informal leaders, and in its strongest form functions as a dynamic system

> embedding leadership, environmental and organizational aspects. (Hunt & Dodge, 2001, p. 448)

Relational leadership is articulated through "care consistent with one's firmly held beliefs," as well as through leader authenticity (Regan & Brooks, 1995, p. 11). Like relational cultural theory, positive work relationship theory, and friendship theory, relational leadership can also involve caretaking, nurturance, empathy, and connectedness expressed through "caring, courage, collaboration, vision, and intuition" (Regan & Brooks, 1995, p. 19). It includes interpersonal trust (Brower et al., 2000), "nurturing and supporting roles . . . [as well as] mutual influence" (Murrell, 1997, p. 39), encompasses "trust, respect, loyalty, charisma, inspiration, stimulation, and consideration" (Mathis, 2007, p. 201), and can be done collaboratively and mindfully (Sinclair, 2007).

Relational orientation can be understood in terms of context and relational dynamics, something Russell (2003) calls relational purpose. "Relational purpose is found in both leaders and followers and in both individuals and groups. It is generally implicit, is influenced by individual and group history, and may change with time, context, and group membership" (Russell, 2003, p. 152). According to Uhl-Bien (2006), current ideas about the meaning of relational focus on "human social constructions" (p. 655) derived from organizational associations and linkages with a focus on relational processes. A relational perspective considers mutual influence engendered through trust, respect, and obligation (Drath, 2001; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2003). Relational leadership has the capacity to reach far and wide into the organization. "In its strongest form, [relational leadership] functions as a dynamic system embedding leadership, environmental, and organization aspects" (Hunt & Dodge, 2001, p. 448). It also assists in developing member commitment (Mathews, 2006).

Relational leadership theory looks at interactions and dynamics. "Relational leadership theory is the study of both *relationships* (interpersonal relationships as outcomes of or as context for interactions) and *relational dynamics* (social interactions, social constructions) of leadership" (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 667). It also asks the question "What are the relational (social) processes by which leadership emerges and operates" (p. 666)? There are two types of relational leadership perspectives—entity, focused on individual action with two-way influence, and relational, embracing multiple realities. Both entity and relational approaches highlight relationship, which differs in meaning depending on the perspective. Other differences include ontology, process, methodology, and leadership emphasis. Both perspectives, however, concur on the interactive dynamic of leadership and require a better understanding of the "context in which leadership is embedded" (p. 664). For a review of the various theories, see Uhl-Bien (2006).

A key responsibility of leaders is to develop relationships. Maak and Pless (2006) have framed this responsibility under the banner of "responsible leadership" (p. 99). According to Pless and Maak (2005), relationship development and maintenance requires three intelligences: emotional, ethical, and relational. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize one's own and others' feelings and respond appropriately. Ethical intelligence is described as understanding one's own and others' "values, norms, interests, situations, behavior" (Pless & Maak, 2005, p. 12) and acting ethically. Relational intelligence (RI) is the "capacity to engage in relationships: an ability to connect and interact effectively and respectfully with people and stakeholders" (Pless & Maak, 2005, p. 12).

People and organizations are involved in continuing narratives. The meanings they derive are social constructions. Additionally, organizational change requires the ability to exchange relational ways of organizing (Holmberg, 2000). Taking an organizational learning view of relational leadership, Holmberg stresses the importance of conversation and relations:

> A relational understanding is an opportunity to focus on processes in which both the actor and the world around him or her are created in ways that either expand or contract the space of possible action. The focus on processes of interaction, conversation, narrating, dialoguing, and multiloguing helps us to ask questions about the qualities of this dialogue, such as who and what is given a voice, what is include, and what is excluded. (p. 181)

According to Drath (2001), there are three expressions of leadership: personal dominance, influence, and relational dialogue. While the first two have less to do with the focus at hand, Drath's third leadership possibility is another iteration of relational leadership. In Drath's view, acceptance of any leadership representation rests on the mutual understanding of leadership by the leader and others members of the milieu. Drath explains this by asserting that the "essence of leadership lay in the power of a shared knowledge principle to make sense of leadership in the whole community" (p. 60). The knowledge principle that Drath is referring to includes those expectations each is person holds about a leader. In this way, leadership is shared regardless of its expression. Stated another way, leadership requires followership consent. The idea of consent will be addressed more fully in the discussion of implicit theories.

Burns (1978) and Murrell (1997) theorize about the collective character of leadership, noting that leaders and followers share a relationship that is the foundation for leadership. Murrell stated "leadership is a social act" (p. 35), which includes compassionate, collective, collaborative, and concurrent behavior (as cited in Mathews, 2006). Good working relationships would then require fulfilled "relational expectations" (Russell, 2003, p. 152). Inclusive, relational leadership can also have a "liberating intent" (Sinclair, 2007, p. 46), or can require traversing beyond the leader's physical, psychological, and emotional horizons (Sinclair & Wilson, 2002).

The Role of Implicit Leadership Theory

Russell's (2003) commentary on relational expectations suggests the notion of implicit leadership theory. The central theme behind implicit leadership theory is that every person carries around a mental view of leadership that is used to evaluate whether a person is a leader or non-leader (Keller, 1999). Perceptions are evaluated against a leader prototype that includes expectations about performance and values. Keller (1999) explains the process something like this: an observer, whether spectator or follower, evaluates another using their ideal composite of a leader. If there is a match, the subject of the evaluation is granted the label of leader. Uhl-Bien (2005) built on the literature regarding implicit leadership theory (ILT) to conceptualize the idea of implicit relational theory. "Adapting ILTs to relationships, implicit relational theories (IRTs) would be schematic knowledge structures individuals hold regarding work relationships. These structures represent the beliefs and assumptions about work relationships and the characteristics they expect relational partners to demonstrate" (Uhl-Bien, 2005, p. 112). Leadership is not possible when there is a disconnection between the knowledge principle (implicit theory) held by the parties, which can be exacerbated by messages and actions that are vague, incongruent, or inconsistent (Tretheway, 1999).

Working from implicit leadership theories, implicit theories of relationships, and personal relationships, Uhl-Bien (2005) conceptualized implicit theories of relationships (IRTs) in the workplace. IRTs "represent the beliefs and assumptions about the characteristics of effective work relationships and the prototypical behaviors they expect relational partners to demonstrate" (p. 105). Additionally, Uhl-Bien theorizes that individuals enter into work relationships with beliefs about the appropriate characteristics of relational partners, beliefs about whether personal attributes are predetermined (entity theory) or can be cultivated (incremental or growth theory), as well as motivations for forming a relationship. IRTs make up the basis for whether there is relational favorability.

For Russell (2003), implicit differences between leader and follower focus are their "relational purpose [which is] influenced by individual and group history, and may change with time, context, and group membership" (p. 152). This may be a product of their "relational schemas" formulated through previous associations, which function as "role-expectations and evaluative standards" (Huang, Wright, Chiu, & Wang, 2008, p. 266). Also, relational schemas, along with member attributes and context, determine leadership effectiveness (Mathews, 2006). What this discussion suggests is that, in order for a leader to lead relationally, her ILT and IRT must be in harmony.

In conclusion, the literature on relational leadership offers a framing for this study on leadership as friendship. The relational dynamic has many features including cultivating relationships, relational purpose, influence processes, relational expectations, and implicit theories. Central considerations that are most relevant to this study are the relational strengths that characterize relational leadership—social and mutual influence, connection, care, authenticity, empathy, trust, nurturance, reciprocity, awareness, and self-management. The connection for this study is how the essence of friendship, as a relational dynamic, fits into the relational leadership equation. This will be explored in the next section.

Leadership as Friendship

"Within the friendship view of reality, the mode of relationship to the world is fundamentally one of connection and interdependence" (Perreault, 2005, p. 4).

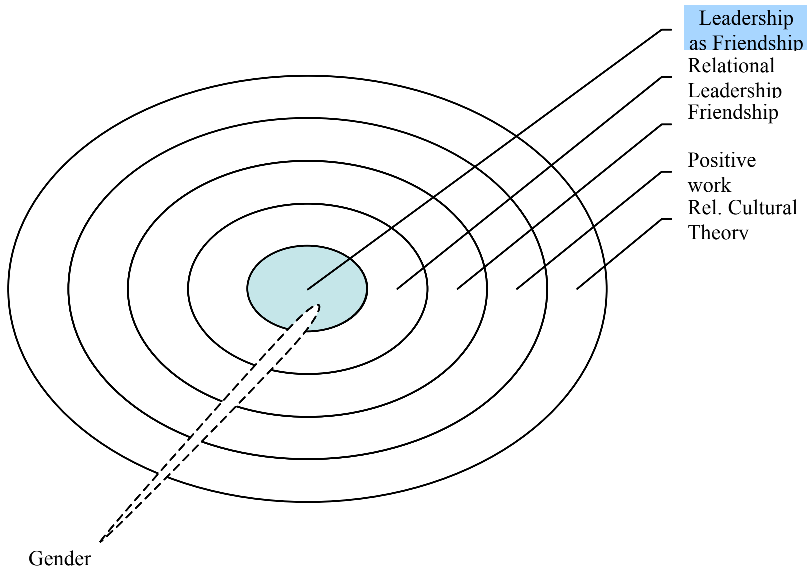

Figure 2.8. Leadership as friendship conceptual ring.

Perhaps the essence of relational practice can be found in a type of leadership that is emblematic of friendship. The idea of friendship as a way to define leadership captured the attention of Perreault (2005) who looks to friendship for its metaphoric value for leaders. “The conception of leadership as friendship requires an optimistic view of human nature. It calls on the leader to approach others with initial trust and to assume the best about people” (p. 6). In addition, Perreault’s discourse suggests that friendship describes a type of leadership that is the essence of relational practice and offers an alternative to the militaristic metaphor predominant in our language. To illustrate the embedded assumptions of metaphor, Perreault references examples presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) of commonly used expressions reflective of military battle: “indefensible, . . . attacked, . . . target, . . . demolished, . . . won, . . . shot down” (p. 2). According to Perreault:

> the military battle metaphor limits the ability of leaders to lead in many situations, especially in today’s complex organizations, society and world. If one begins with an assumption of an enemy, this mindset keeps the person from seeing a broader range of options. (p. 3)

She invites all of us to take a big paradigm leap and to land onto the web of interconnectedness.

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) explained that our language is infused with metaphor and that people think metaphorically. The value of metaphor is that it assists in comprehension as one thing is compared to another. It is commonly used to convey meaning, define concepts, and to relate to others. In making their argument, Lakoff and Johnson stated, "if we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor" (p. 3). The relevance of this is that language plays a central role in the understanding and recognizing aspects of our world. Lakoff and Johnson's argument parallels the viewpoint of Damasio (1999) who contended that external behaviors are a result of the phenomenon of consciousness and the processes of the mind, noting that there is a "triangulation of mind, behavior, and the brain" (p. 13). He made the connection between consciousness and emotion, noting that it is possible to feel what is thought. The importance of this association is that metaphor can and does influence the way in which we feel about aspects of our reality. In this case, how a person thinks about leadership affects the way they feel about it as well as how they behave.

Perreault (2005) has suggested that replacing the war metaphor with the friendship metaphor is a better fit for explaining and understanding relational leadership. "Using friendship as a metaphor for leadership provides a way to convey a view and practice of leadership in which connection and relationship are basic" (p. 3). In Perreault's model of leadership, connection, and interdependence are central themes. Her model emphasizes relationship and collaboration and counters the values of distance and competition, so the friendship as leadership model may be viewed as representing an alternative to the commonly held view of leadership as an individual pursuit. When one leads through friendship, the essential elements of respect and support are conveyed by "considering the welfare of oneself as well as others . . . feeling connected with others . . . listening to others and trying to understand their point of view . . . affirming the best in people regardless of their affiliation . . . [and] respecting others as moral equals" (pp. 3-4).

Friendship as a way of leading is connoted by Perreault's (2005) metaphor of leadership as friendship, which implies a relatedness or connection, as well as how that connection is expressed through regard for and behavior toward each other. Connection is expressed through concern for both the self and others, respect, listening, and seeking to understand and be understood.

Perreault's (2005) leadership model is relational and involves a joint envisioning of what is possible. Subordinates are seen as allies who are instrumental in achieving the organization's purpose. The organization is the community, and given a relational predisposition, it is possible for everyone to experience friendship-type relations and perhaps even actual friendship, though that is not required by her model. She also recognizes that others may not operate out of the same paradigm suggesting that the friendship paradigm of leadership can exist alongside the dominant perspective.

Leadership as friendship can be interpreted as a metaphor, as Perreault (2005) intended, or it can relate to a possible workplace relationship. To further tease out its central components, leadership as friendship can be further synthesized with the other relational strengths articulated thus far (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1.

Leadership as Friendship Synthesized with other Relational Strengths

Perspective	Relational Strengths
Relational Cultural Theory	Empathy/Caring, Mutuality, Empowerment, Self-Esteem, Influence
Positive Work Relations	Trust, Mutuality, Growth, Sense of Identity, Self-Disclosure, Learning, Community
Friendship	Trust/Goodwill, Reciprocity, Caring/Growth, Harmony, Support, Task Assistance, Intellectual, Stimulation
Relational Leadership	Empathy, Trust, Reciprocity, Influence, Connection, Care, Nurturance, Awareness, Authenticity, Self-Management
Leadership as Friendship	Connection, Listening, Respect, Concern for Other & Self, Support, Collaboration, Optimism

Leadership as friendship is a way to lead. Using the themes derived from RCT, PWR, friendship, and relational leadership a more complete picture of what leadership as friendship might resemble in practice. Table 2.1 provides a composite of what leadership as friendship might feel like for a leader: reciprocal exchange of empathy, mutuality, connection, concern for the other, self-disclosure, teamwork, collaboration, self-achieving, caring, respect, appreciation, trust, growth, authenticity, learning, and communal solidarity within varying relational constellations. Added to these ideas is Perreault's (2005) concept of respect and support that encompasses the welfare of self and others, connection, listening, affirming the best in people, and valuing others as moral equals. Perreault is suggesting that leadership as friendship can improve the ability of leaders and organizations to respond to a broader range of issues since it involves a joint envisioning of possibilities where connection and interdependence are foundational themes.

This section described the essential ingredients for leadership as friendship to be put into practice. With an emphasis on relationship, connection, interdependence, and collaboration are central themes. This points back to the central question of this study—what is the leader's lived experience of relational leadership and does it resemble leadership as friendship? This leads to another question—is Perreault's (2005) leadership ideal robust enough to overcome the status quo? The answer may depend on any number of variables the first of which may be gender and the implications—both embedded and visible—that gender implies. This will be explored in the next section.

The Thread of Gender

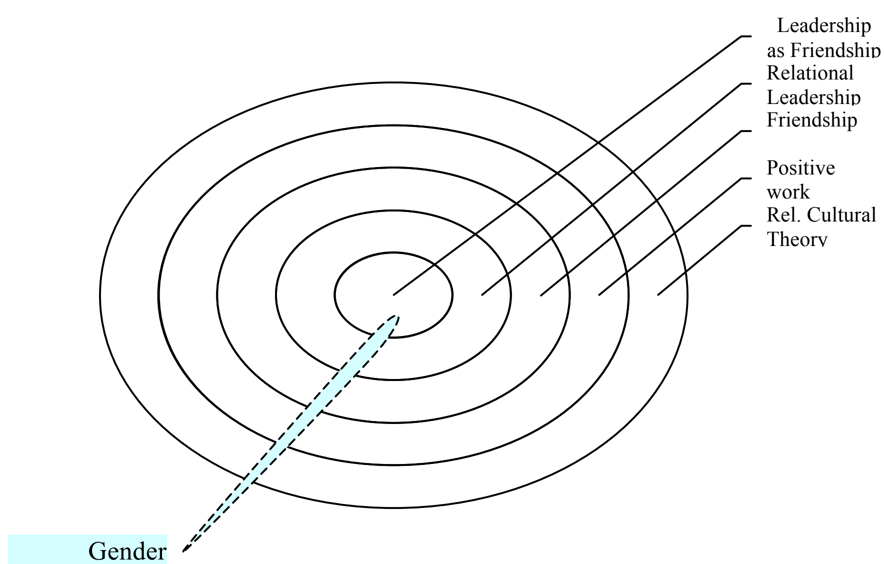

Figure 2.9. Gender as a conceptual thread.

Three of our theories, RCT, PWR, and relational leadership, provide a snapshot of women, so a brief discussion of gender is added here to complete the picture. One fundamental and underlying aspect of much of the literature that focuses on the relevant fields of relational practice has to do with gender. It is not that men do not exhibit leadership relationally, it is that many of the characteristics are gendered and much of what is focused on in terms of effective relational practice draws from behaviors ascribed to women and female gender roles. Gender carries with it both implied and explicit power. According to Acker (1990):

> To say that an organization, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. (p. 167)

Acker identifies five synergistic constructions: distribution of labor, behavior, and power; representations of gender divisions; everyday interactions between the sexes; knowledge of gender appropriate actions and activities; and "creating and conceptualizing social structures" (pp. 167-168). Acker's (1990) analysis suggests that hierarchies do gender in a number of ways—through job descriptions and through the suppression of "sexuality, emotionality, and procreation" (p. 172).

In "Doing Gender," West and Zimmerman (1987) distinguished between sex, as "ascribed" (p. 125) physical attributes, and gender, as a status that is "achieved" (p. 125) through everyday social interaction. Because it is achieved, gender is continually enacted and distinguishes men from women. According to the authors, gender is produced in everyday activities, is constructed through interaction, and is unavoidable. West and Zimmerman believe "it is unavoidable because of the social consequences of sex-category membership: the allocation of power and resources not only in the domestic, economic, and political domains but also in the broad arena of interpersonal relations" (p. 145). They further state that when gender fits the social construct, institutional arrangements based on sex category are in accord, but when gender does not match, the person's actions are called into question. The authors' suggest that those who present themselves in any way other than what is expected for the sexes cause others to speculate at best, and condemn at worst. In either case, acting in ways that defy conventional wisdom would present another obstacle for the other to overcome and is reflected in the insights of Acker (1990), Eagly (2007), Ely and Meyerson (2000), and Deutsch (2007).

Social interactions provide the opportunity for gender and the associated roles and identities to be reinforced, as well as redefined within the context of the larger culture, the law, the organization, religion, and one's personal beliefs. It would appear that the enduring nature of gender can be attributed to a proliferation of ideas about the way life should be within our (albeit slowing changing) collective consciousness. This may be due in part to what Deutsch (2007) discovered in her review of West and Zimmerman's work (1987).

Sixteen years after West and Zimmerman's (1987) article appeared, Deutsch (2007) proposed "Undoing Gender." Her rationale is that "doing gender has become a theory of gender persistence and the inevitability of inequality" (p. 106). Deutsch points to four contributions of doing gender. It "de-emphasized socialization, exposed weaknesses of deterministic structural accounts of gender, alerted us to taken-for-granted expressions of difference, and implied that if gender is constructed, it can be deconstructed" (pp. 107-108). She contends that it is time for gender to be undone because it has contributed to "conformity and gender conventionality" (p. 108).

Deutsch's (2007) approach in her meta-review was to look at articles published in 2005 that cited the West and Zimmerman article. Further, Deutsch reported that all but one of the articles she reviewed seemed to focus on the maintenance of gender norms, rather than what she believed to be the articles' purpose—the potential for transformation. Her concern is that gender norms contribute to inequality. Deutsch asks the question "How can we dismantle the gender system to create real equality between men and women" (p. 123)?

Perhaps, the only significant difference between men and women is ideological. According to Eagly (2005), the two primary ideological differences are women's greater compassion, concern for others, and opposition to violence, and men's "traditional morality and greater tolerance of ethical lapses" (p. 467).

Traditional morality is assumed to mean what is generally normal for men. This brings into focus the idea presented by Gilligan (1993) and Acker (1990) that men's reality has been accepted in the mainstream as representing all of humanity. So what is the relevance of gender in the workplace, and more specifically to this study of leadership as friendship?

Acker (1990) describes organizations as following a male design, representing the male model, and structured to accommodate male conceptions of the division of time between work and family life, which are perceived as "gender neutral" (p. 163). An additional concern for this study is the predominant viewpoint that friendship is a private sphere construct and that leadership and friendship are paradoxical concepts with no relevance to each other.

Women in leadership positions have generally been "socialized to conform to accepted organizational norms" (Rhode, 2003, p. 169) so leadership as friendship may be contrary to so-called accepted organizational norms. Would this in any way relegate leadership as friendship to be dismissed as something less than leadership? This leads to the question, what conditions are necessary for leadership as friendship to flourish? This, in fact, is a central curiosity of the dissertation at hand, and will be explored as part of the research for this study.

Looking to Ely and Meyerson (2000), the best way to minimize the negative effects of gender is to revise the work culture. The first step is to look at formal and informal organizational formal values and practices and then to continually expose and revise them through incremental change, which could include leadership as friendship. Eagly (2007) notes that our society is in a transition period—women's roles are changing along with view about what constitutes good leadership. In an earlier work, Eagly (2005) stated that "research suggests that women in powerful roles do promote a somewhat kinder, more socially compassionate version of organizational goals and social policies" (p. 467). Acceptance of new practices of leadership recognizes that collaboration is potentially more effective at obtaining results than "individual, heroic action" (Fletcher, 2002, p. 204). This leads back to the central question, how do women leaders experience leadership as friendship?

As this section has shown, gender roles and identities are reinforced through social interaction and are redefined contextually through culture, the law, the organization, religion, and one's personal beliefs. Because women's roles are changing along with views about what constitutes good leadership, new practices of leadership, such as leadership as friendship, are not only possible, but may be more effective at obtaining organizational results. This section also illustrates another potential concern mentioned above for this study. The terms leadership and friendship are paradoxical. It is this paradox that will be address through hermeneutic phenomenological reflection.

Conclusion

The focus of this study is the lived experiences of women leaders who are relational leaders and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship describes their experience. My interest is in the positive aspects of leadership as friendship congruent with the recent shift in scholarly research on positive work relationship theory (Dutton & Ragins, 2007). The genesis for this study is a discourse by Perreault (2005) suggesting that the essence of relational leadership is friendship where connection and interdependence are central themes. Further, Perreault proposed that the ability of leaders and organizations to respond to a broader range of issues is enhanced through a joint envisioning process.

This literature review concentrated on five theoretical areas: relational cultural theory, positive work relations theory, friendship, relational leadership, and gender. Because this is a hermeneutic phenomenological study of women leaders, these subjects were used to illuminate theory and research about women's experience, as well as to construct a composite of leadership as friendship. What was discovered is that the organization can be a fertile environment for friendships to flourish. Relational practice is a conscious choice. Relational needs are satisfied within the work context. Relational competence is an indispensable skill for professional life and the global arena. Relational constellations connect people at different levels within the organization and for varying lengths of times. The more meaningful the connections, the more engaged individuals will be in the work. Relationships play an important role in the degree of authenticity a person displays in a professional setting. Public sphere friendships may manifest in a communal solidarity and assist in key performance areas and goal achievement. Friendships between leaders and followers are possible within the organizational setting and may increase overall effectiveness. Relational leadership is about cultivating relationships and is transformational. Both women and men can lead relationally, though many of the characteristics have been ascribed to women and female gender roles. Changing perspectives about what constitutes good leadership provide an opportunity for leadership as friendship to gain acceptance and be named as such.

Each of these areas adds understanding to the idea that the leadership relationship can involve friendship or friendship-type relationships. As this literature review has demonstrated, leadership as friendship has not been studied in the workplace. The dissertation, grounded in the belief that the metaphor “leadership as friendship” (Perreault, 2005, p.1) is an expression of relational leadership will address that gap through this study. An additional consideration is the conjoined ideas of leadership and friendship and how these themes are brought to life. In the chapter that follows, the chosen method of discovery, hermeneutic phenomenology, will be discussed.

Chapter III: Methodology

"The being of phenomenology involves specific activities to bring oneself into a place where a deep involvement with a phenomenon can occur" (Simpson, 2008, p. 52). My goal for this research project is to uncover the lived experience of women who are relational leaders and to consider their experience in relationship to the metaphor of leadership as friendship. Recognizing the variability of individual experience, my quest will be to investigate both the experience and essential themes that epitomize leadership as friendship. I will explore this topic through hermeneutic phenomenology because of its "participative, conversational, and dialogic" focus (Schwandt, 2000, p. 195) on the individual, as well as its emphasis on the "human world *as we find it* in all its variegated aspects" (van Manen, 1990, p. 18). Through phenomenology, it is possible "to become more fully who we are" (van Manen, 1990, p. 11). What follows is my explanation and justification for hermeneutic phenomenology as an appropriate methodology for this topic.

Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology deals with the nature of reality, in this case, for the researcher and participants, and epistemology, which is the "study of the nature of knowledge and justification," (Schwandt, 2001, p. 71) involves the relationship between the researcher and the object or person under study (Creswell, 1998). Epistemology includes the "values, norms, and practices" of the particular methodology (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 85). I have decided to "rely on the participants' views of the situation being studied" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8), so this will be a qualitative study using hermeneutic phenomenology. People interpret experience through invented "concepts, models, and schemes" (Creswell, 2003, p. 8). Knowledge is then reshaped with new experiences "against a backdrop of shared understanding, practices, language, and so forth" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 30). As Bentz and Shapiro (1998) asserted, "different research methods require different kinds of skills and capacities of the inquirer. One's capacity includes prior experience, knowledge, attitudes, and personal drives or ambitions" (p. 79).

My philosophical stance can best be described through Rehorick and Bentz's (2008) reflection:

> My orientation is *phenomenological* since I am concerned with experience, especially that arising from wonderment or astonishment in face of the world. My orientation is *social* because I examine the structure of the everyday life world and the meaning of mundane categories. (p. 10)

According to Laverty (2003), the genesis of phenomenology began with Husserl (1970) who saw phenomenology as a method "of reaching true meaning through penetrating deeper and deeper into reality" (p. 2) in order to uncover meanings that may have been forgotten or to discover new meaning. The focus of phenomenology is on life world or lived experience of the person (Laverty, 2003; van Manen, 1990). Where life-world refers to experience prior to reflection, consciousness results from the interaction of a person and the world. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2000):

> Concerned with the experiential underpinnings of knowledge, Husserl argues that the relation between perception and its object is not passive. Rather, human consciousness actively constitutes objects of experiences. Consciousness in other words, is always consciousness-of-something. (p. 488)

Consciousness is achieved through an intentional focus on a phenomenon. In Husserl's (1970) view, intentionally and essences were central to understanding. Laverty (2003) notes, "conscious awareness was the starting point in building one's knowledge of reality. By intentionally directing one's focus, Husserl proposed one could develop a description of a particular reality" (p. 3). Husserl's conception of bracketing of both internal and external biases was envisioned as necessary to connect to the essence of the phenomenon. Understanding about the bracketing process was refined by Klein and Westcott (1994) who outlined three steps—“exemplary intuition, imaginative variation, and synthesis” (Laverty, 2003, p. 2).

As Laverty (2003) noted, Heidegger (1927/1962) added hermeneutics to phenomenology suggesting that consciousness evolves from a person’s history and that pre-understanding cannot be fully bracketed. Further, Heidegger believed that these interpretive influences could be reconciled in the hermeneutic circle (Laverty, 2003). Further refinement of hermeneutics came from Gadamer (1960/1997), who was influenced by both Husserl (1970) and Heidegger. According to Gadamer:

> Hermeneutics must start from the position that a person seeking to understand something has a bond to the subject matter that comes into language through the traditionary text and has, or acquires, a connection with the tradition from which the text speaks. (p. 295)

In addition, Gadamer affirmed that understanding and interpretation were inseparable concepts. Given this stance, Gadamer also believed that bracketing was impossible.

Ihde (1974) informs us that both Heidegger and Ricoeur believed in the centrality of language, however, their attention was located at opposite poles of the hermeneutic circle. Where Heidegger was more closely ontologically aligned with inquiring about being, Ricoeur was epistemologically inclined on the method of interpretation (Bontekoe, 2000). “Ricoeur’s approach is one of attaining ontology by degrees, through methodological considerations” (Ihde, 1974, p. xii).

The meaning of being was central to Heidegger’s (1927/1962) hermeneutic phenomenology (Laverty, 2003). Attention to the phenomenon means being attentive and receptive, but not passive. Being attentive and receptive facilitates understanding, “the focus is toward illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding”

(Wilson & Hutchinson as cited in Laverty, 2003, p. 2). The researcher needs to be aware of her bias and prejudice and, to the degree possible, set them aside (bracket) so that the phenomenon is visible (Bontekoe, 2000). Gadamer (1960/1997) asserted that prejudice or pre-judgment is inevitable and that it informs our understanding. There is a distinction, however, between pre-judgment and prejudice that enables or disables (Schwandt, 2001). According to Gadamer, "the prejudices and fore-meaning that occupy the interpreter's consciousness are not at his free disposal. He cannot separate in advance the productive prejudices that enable understanding from the prejudices that hinder it and lead to misunderstandings" (p. 295).

Gadamer's (1960/1997) argument was built on the ideas of Heidegger (1927/1962)who believed that a person's culture and related experiences in the world make bracketing difficult "as one cannot stand outside the pre-understanding and historicality of one's experience" (Laverty, 2003, p. 3). Further, Heidegger asserted that consciousness evolves from historically lived experiences, which are intertwined with a person's culture. Understanding stems from a person's background, although "one's background cannot be made completely explicit" (Laverty, 2003, p. 3). For Heidegger, meaning is derived from the symbiotic relationship between a person and the world where each is constructed by the other. As for interpretation under Heidegger, it is realized through the "hermeneutic circle which moves from the parts of experience, to the whole of experience, and back and forth again to increase of depth of engagement with, and the understanding of, texts" (Laverty, 2003, p. 3). In fact, "the hermeneutic circle is a metaphor for understanding and interpretation" (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007, p. 622). Gadamer has explained that the "hermeneutic circle describes understanding as the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the interpreter" (p. 293).

In the 1960s, Ricoeur began to combine hermeneutics with phenomenology (Dauenhauer, 2005). For Ricoeur, hermeneutic reflection is to try to tease out the multiple meanings of texts by considering the tension between conflicting or interactive forces (Ihde, 1971). There are four levels of meaning—literal, allegorical, analogical, and symbolic. Ricoeur's focus is on the epistemology of interpretation of the text with attention to language. Bontekoe (2000) explains "Ricoeur claims . . . that the text exists independently as a written communication" (p. 140). The texts' meaning encompasses the author's intention, as well as the effect the text elicits from readers. The hermeneutic task is to decipher the multiple or hidden implication implied in the literal expression. "Interpretation . . . is the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning" (Ricoeur, 1974, p. 13). For Ricoeur, the symbolic implication or the metaphoric structure of words comprised the hermeneutic problem. As Ihde (1971) describes it:

> Hermeneutics presupposes that a "text" or an "expression" has something to say which in turn can be interpreted or said in another way. This notion, which recalls two classical meanings of hermeneutics, a "translating" technique for making obscure expressions clearer and an exegesis, which exposes the hidden meaning of a text, relies first upon its object, the text. In this case, hermeneutics is a "reading" or "listening" to what is said. (p. 83)

Interpretation of the text involves two forms: grammatical and technical. "Grammatical interpretation is based on the characteristics of discourse which are common to a culture; technical interpretation is addressed to the singularity, indeed to the genius, of the writer's message" (Ricoeur, 1981, pp. 46-47). Hermeneutics, then, requires deep reflection that leads to owning the text. "It is thus the growth of his own understanding of himself that he pursues through his understanding of the other. Every hermeneutics is thus, explicitly or implicitly, self-understanding by means of understanding others" (Ricoeur, 1974, p. 17). Learning about others enhances consciousness. Awareness, then, is both a process and a consequence of interpretation. With oneself and another representing the two poles of the hermeneutic circle, we come to *Oneself as Another* (Ricoeur, 1992). According to Kenny, Jahn-Langenberg, and Lowey (2005), the hermeneutic circle is where understanding is realized:

> The hermeneutic circle is a way of thinking about how one derives meaning for an experience. . . . The circle is the way in which access to the phenomenon is achieved and there is certainly always a deeper meaning assigned and uncovered. These meanings, understood through text must then be re-synthesized and brought back to the original source where new insights are illuminated. The hermeneutic circle is as much a way of working though our own translations as it is the insights which then are uncovered and renamed, which in turn take us back to the text. (p. 341)

This study focused on women leaders and their experiences of relational leadership and leadership in the workplace, and gender is a thread across all the contextual literature discussed to date in chapter 2—therefore, it seems appropriate to explore how feminists have approached phenomenology (some embrace it while other feminists have been critical). Those who embrace phenomenology include Butler (1988), who recognized the connection between phenomenology and feminist inquiry. “On the surface it appears that phenomenology shares with feminist interpretation a commitment to grounding theory in lived experience, and in revealing the way in which the world is produced through the constituting acts of subjective experience” (Fisher, 2000, p. 27). Levesque-Lopman (2000) also emphasized the suitability of phenomenology for feminist research. Levesque-Lopman notes that feminist phenomenology is an exceptional research tool to explore women’s experiences.

The heart of feminist phenomenology is that a woman’s experience differs from a man’s and is, therefore, gendered (Arp, 2000) and because of this “phenomenology needs feminism” (Alcoff, 2000, p. 39). Arp posited that the involvement of women suggests a gendered experience. “Moral theory is necessarily rooted in experience and constantly refers back to experience. However, experience, as feminist phenomenology points out, is always a gendered experience" (Arp, 2000, p. 75). Holland and Huntington (2001) contribute to the discussion on phenomenology by analyzing the work of Heidegger. They maintain that while Heidegger was not a feminist theorist, his attention to social ontology provides a richness of thought for feminist engagement and learning:

> One clear reason for feminists to turn to Heideggerian thought is that the early works articulate a model of the human knower as pragmatically engaged in a world of meaningful concern. . . . Heidegger supplies a rich vocabulary for reconceptualizing human nature as care—custodian for what appears—rather than as the rational animal who lords over the earth…Heidegger defends the gender neutrality of Dasein [human being] because his methodology seeks to think of human being as holistically engaged in world . . . although being incarnated into sexed bodies is a defining feature of worldly embodiment, sexual difference can take on multiple meanings in the world. . . . Heidegger's insistence on the neutrality of Dasein implies that gender does not encompass the totality of who one is. Such a conception of self is a consequence of being thrown into a body and a world. (pp. 27-28)

For those feminists who critique phenomenology, it is because of the obvious absence of women's experience. Fisher (2000), who presents both sides of the argument, notes that this omission is an essential flaw in phenomenology. "There has been comparatively little exploration of the interaction of feminism and phenomenology" (p. 17) except on the part of feminists. The "maleness of the philosophy [is apparent] when in effect such perspective is unarticulated, cloaked, or presented under the guise of neutrality and objectivity" (p. 23).

Speaking from a feminist methodological standpoint, Sprague (2005) affirms that "gender shapes identities and perception, interactional practices, and the very forms of social institutions, and it does so in race- and class-specific ways. If we do not see gender in social phenomena, we are not seeing them clearly" (p. viii). Attending to the other side of the argument, Fisher (2000) states that:

> Just as feminist critiques of omissions or lacunae in phenomenological accounts and corresponding elaborations and analyses of gendered experience serve to expand,

> deepen, and correct the phenomenological accounts, so phenomenology can lend insight to feminist accounts, particularly with respect to frameworks for experiential analysis. (p. 33)

Qualitative Paradigm

The paradigm for this study is qualitative. The intent is to research leaders' lived experience of relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship describes its qualities. As noted by McMillan and Wergin (2006), "qualitative studies are based on the assumption that reality is subjective and dependent on context" (p. 94). Qualitative studies rely on rich narrative description. Meaning is garnered from participants though the study of an experience, phenomenon, situation, occurrence, circumstance, milieu, and other people (McMillan & Wergin, 2006). Qualitative research involves a relationship between participants and the researcher in order to gather relevant data of the phenomenon being studied. The intent is to understand "how people interpret experiences, define terms, and conceptualize their lives" (McMillan & Wergin, 2006, p. 94).

There are two multifaceted criteria for the qualitative paradigm: trustworthiness and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Trustworthiness is measured by the credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the research. Authenticity is characterized by fairness and the validity of ontological, educative, and tactical standpoints. Authenticity standards encompass an even representation of perspectives, increased awareness, and action by participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

The phenomenon this study will attempt to understand is how experienced women leaders within the human and social services field embody the conceptual metaphor of leadership as friendship. Their multiple voices provided the texts for consideration and the themes that emerge were examined and placed in the context of that which emerged in the literature review in chapter 2. I chose a qualitative approach for four reasons.

First, I believed this paradigm, as expressed through hermeneutic phenomenology, captured the intricacy of experience from participants. I was more interested in the deep stories than in the broad trends. I was interested in their stories as women, their stories as leaders, their stories as women leaders, and their stories as women who lead relationally. In short, I was interested in the "wholeness of experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21) that their stories represent.

Second, leadership as friendship is an under-researched phenomenon. As the prior chapter has shown, there have been many studies on the related areas of friendship and relational leadership, but I found only three that investigated friendship between leaders and followers. However, the leaders' experience of friendship and how this fits into the leadership relationship is unexplored. As an under-researched phenomenon, a qualitative approach allowed me to get inside the phenomena in a naturalistic genre that is grounded in the lived experiences of the participants. The contribution to the field is the depth of experiences gathered from participants and the opportunity for future research on emerging themes.

Third, the qualitative paradigm was congruent with my desire as a researcher to engage participants in the research process, as well as understand myself. As noted by Bentz and Shapiro (1998), "one's research can contribute to the transformation of one's self or identity," (p. 5), or, as stated by van Manen (1990), "from a phenomenal point of view, to do research is always to question the way we experience the world to want to know the world in which we live as human beings" (p. 5). Ricoeur stated it this way, "though each of us has an individual identity, our identities are bound up with others. 'Man is this plural and collective unity in which the unity of destination and differences of destinies are to be understood through each other'" (as cited in Dauenhauer, 2005, p. 4). I was both aware of and prepared to make this journey with the participants who agreed to join me in reflection on the meaning of relational leadership. Meaning may come from interpretations that are "perceived . . . conceptualized . . . remembered . . . [or] dreamed" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 97). What is important is an interpretation that is trustworthy, credible, transferable, and confirmable (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 22).

The fourth reason for choosing a qualitative paradigm was introspective. Introspection is exactly how I experience life. Contemplating. Meditating. Mulling over. Looking for meaning. Creating, and recreating, a picture. These are my natural inclinations.

Method

Inspired by the discourse of van Manen (1990), hermeneutic phenomenology, which embraces the basic principles of both hermeneutics and phenomenology, was the methodology for this study. At its most basic level, phenomenology presents a description of a person's experience, whereas hermeneutics is about interpretation at increasing levels of depth. As described by Ajjawi and Higgs (2007), "the main focus of phenomenology is with pre-reflective experiences and feelings (the essence of a phenomenon). . . . Hermeneutics adds the interpretive to explicate meanings and assumptions in the participants' texts that participants themselves may have difficulty in articulating" (p. 616). Ricoeur (1981) describes the connection between the two: "*phenomenology remains the unsurpassable presupposition of hermeneutics.* On the other hand, phenomenology cannot constitute itself without a *hermeneutical presupposition"* (p. 101).

The process involves thick description of the phenomenon and interpretation. "Phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience, hermeneutics describes how one interprets the 'texts' of life, and semiotics is used here to develop a practical writing or linguistic approach to the method of phenomenology and hermeneutics" (van Manen, 1990, p. 4). Interpretation is hermeneutic. "Understanding is participative, conversational, and dialogic" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 195). One of the research activities in hermeneutic phenomenological research is "investigating experiences as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it" (van Manen, 1990, p. 30). This was one of the intents for this study of leaders' experience of relational leadership. Conceptualization of the metaphor leadership as friendship came from Perreault (2005); living it, or praxis, will come from participants. As Ihde (1971) has stated, "phenomenology as a theory is a series of methods and concepts which take as their central value the primacy of concrete experience" (p. 17). Stated another way, "being-in-the-world . . . refers to the way human beings exist, act, or are involved in the world" (Heidegger as cited in van Manen, 1990, p. 175). In this study, involvement in the world refers to woman, leader, and friend.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is interpretation of the unique through description and interpretation of text—words, metaphors, and symbols—as well as interpreting other ways of communicating. Kenny et al. (2005) explained the use of hermeneutics, "hermeneutics is used to interpret not only texts but other expressions that need interpreting like conversations, nonverbal interactions, and even clothing and fashion" (p. 341). "For Ricoeur, the hermeneutics of language centers upon certain privileged words, those of the *symbolic* word. Hermeneutics is primarily, under Ricoeur's use, the interpretation and investigation of those words which have a certain type of multiple sense" (Ihde, 1971, p. xiv). For Ricoeur, the metaphor is a symbol, in which the hermeneutic charge is to bring to light "the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning" (Ihde, 1971, p. xiv).

Metaphor was important to this study for two reasons. First, metaphor is where this study began. Perreault (2005) offered the metaphor of leadership as friendship as a way to shift the focus of leadership from the individualistic and separatist assumptions portrayed by war metaphors (e.g., target, attacked) more common to leadership, to a focus on leadership with cooperative and relational assumptions portrayed by the friendship metaphor. The leadership relationship describes the way in which the parties are connected to each other, and friendship refers to how parties behave toward each other. In praxis, this metaphor can be interpreted as a positive work relationship that embraces the philosophical concepts of relational cultural theory. Specifically, this includes "concern for the welfare of self and others . . . connection . . . mutual respect . . . listening . . . [and] seeking to understand" the other and to be understood (Perreault, 2005, pp. 3-4). Second, metaphors are a part of our language. They are part of how we make sense of the world and how we understand the nature of one thing to another. Metaphors are a way to explain the essential elements of a thing (i.e., essence). It is the interpretive quality of metaphor that makes it hermeneutic (Ricoeur, 1981). van Manen (1990*),* also commented on the importance of metaphor:

> Virtually every word we utter ultimately derives from some image, thereby betraying its metaphoric genius. . . . By way of metaphor, language can take us beyond the content of the metaphor toward the original region where language speaks through silence. This path of the metaphor is the speaking of thinking, of poetizing. (p. 49)

However, I did not try to directly unpack the theoretic significance of Perreault's (2005) leadership as friendship metaphor; rather, I attempted to marry practice to theory by discovering the essence of a leader's experience of relational leadership and whether her experience could be described as leadership as friendship. My goal was to understand the participants' relational practices of leading and whether this could be described as leadership as friendship. I believed that leading in this way could create an environment where actual friendship between leaders and followers was possible and, therefore, I also explored the idea of public sphere friendships with the participants.

Research Paradigm and Questions

This study had, at its core, a focus on the meaning women leaders attribute to leading relationally and the degree to which leadership as friendship described their experience. Meaning may come from living, imaging, dreaming, or recollecting. Conceptualization represents only one way of seeing. An event, person, place, or thing can also be "perceived . . . remembered . . . [or] dreamed" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 97) and this study attempted to surface whether, how, and in what way the participants perceive, remember, and even dream about leadership as friendship.

Phenomenology looks to the lived experience of participants (van Manen, 1990) or to the "essence of consciousness itself" (C. Kenny, personal communication, March 22, 2008) where essence is the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). The result of this approach was a rich description of relational leadership through friendship. Understanding the lived experiences suggests that phenomenology is a philosophy, as well as a method. Studying a small number of participants through extensive interviews facilitates phenomenology.

This study involved gathering data about participants' experience of their relational practices and the degree to which leadership as friendship described their leadership. The study involved in-depth interviews to gain a rich and deep understanding of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). The interviews were mined for participants' statements to discover the meaning the leader assigned to the leadership relationship and whether that relationship can be described as leadership as friendship as discussed in chapter 2. Approaching the research from the position of the relationship left open the possibility of finding out if participants had this experience and in what ways they had, or did not have, the experience of leadership as friendship.

Perreault (2005) has posited that one expression of relational leadership is friendship. It is a phenomenon that has been alluded to in the context of describing components of relational leadership (e.g., care, compassion, respect, loyalty), but not directly named as friendship. My intention was to learn how these leaders experienced the leadership relationship, what conditions favor relational leadership, and what meaning they ascribe to these experiences. A second goal was to inform practice about whether the metaphor of leadership as friendship describes their experience. I attempted to understand how relational leadership functions on a deep and personal level for the leader. Through the interview process, I explored the leaders' experiences with relational leadership, whether leadership as friendship described their experience, how they experienced the leadership relationship, whether friendship fit into their leadership, whether workplace friendships helped them achieve personal goals, and whether they believed that gender affected their leadership.

Bracketing

The process of bracketing began with conceptualization of the phenomenon. I provided a description of my own experience with friendship and leadership, described in chapter 1, then bracketed my taken-for-granted assumptions and knowledge. This was an important step to clear the canvas so the stories of participants could be painted. I also recognized that I came to the research situation with a richness of experience from a personal standpoint, as well as vicariously from the literature. My personal beliefs also formed the basis of discovery through the literature, which resulted in reflection, as well as supported or broadened my beliefs. The literature added language to my personal knowledge or naturalistic state (van Manen, 1990).

This knowledge required that, to the best of my ability, I bracket my beliefs in order to lift the metaphoric veil that could obscure the essence of the phenomenon. As van Manen commented, “bracketing describes the act of suspending one’s various beliefs in the reality of the natural world in order to study the essential structures of the world” (p. 175). The nature of a phenomenon is that “a person cannot reflect on lived experience while living through the experience” (p. 11). Reflection always follows practice.

The researcher needs to be aware of her biases and, to the degree possible, set them aside (bracket) so that the phenomenon is visible (Bontekoe, 2000). According to Heidegger (1927/1962), understanding developed from a person’s culture and related experiences in the world make it difficult to completely set aside one’s biases. My beliefs about friendship and the leadership relationship that I have identified, and have set aside include:

- Friendship in the leadership relationship is always recognized as such.
- Friendship as a metaphor for leadership is easily understood.
- Friendship between people of unequal work status is an aspect of positive work relationships.
- Context and environment, opportunity, work culture, structure and function, process, and personality differences impact friendship in leadership.
- Friendship can result from collaborative activity as well as enable collaborative activity.
- Friendship can be a style (way of being) or a skill (technique).
- Workplace friendships imply that the work environment is also friendly.

Both my personal knowledge and that gleaned from the literature was suspended, or bracketed, which added to a further level of reduction. There are four steps to reduction:

wonderment about the phenomenon, couching individual "feelings, preferences, inclinations, or expectations" (van Manen, 1990, p. 185), couching theories and research about the phenomenon, and discovering the essence of the experience. Wonderment began with a curiosity about friendship in leadership as I reflected on leadership relationships I had observed in a previous work experience. Perreault's (2005) envisioning of leadership as friendship further fueled my curiosity. Literature related to the leadership-friendship connection continued my excitement and reflection on my own way of leading and later to the participants' way of leading.

Overcoming my private and subjective ideas and feelings began with recognizing them. This was done through personal reflection at various points in the pre-research process—both when contemplating the topic individually and as a result of a pilot study I conducted to help inform this topic. Other personally held ideas and feelings came to light during the actual research.

The theories and research found in the literature was the third step in the reduction process. This included bracketing personal beliefs unconfirmed by the literature, as well as bracketing the literature itself in order to hear the experiences of the research participants. The final step in the reduction process was to get to the essence or universality of experience by bracketing the distinctive or particular aspects of relational leadership.

Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me to rely on the participants' interpretation of their lived experience of the leadership relationship and the role of friendship. Further, hermeneutic inquiry is:

> open-ended and circular, [typified by deep reflection]. It takes into account our personal histories, our time in history and the history of ideas, the precision and meanings of words, phrases, melodies, rhythms, the history of our works and fields, and in general, as

> many conditions as we possibly can reveal before we create our interpretations. (Kenny et al., 2005, p. 7)

Additionally, hermeneutics is the process of looking for meaning in texts. In this study, the transcribed interviews created the texts, which were the focus for understanding and interpretation. Language expresses understanding of the self and others, and "hermeneutic phenomenology [is] concerned with expression" (Ihde, 1971, p. 82).

At the point that the participants' voices were added to the literature, the three "ships" (relationship, leadership, and friendship) connected. Because the phenomenological journey is as much about self-discovery as it is about uncovering the meaning of the lived experiences of others, my intent was for the process to enrich all of us. From comments I received from some of the participants, I believe that this intent was satisfied.

The Research Process

The steps for this hermeneutic phenomenological study included eleven steps. Each step provided the foundation for each subsequent step. The steps included: ethics clearance, recruitment, selection of participants, obtaining a written consent, conducting round one of interviews, mining interviews for themes for the second set of interviews, mining interviews for themes, conducting the third cycle of interviews, interpretation of the texts, and presentation of findings.

Ethics clearance. Prior to the interview process, I completed the Internal Review Board process for Antioch University (see Appendix A for a copy of the IRB application, participant letter, and informed consent form).

Recruitment. To obtain six participants, I contacted people I knew in the human and social services field and informed them that I was conducting a research study of relational leaders. I asked for a recommendation of someone who might be interested in this study. This process is known as snowball sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Though my various contacts, I obtained several lists of possible participants, which totaled 50 people. The list of potential participants narrowed as some people were unavailable to interview during March through May 2009. There were some people I was unable to reach by telephone inquiry, and some declined participation citing timing or discomfort with being interviewed. I did not add any new participants once six people agreed to be interviewed.

Selection of participants. A phenomenological study does not require a large number of participants in order for the phenomenon to be documented (C. Kenny, personal communication, March 22, 2008). For this study, I used an inverted pyramid structure of interviewing beginning with six participants. Three rounds of interviews were conducted using an inverted pyramid structure. The number of participants in each round was six, then three of the six, and then two of the three participants, respectively. My interest in interviewing appointed women leaders in the human and social services field was threefold. First, I believed that the nature of the work could foster the common bond of human connection. Second, I believed that this bond could provide a fertile background for leadership as friendship to grow. Third, I believed that the human and social services field is conducive to leading through a relational approach.

This is an area where I had prior experience, which assisted in establishing rapport with participants, as well as providing a basis of understanding of discipline-based values and expectations. I selected six female participants from the human and social services field (nonprofit and government sectors) within New Jersey. I chose this work sector because of the relational practices I had observed among some of the women leaders, and selected this geographic location so I could conduct in-person interviews.

Participants were selected using the following criteria. First, participants were appointed agency heads in the human and social services field with at least two years in their current leadership position. I chose two years because it increased the chance that leaders were comfortable with the requirements and boundaries of the position, as well as comfortable with their own way of leading. It also meant that they had the breadth of experience and insight needed to provide rich description. Second, participants were purposefully selected for this study. I believed through my observation, or on the recommendation of others, that they had some experience with leading relationally. Third, participants needed to be willing to reflect on their experience as a leader.

Consent. Participants were provided with information about the research and the research process and afforded an opportunity to ask questions about the research before proceeding. They were informed of their option to withdraw from the research at any time. Prior to conducting the research, participants were asked to sign a written informed consent form and to obtain any needed permissions from their board of directors or other governing body (see Appendix A). According to Sims (1998), informed consent includes four parts: "disclosure (providing adequate information), comprehension (understanding of information), competence (ability of participants to make a rational decision), and voluntariness (no coercion)" (as cited in Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007, p. 620).

Interviews. The interview served three purposes: to explore and gather narratives of lived experiences, to allow participants to share their stories, and to "develop a conversational relationship" where reflection occurred with the participant (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007, p. 619). Interviews were semi-structured and conducted in three rounds. Participants were asked to commit to a maximum of 60 minutes for the first interview, 45 minutes for the second, and 30 minutes for the final interview. Of these six participants, subsequent interviews were conducted with three of the six participants, and then two of the three participants. Participants for the second and third interviews were chosen based on concepts that need further clarification, their ability to commit additional time, their ability to reflect, and their willingness to delve into deeper levels of consciousness.

Initial prompts for the first interviews included the following:

- Leadership is a collaborative relationship involving influence for the purpose of achieving goals.
- Workplace friendship is defined as a relationship between two or more persons within an organizational setting characterized by sharing strengths and resources, assisting in life/work goals and interwoven with work tasks.
- I am interested in your experience with leadership and with friendship in the workplace.
- I am also interested in how your position and the organization impact your work relationships.

Prompts for the second interview were created based on emergent themes from the first round of interviews and themes from the second interviews served as prompts for the third interviews. Through this inquiry, I hoped to discover what the leadership as friendship metaphor looks like in practice, and what essential features rendered those experiences with their relational significance.

Research process. The research process included collection of first-hand accounts obtained from conversations and interviews (Moustakas, 1994). This involved semi-structured, open-ended interviews that were audio taped, and then transcribed by a secure service. I reviewed all of the transcriptions and e-mailed a copy of their transcript(s) to the participants for review.

I attempted to research this topic as it occurred in its natural setting, which not only adheres to the “naturalistic approach” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 15) of qualitative research, it also assists in understanding, which is conceptualized from other concepts already understood. This was possible in four of the six interviews. For the first round of interviews, interviews were conducted at the work site with four of the participants; the other two interviews were conducted at participants’ homes. The interviews that took place at the participants’ worksite added an important dimension. It provided the researcher with an opportunity to observe participants in their environment, to observe their interactions with staff, and to get a sense of the congruence between their words and how others responded to them. Another essential aspect for ascertaining congruence for all of the interviews was the conversation that occurred off the recorder. All but two of the interviews in rounds two and three were conducted over the telephone in accordance with participant preference.

I journaled the process through field notes to capture my impressions about the environment and interview process, as well as participants’ expressions and bodily reactions not captured on audiotape. Field notes were used to organize transcripts and reflections and interpretation of texts.

Interpretation. Interpretation included immersion in the text and deep reflection. Ajjawi and Higgs (2007) identified a six-step process for interpretation: immersion, understanding, abstraction, synthesis and theme development, illumination and illustration of phenomena, and integration and critique (pp. 621-622). There are two strategies in this stage: phenomenological (rich description of the phenomenon to draw out its essence) and hermeneutic (interpretation of the text). Interpretation is looking for meaning in themes and contexts to discover the invariant structural themes or the essence of the phenomenon. The intent in this study was to find out what exemplifies relational leadership and its relationship to the metaphor of leadership as friendship. This was done through reflection and looking at the parts in relation to the whole text (hermeneutic circle). The first step was to become immersed in the data for a preliminary organization of ideas by extracting key concepts (coding). Going back to participants to verify concepts creates deeper understanding. Abstraction involved interpretation by the researcher of the constructs created though verification of key concepts gleaned through immersion. Key ideas were then grouped into themes with subgroups to accomplish synthesis and theme development. Finally, the literature was then re-examined to provide illumination and to illustrate the phenomena.

Ethical Issues

In addition to obtaining permission from Antioch's Internal Review Board, an important aspect of this study was to assure participants that the interviews were confidential. This was conveyed through a written informed consent. The consent advised them that their participation was both voluntary and revocable at any time. Participants were notified that this research was being conducted as part of the dissertation process.

The impact on participants involved the commitment of their time for the interview along with any subsequent interviews. With the interviews, review of the text, and follow-up conversations, it was estimated that participants could invest anywhere between 1 and 5 hours in the process. I attempted to minimize their inconvenience by being prepared, pre-testing recording equipment, and being flexible about scheduling. Interviews were conducted at a time and location that was the least disturbing for participants and their respective worksites. When interviews were conducted at the worksite, all necessary permissions were requested in advance.

It was probable that participants would be recalling experiences that might have been uncomfortable, so they were advised that their privacy would be protected at the beginning of the process, as well as at the beginning of the interview. I remained attentive to visual and auditory clues suggesting that the interview had resulted in the revelation of private, personal, or sensitive topics. At any point where it appeared that potentially dicey information (confidential or painful subject matter) was being conveyed, participants were assured that the interview was confidential.

To protect the anonymity of participants, interviews were transcribed by a secure transcription service, and pseudonyms (of the participant's choosing) were used in the dissertation. In addition, participants were treated with respect, courtesy, and care.

The final ethical issue was accuracy. The participants counted on me to tell their stories accurately and to attend to trustworthiness and authenticity explained earlier. This was attended to by having participants review transcripts as well as interpretations. The latter was also vetted with my advisor.

Conclusion

I chose hermeneutic phenomenological as the approach to uncover the multiple realities of women leaders in the human and social services field. The phenomenon of interest was relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship described the participants' experience. I began the process by understanding that this way of leading is congruent with my personal inclinations. My interaction with others is inclusive, receptive, and caring. This is, of course, the point at which my personal views were bracketed in order to clear the space and allow listening to occur. In the subsequent chapter, the participants' voices were heard through the stories they shared.

Chapter IV: The Interviews

> I believe leadership has components to it that are essential to a successful organization. I think respect for each other, talents in the job, and creating a good climate for teamwork, which really gives the staff a stake in the organization, because when you do it together—we're working for a cause—the actions, their actions, offer success to themselves and to others. We offer assistance and ask for input from one another. We share in management and problems when appropriate. We share a sense of humor every single day. (Angel, 2009, research participant)

As described in chapter 1, I approached this study with the idea that within the human and social services field there were women leading relationally and that it was possible that their relational practices might resonate with Perreault's (2005) metaphor of leadership as friendship. My interest in this possible match was based on my own observation at a previous point in time when I worked in the field.

The research was conducted in three stages. The first (initial) and second stage (data gathering) are discussed in this chapter. These two stages provided the foundation for the final stage (interpretation), which is the subject of chapter 5. The initial stage included preparation for the research. I conceptualized the selection of participants based on certain variables that I layered into two tiers of importance. Tier one consisted of the primary and overriding criteria of women leading a human and social services agency who considered themselves, or were viewed by others, to be relational leaders. Tier two included the secondary considerations of diversity components of type of service population, organization size, ethnicity, and age, which were desirable, but not essential. My first goal in selecting the participants was to involve women who either saw themselves as relational leaders or who others identified as relational leaders through the snowballing process.

I was interested in exploring the phenomenon of relational leadership and its resonance with the metaphor of leadership as friendship, so this study involved a purposeful sample

(McMillan & Wergin, 2006) where I intentionally and purposefully sought out women leaders who exemplified the phenomenon under study. According to McMillan and Wergin, "purposeful sampling is done to select individuals, sites, or documents that will be most informative" (p. 95).

In terms of selecting the participants, I identified them using in three circles of relational connection:

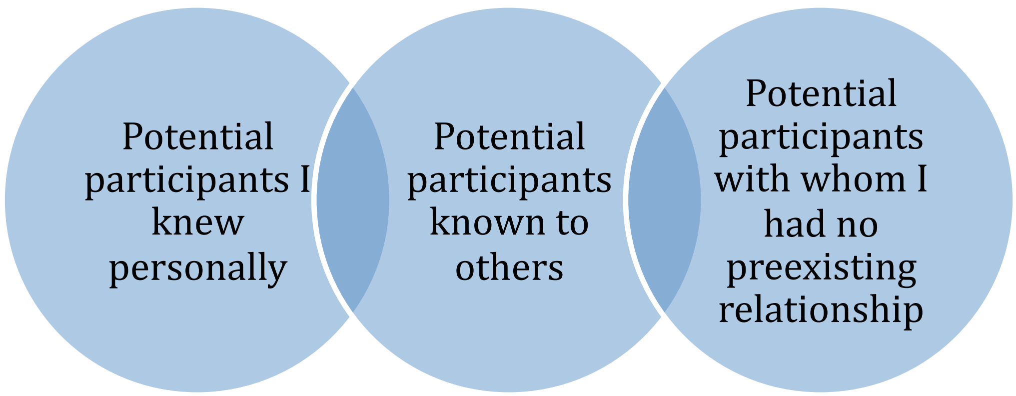

Figure 4.1. Research relationship.

This was the first step in creating the research relationship which would exist between me—as researcher—and the participants. The first and most intimate circle consisted of people I personally knew in the field. I created a list comprised of four names of women active in the human and social service field whom I believed demonstrated relational leadership through personal observation in the past. Three of the women were leading agencies. The other woman, friend and colleague, is a consultant in the human services field who once worked in government and nonprofit sectors and has maintained many of her contacts and created new ones. I initially contacted probable participants by telephone followed with an e-mail providing an overview of the study and giving them the opportunity to consider their participation. Because I had not been in touch with any of them for several years, I mentioned that I was pursuing a Ph.D. in Leadership and Change at Antioch University and was contacting them because I was working on a research study regarding relational leadership and the role of friendship. I asked whether they would be interested in participating or if they could recommend someone who would be appropriate for the study. I did not offer a definition of relational leadership at this time (this would come later with the interview prompts) nor did I discuss the leadership as friendship metaphor, which was one of the questions I asked during the course of the interviews. I then mailed or e-mailed the informed consent and cover letter to those who agreed to participate.

From the first circle of relational connection, Angel and Pia agreed to participate, and I received six names from my consultant friend whom she felt would be appropriate. She initiated the contact with two of the women on her list, (Adele) and (Maggie), who participated in this study. I attempted to contact one other woman on her list, but she did not respond to my telephone calls or e-mail. I did not reach out to the other women in this set because they were not agency heads.

The next circle of relational connection involved contacting community leaders in other fields including education, local government, the faith sector, and the broader nonprofit community for referrals of potential participants. I did mention that if possible, I was hoping to include women of color. This resulted in another list of ten names. I reached out to four of these women two of whom agreed to participate in the study. As for the others, one woman did not return my phone calls and the other was uncomfortable with the research process and chose not to participate. At that point, I had six participants interested in and willing to be involved this research project.

In order to broaden the potential participant list, the third circle of relational connection consisted of a list of nonprofit associations in the New Jersey area. I placed several telephone calls from this list while attempting to contact people within the second circle. In addition to a general association of nonprofit organizations, this circle contained names from an association for Latina women leading nonprofit organizations along with an association for African American women leaders. This circle resulted in the 30 names. I attempted several initial contacts from these two groups and received three referrals. The majority of the women I attempted to reach did not return my phone calls. There was one exception who declined stating that the timing was inconvenient for her. She referred me to another leader, who did not return my phone calls. I was attempting to schedule the interviews during March through May 2009, and some of the people I contacted mentioned that the timing was difficult; others were uncomfortable with the interview process. Still others, I was unable to reach, or we connected after the initial interviews were scheduled. The easiest contacts were those with whom there was a relationship with someone I knew, or who was familiar, personally or professionally, with one of my contacts.

Once the initial list was compiled, I searched the Internet for a description of the organization the potential participants where leading. I looked at their mission statement, the services they were providing, the population they were serving, and their base of operations. This search also helped me become acquainted with their organization in preparation of a potential meeting. It also helped me narrow the possible selection list to agencies delivering some form of human and social services. For instance, I excluded health agencies and religious institutions. I was interested in selecting participants who I could interview in-person so I could get a better sense of their work environment. I reviewed prospective participants based on whether they were leading, or had led, a human and social services agency and where their office was located. When I spoke with them, it was determined whether they had the time to participate in this study.

Because other names were beginning to emerge from my initial inquiries, I considered expanding the study to seven or eight women. After consulting with my dissertation chair, we decided that I would keep the study at the original number of six.

To summarize, this study included six women participants that emerged from the first two of the relational circles described above. Six women participants ranging in age from 43 to 73 agreed to be interviewed. Their years of experience in their current field ranged from 2 years to 21 years. One is of Spanish decent; another is an African-American; one has a disability and has recently started another human and social services program; and one of the women has retired and has transitioned to the board of the organization she previously led. The leaders who readily agreed to participate in this study represent the strongest relational connections. They consisted of people I personally knew along with leaders referred through personal contacts. Their relational connection to me is as follows: Angel and Pia were women I knew, Adele and Maggie were referred by consultant friend and consultant, and Cynthia and Lola were referrals from community leaders.

In preparation for the interview, the participants received a cover letter and a copy of the initial interview questions contained in the IRB application (see Appendix A for the IRB application and see Appendix B for the initial interview questions). At the start of each interview, I read the interview prompts identified earlier in this document and then proceeded to ask the questions. The 19 questions (see Appendix B) were conceptualized into three lines of inquiry: leadership, friendship, and organizational influences.

The second stage was the data gathering stage where the interviews actually occurred. As a researcher, I was aware that the very act of asking questions had an impact on the person responding. I believe that the effect has three dimensions: the question resonated with their beliefs, it caused them to scrutinize their actions through the lens provided by the researcher, or they rejected the question's premise and offered their own. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997a) described the presence of the researcher's voice as follows, "the portraitist's voice, then is everywhere—overarching and undergirding the text, framing the piece, naming the metaphors, and echoing through the central themes" (p. 85). This is unavoidable and carries with it a caution. Lawrence-Lightfoot continues, "but her voice is also a premeditated one, restrained, disciplined, and carefully controlled. Her voice never overshadows the actor's voices (though it sometimes is heard in duet, in harmony and counterpoint)" (p. 85). Relating Lawrence-Lightfoot's observation to my experience as the researcher, I was aware that the very questions I asked could incline the participants to address their beliefs, scrutinize their actions, or offer a dissonant response.

Understanding that my voice was embedded in the questions, I aspired to maintain the integrity of this study and to ensure that the actor's voices were presented through member checking, which is "submitting notes to informants to ensure that their perspectives have been recorded accurately" (McMillan & Wergin, 2006, p. 96). I sent each of the participants a copy of their story contained in this chapter in order to complete the circle of inquiry, to perform a relational co-check, and to confirm that the transcription of their interview along with my edited rendering was accurate.

As van Manen (1990) informs us, "phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience" (p. 4). In this vein, the purpose for this chapter is to share the leadership stories as presented by the participants. Through narrative description, I hope to provide a glimpse into the leadership experience of the six women leaders who shared their stories.

I conducted 11 interviews in three rounds between March and May 2009. Criteria for the first round have already been discussed; criteria for inclusion in the second round of interviews included a willingness on the part of the participants to go further and, based on the richness of prior interviews, a belief on my part that they had more to share. For the third interview, I chose participants at different points in their current career—Maggie who is at the beginning of her present leadership position (2 years) and the Angel who has led her agency for 15 years.

The first round included all six participants and was conducted in-person at their office or home; the second round included three participants, two of which were over the telephone and one in-person. The third and final round included two participants from the second round. One of these interviews was conducted in-person, the other was conducted over the telephone.

The questions for the first round were structured around leadership, organizational influence, relationships, and friendships, as these are the areas of my research interests. Questions for the two subsequent rounds of interviews, emerged from the initial interview set. Round two questions delved deeper into relationships, the meaning of being in charge, working for a cause, and authenticity. For the third round of questions, I inquired about how each became the leader they are today, their greatest professional achievement, what they believed others thought about their leadership, and their vision for the future.

Before each interview, I asked participants to choose a pseudonym used for the transcripts and in this document. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed by a secure transcription service. A copy of their transcript was e-mailed to each participant for her review and comment. I did not receive written comments from anyone, but did receive some verbal feedback from Maggie who was surprised about how often she laughed and from Angel who was pleased with the content and quality of transcription. I reviewed each transcript separately, highlighting the sections that seemed most significant to me in regard to their experiences.

I first read through the transcripts checking for accuracy and created a chart listing each person by pseudonym along with identifying information (e.g., title, age, number of employees, and work context). During the second reading, I highlighted sections of the transcript that seemed to answer the questions that were asked. In a third reading, I circled words that related to the question and recorded in the margin the theme of the question (e.g., approach to leadership) along with key concepts that emerged (e.g., encouragement, suggestion, and positive reinforcement). This provided the detail for me to organize key concepts identified in the first two steps into a matrix chart organized by question and participant, and a second matrix listing all of the key concepts for each participant.

During the fourth reading, I alphabetized the emergent concepts from the prior review under each person's pseudonym. This resulted in a visual representation of concepts that facilitated comparison and contrasting of themes across participants. Using different color highlighter pens, I grouped related concepts (e.g., care, caring, and caretaking). With the fifth contemplation of the text, I again reviewed their stories to reconnect the themes with their dialogue. I then marked all terms that were similar across the interviews, and used these tools for the analysis in chapter 5.

I have also shared the retelling of their stories contained in this chapter by forwarding an e-mail copy to the participants, providing an opportunity for additional feedback. As the interviews unfolded, I found it particularly easy to get caught up in their narratives. Each woman was alluring in her own way. Each exuded a different aura: determination (Adele), pride (Cynthia), vibrancy (Angel), calm (Pia), exuberance (Maggie), and tranquility (Lola).

I approached each interview with the weight of the responsibility to accurately record and interpret their stories. The recorder would ensure that the words were documented accurately, but it was up to me to discern the nuances of the interview—demeanor, body language, tone, inflection, and receptivity. I tried to develop my own sense of observation and attended to the subtleties of the interview through the use of field notes.

I was aware that the participants were making room in their busy day to meet with me and cognizant of my role as researcher, observer, spectator, guest, and outsider. My response to this was to try to be as unobtrusive as possible. Each time I took the recorder out of my purse and then out of its protective sleeve, I reminded the participant that I would be recording the interview and would place the recorder between us on the desk or table and just leave it there until we were through. I did not want the presence of the recorder to cause any apprehension or pretension that might interfere with their candor. I also reminded participants that they would receive a copy of the transcript for their review so they could check the document for accuracy and to clarify or delete anything that they were uncomfortable with, but also to give them the opportunity to reflect on the information they provided.

As I pressed the recorder's stop button at the end of each session and glanced at the recording time, I was pleased when the interview had stayed within the estimated time I had asked participants to commit. As soon after the conclusion of the interviews as possible, I journaled my observations of the interview experience. I focused on the setting, the participants' comportment, and their ease with the subject matter as well as my own responses to the experience. The life stories that follow are presented in the order of the first round of interviews as follows: Adele, Cynthia, Angel, Pia, Maggie, and Lola.

Adele

"There's not a person I pass here that I don't call by name, that I don't stop for a moment and say, 'How are you doing today?'"

Adele is a 67-year-old woman of Spanish descent who has managed a comprehensive a full-service anti-poverty program in New Jersey for the past seven years. It occurred to me that Adele administers the operation as if it were both business and home. I observed that she is as comfortable mopping the floor as she is in leading the organization. It was apparent from my visit that Adele is in charge.

Adele's energy level and enthusiasm belie her 67 years of age. She appeared to be strong and confident enough to appreciate the complexities of the various services her organization provides. Adele reported that she has hired people she can trust to tell her what is needed, and she is willing to be the conduit to fulfilling the organization's mission. Adele likes to talk, knows everyone by name, and is extremely organized. As I observed when I visited the workplace the day of the interview, Adele moves purposefully, yet she takes the time to speak with everyone she encounters because she believes that everyone is "precious." There are 120 employees and 500 volunteers assisting with Adele's operation, which is open continuously to clients regardless of when they arrive.

The setting. When I arrived for the interview, I parked in the last spot in the lot where double parking is the norm. Because it was really too cold to be standing outside without a purpose, I assumed the man overlooking the lot was the parking lot attendant and that his slight, but obvious, movement from side to side was an attempt to keep warm. As I opened my car door to the crisp, cold wintery air, a shiver ran through me as I looked at the man standing in the cold wondering how he was able to stand there. I said hello as I passed him on my way to meet Adele where the warmth of the building promised to contrast the cold.

Adele's organization is a full-service complex. The soup kitchen was clean and bright with lots of windows and the wonderful scent of freshly prepared food. The reception area was spacious and cheery with four chairs lining each side and a receptionist, perhaps in her 70s, with a sweet disposition and willingness to help those who enter. She clearly loves what she does and the joy in her voice can be heard and felt when she greets callers: "Welcome to [our organization], where hope begins."

Adele was assisting a client when I arrived so I waited for a few minutes for her to finish. She was walking the client out of the office area. Adele glanced at the floor, which was wet and dirty from shoes tracking in a mix of snow, salt, and dirt. She looked at me, stated she would be with me shortly, walked to a closet behind the receptionist's desk, pulled out a mop, and began to wipe down the floor. With a giggle of delight, the receptionist said, "there isn't a lazy bone in her body." Adele returned the mop to the closet, greeted me, and escorted me to her office through the area where the office staff worked. As we were walking to her office, a staff member, navigating an upright vacuum cleaner, called out to Adele asking if she wanted her office vacuumed. Adele told her to skip today that she would be meeting in her office.

Adele's office was immaculate and welcoming with cherry wood furniture and flowers everywhere in recognition of a recent birthday. She made an exception to her open door policy for our first interview, which lasted 28 minutes. Our second interview was conducted over the telephone and lasted 74 minutes. Adele mentioned that she closed her door for the telephone interview as she did for our first interview.

Adele was the first participant I interviewed. We were seated face-to-face with Adele's desk between us. She sat behind her desk, and I sat in one of the guest chairs in front of her desk. My first impression of Adele was that she is direct, confident, and determined. Her presence is commanding, but not overbearing. She is in charge and, with a people-first attitude, will do whatever needs to be done in a day—attending to the requirements imposed by state regulatory agencies and funders, tidying areas that are in disarray, and working with staff and clients. I was a little tense anticipating my first interview and our first meeting, but once we settled into her office I immediately felt at ease with Adele. For this moment in time, Adele was focused on our interaction. Much of our first interview was spent delving into the facets of the organization and about how Adele approached relationships in the workplace. During our second interview, we went deeper into the meaning of these relationships.

Unlike the other participants, Adele did not receive the questions (see Appendix B) prior to our first interview. I made the decision to send participants the questions in advance of the interview after reflecting on Adele's interview. During the interview, Adele commented that the questions were hard. In addition, the interview lasted half the time I had estimated. I attributed this to Adele not having the opportunity to consider the questions prior to our meeting.

The interviews. Adele explained that she manages a large, comprehensive antipoverty program. Her organization encompasses a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, drug treatment facility, medical clinics, and is expanding to include an apartment complex. According to Adele, her board of trustees has given her the authority to take the organization in whatever direction she deems appropriate. She shared that they rarely interfere with her decisions and "totally trust [her] leadership abilities." The mission of the organization—to serve the poor—

fits with her fundamental purpose of serving the poor by addressing the issues that keep people in poverty. Adele informed me that the work she does is her life's mission—it is her life.

With all the services provided by the agency, it is not possible for Adele to know every detail. Adele is both the spokesperson and the person responsible for the operation. Her job is about oversight and about ensuring that the people with the expertise are matched with the right job. Being a spokesperson fits into Adele's greatest leadership strength—she is, in her own words, a "talker." She enjoys raising awareness by educating as many people as possible about her organization and the work they do. Adele also considers herself to be a good listener who learns as much from her staff as they learn from her. Adele reported that she counts on her directors for information about trends and needs. Their expertise, whether from formal training or life experience, influence her decisions about service additions, as well as funding requests and the message she presents both formally and informally to anyone who will listen. Adele's message extends to her staff, which includes a high percentage of people with personal experience with one or more of the problems her agency addresses.

Adele says that she spends a good deal of her time learning from her staff. "I would not have any information about any of this if I did not listen to them and really hear what they had to say." She commented that the job requires openness to learning, "you have to be like a sponge." She sees her staff as the experts and depends on them to advise her. In turn, Adele says that she feels that it is important that she "spend [her] life learning from them," and then add her insight and "synthesize" the information they provide. Because of the input and collaboration of her staff, Adele feels that the decisions she makes are "appropriate" for their clients.

Adele explained that her work relationships are very important to her and she is philosophically aligned with the relational side of leadership. She says she wants every person to feel “valued and precious and important” and talks to everyone she encounters during her day. Adele’s philosophy is to “take people where they are.” She says she is working for a cause and all of the people who are working with her are part of that cause. They “have to work together.” Adele explained that she includes everyone in the mission by taking extra care to treat everyone the same.

Adele believes that the people who work in her organization are “very compatible” with the mission, as well as each other. Many of them have personal knowledge of what their clients are experiencing, so Adele says she can count on them to support one another. Their motive for working there is about personally shifting out of poverty into a “good life” and helping others do the same. Adele stated that believes her staff is also very accepting of others:

> Nobody cares what color you are, what sex you are, what sexual preference you are, what religion you are, because so many people have experience with the pains of addiction and this place is always one of being supportive of people. . . . It is a context of recovery and of making life better for people.

Adele believes “the most important thing is to work with people, to be kind, to be considerate, and to let them know what is acceptable and what isn’t, in a positive . . . and, hopefully, in a cheerful way.” Adele regularly informs staff about professionalism and adherence to state guidelines. She describes herself as a “nag,” following-up with staff until they finish the assignment they were given.

As the organization’s head, she expects her directors to keep her in the information loop. The understanding she has with her directors is that “I don’t have to know how to do it; I have to know about it.” This policy is especially important for times when something goes awry or when it involves issues around rules and regulations. Adele explained:

> What I ask [staff] to do is keep me informed of everything because when push comes to shove, this is where the buck stops. This is where the mayor calls; this is where the city council calls; this is where the state calls.

Adele's approach to leadership is to use "encouragement, suggestion, [and] positive reinforcement." She described herself as a "cheerleader" who expresses her appreciation to staff for the work they do. In return, Adele values the respect she gets from people. "I think that respect is very important to me. That people really respect that what I do comes from a true intention of helping others."

When asked about the role of gender on her leadership practices, Adele explained, "women, by nature, are much more nurturing, are much better listeners, [and] are more compassionate." She is accustomed to working with women and has an office staff comprised of all women. However, most of Adele's program directors are male and she works predominately with men in the anti-poverty field, and likes the "balance" this presents for her.

Adele sees collaboration is a critical component of her leadership style within the organization. She discussed how she collaborates with people inside her organization regularly. According to Adele, "I do everything collaboratively. Everything is collaboration, because, as I said, I'm not an expert on any of these matters, but I've learned a lot." The first project that Adele collaborated on was to redo the manuals. She met with all of the managers, discussed every rule with them, and, together, they determined what was relevant and appropriate. She instituted bi-weekly meetings with directors so that they could bring each other up to date and learn from each other.

There were two points in the interview—when we discussed power and when we discussed the friendship metaphor—where Adele's tone and demeanor changed. Her delivery was forceful, direct, and definitive.

When asked about how power and her position impacted her ability to lead relationally, Adele responded emphatically that she does not consider what she does as power:

> First of all, I don't consider it power. I really don't. I think [power] is a silly word. I think that's very male dominated to do power. I mean I can pull that on anybody and get what I want, but I don't think you get anything from people that way. But my position, people very much respect the office. It's like the office of the president kind of thing. I don't know how it impacts [pause]. I think it impacts because they [staff] realize that I have the best interests of the organization at heart. They know that I really want to help people that are poor and homeless.

During our second interview, the word "influence" was substituted for power. Adele was more comfortable with this exchange. She mentioned that she is a "workaholic" and in a prior job, she expected everyone to do the same. Adele "had to learn to eat humble pie," when people continued to leave the agency unhappy. Adele recalled how she came to her current leadership approach:

> You learn when you fall flat on your face. And that's what I did. When you realize how awful you were. I spent a lot of time trying to make up for it. But you don't learn—and I really believe this: No pain, no gain. We learn our best lessons when we're hurting, and then we have to grow past them, and some people never grow past them, because they don't know how to grow, or they're afraid to grow. But if you're open to learning about who you are, and what you're about then you grow.

Adele carried her lesson to her current position:

> I think you influence people by the way we act. It keeps going back to that same thing I've said to you over and over again: We influence people by the way we treat them . . . [when you accept people for who they are] people are much more productive, they are much more caring about their job. It was a big lesson to learn in life, that as each person comes in they come in with their own set of values their own morals, their own life. I've learned to take people where they are, and it makes a whole difference, a huge difference, of how you deal with them in leadership, as a leader.

The second point in the first interview during which Adele's tone became stern was when we discussed the metaphor of leadership as friendship. Adele was resolute that leadership is not friendship. When asked to comment on the friendship metaphor, Adele firmly stated, "Leadership is relational to me. It's very much about relationships with people whether they're professional relationships or a deeper personal relationship. It's not about friendship. It's about relationships." Adele distinguished between possible levels of relational commitment, "some are more intimate, some are more casual, some are just professional . . . and some become friendship."

We were able to go a little deeper into this statement during the second interview. Adele explained that her workplace relationships are casual and professional with a few friends:

> When you're the boss, you have to pick and choose. You can't be everybody's best friend. You'll have a few close friends. People know they're my friends, but they also know that these are people who work very hard. There's no jealousy as far as, "oh, she's giving them favors; she's doing this for them; she's doing that." So, that doesn't enter into the picture, but the relationships you have to be very careful with them, because you also can't exclude people. But that's why I don't eat lunch with either of the two people that I'm closest with. I make sure that I go into lunch [in the soup kitchen] and eat with other people.

Adele, does however, work with two people she calls friends and with whom she explained she shares a mutual "respect, concern, and caring." She has a mentor relationship with one of these friends whom she refers to as an "emergent leader." She describes this friend as someone who is "very important" to her at work and in her personal life:

> She's very much my right-hand person. I bounce things off her. I trust her confidentiality whether it's something that's tricky. But she's a lot of fun. I need fun in my life, and work best with people who can laugh a lot and enjoy life.

Adele's other friend is someone she worked with in the past and had brought into the agency and who she also highly regards. "She's absolutely amazing. She has a personality that could charm anyone." Adele hired her because she "knew [her] friend would do just one of the most amazing jobs." According to Adele, "We just enjoy each other very much and the trick to it all is that we all know our jobs. We all work extremely hard and we give as many hours as needed to the job."

Adele believes that friendship happens naturally and flows from relational interactions where common interests are revealed. Workplace friendships carry an added responsibility to ensure that other members of the team do not experience jealousy due to any perceived favoritism. Adele noted that she is careful and tries not to allow her friendships to negatively impact anyone else in the organization, so the only time she spends with her friends during the workday is for an occasional cup of tea. According to Adele:

> the friendships that I make at work have to be with people who can be independent workers . . . these two people can carry on and run this organization. And that's important, and those are the types of relationships that I will go after.

For Adele, friendship includes loyalty, trust, respect, and lots of fun. When discussing her work friendships Adele expects that:

> You respect who I am, that you're loyal to me because I would do that for you . . . I give people respect and trust and I expect that back. That's the level we work on. Besides I like a lot of fun. I like people who laugh, who are positive. . . . We enjoy each other and it's a good way to work.

The fact that Adele was so adamant about her stance on leadership as relational rather than friendship was the motivation for me to interview Adele a second time. I wanted to explore her views on the relational aspects of leadership:

> I treat people the way I want to be treated. I don't want to be treated rudely or nastily, and I don't want people to talk down to me like I'm some stupid person, so why would I talk to somebody else like that? That's very important to me, that you treat people with the dignity that they deserve. You could be a nasty old boss, and go around screaming and yelling at people and demanding what you want, but you know what? Then you have a very miserable workplace, people are extremely unhappy, they hate coming to work, and because with today's economy a lot of people have to work, and will put up with crummy jobs, because they don't have the option. People here don't get paid a heck of a lot of money, so I want them to come here and at least know that they are respected and cared about, and their concerns are important. I can't tell you the number of people that have walked in here, and just tell me their personal life, and sometimes it's just to air it out, and you have to be a listening ear for these people, they deserve it.

Adele shared that she develops relationships:

> By being extremely positive, by valuing people and what they do, taking a genuine interest in what they do . . . and I think that's very important that they feel that I am always accessible. I also keep an open door. Anybody can walk in, and they know that at any time they don't have to make an appointment to see me. . . . I feel in my position that I'm here to serve people. That's what my job is.

Adele asked me rhetorically, "Really, what's more important than another human being? Really, there's nothing that important."

Adele reiterated during the second interview that people are the most important aspect of her job and that they deserve respect and that is what she gives them. "A lot of it is just treating people with the respect they deserve, and things work when that happens." Adele believes that "what we're all about here is people. And if I can be part of people making lives a little bit better, I mean, you can't go wrong."

When Adele escorted me to the door at the conclusion of our first interview, she noticed the person, I mistakenly perceived to be a parking lot attendant. I had been in the building for about 45 minutes and had not thought about him at all since first arriving. His name was Bill. He was a client who literally needed to be called in from the cold. Before I pulled out of the parking space, someone from the kitchen was inviting Bill into the kitchen.

In the introduction to this chapter, I described Adele's aura as determination. I assigned this description to Adele because of my observation of her moving from task to task—client, dirty floor, me, Bill—purposefully, effortlessly, and resolutely.

Cynthia

"I would always ask for suggestions and feedback, and yes, they could certainly influence me one way or the other especially if they took the opposite position."

Cynthia is a 73-year-old woman who founded and managed an adult literacy awareness and illiteracy mitigation program in New Jersey for over two decades. She began her organization nomadically, migrating from place to place, traveling wherever her services were needed with a portable office contained in a briefcase. Early on, Cynthia felt that the informality of this arrangement required a conventional organizational structure so that she, the literacy message, and the organization would be legitimized.

Cynthia established the organization as a 501(c)3 nonprofit agency, recruited and developed a board of trustees, and found a base of operations for her organization by partnering with the director of a community college learning center serving the educational needs of adults returning to school. Ever conscious of her precarious "tenant" status at the learning center along with the need for confidentiality, Cynthia was fastidious about protecting the privacy of her clients.

Recently, Cynthia handed the reins of "her baby" over to a new male CEO and transitioned as a member of the board of trustees. She brings with her 21 years of experience in meeting the needs of American and foreign-born adults who cannot read, by bringing awareness to the literacy problem, training reading tutors, and developing a board.

The setting. The learning center where Cynthia's organization was housed is located on a main street of a business district in a New Jersey city comprised of storefronts, offices, and restaurants. The building is a satellite location of a community college. Due to the fact that Cynthia is retired, the interview was conducted at her home.

The car ride from my office to Cynthia's home was quite pleasant. It was a beautiful, warm afternoon with little traffic to delay the trip. The setting of her home is bucolic and contrasts the urban-suburban setting of the educational center where Cynthia eventually found a location for her operation.

When I arrived, Cynthia's husband answered the door and led me to the living room where we briefly chatted until Cynthia descended from upstairs. When Cynthia arrived, her husband left us, allowing us to give each other our undivided attention. She and I spent a few minutes getting to know each other by discussing the people we both knew who created the bridge to our meeting. We moved to the kitchen for the interview where we sat opposite each other at a breakfast nook. Cynthia was prepared. She had reviewed the questions and typed out her responses. And while she did not look at what she had written during the interview, the opportunity to think about the questions prior to our meeting was evident in the level of detail Cynthia provided.

Cynthia was my second interview. We met once for 1 hour and 45 minutes. Cynthia was very willing to share her story. She was welcoming and kind, and I felt that my introduction to her by one of her board members prior to our interview bypassed some of the awkwardness usually accompanying a first encounter.

The interview. Cynthia was very excited to discuss the organization she referred to as "her baby" with evident pride as she enthusiastically discussed the development of her organization from idea conception to organizational maturity.

Cynthia explained that the impetus for the organization originated when she was tutoring students to take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) at the school her children attended. She was also recruiting other parents to volunteer their time. When one of her friends (who was earning a certificate as a reading teacher) learned the parents were tutoring without any training, Cynthia's friend became "irate." Her friend suggested that if Cynthia was serious about tutoring, then she should get the proper training. Her friend did some research and informed

Cynthia about a national organization that offered training to individuals who wanted to train others to become reading tutors. Cynthia recalled:

> She called me all excited and she said they actually will train you to teach these people. I said good. So she invited people to her house. We had a meeting and that's how I found about LVA [Literacy Volunteers of America] in New Jersey, and yes we would like to start an affiliate. She and I did it; she and I together did it. And she said I'm not going to run it. She said we'll have to find somebody to run the affiliate. I said, "I will do that if you'll be president because we need a board." I had enough sense that I knew we had to have that.

Cynthia assessed her challenges as follows: create awareness, develop tutors, incorporate the organization, raise money, and establish a board. Because everything hinged on awareness, Cynthia accepted this as her first task. She set out to create some excitement about the literacy problem so she could reach those in need. This also meant she would promote literacy awareness while she "had to actually grow the nonprofit." Cynthia looked for every possible venue to educate people about illiteracy and the effect it had on the quality of one's life:

> My job [was] to develop awareness, it could be giving speeches; it could be writing articles, doing interviews for newspapers, speaking at service organizations whether it was women's clubs, or churches, or Rotaries, or Lions. We had a couple of TV interviews. . . . And so in the beginning it was just simply developing awareness. I worked with the libraries and showed them how they could develop additional literacy programs.

Cynthia then began to contact corporations and hospitals to develop on-site literacy programs and to recruit board members. Some attempts were successful; others were not. Cynthia attributed unsuccessful attempts to a mistaken belief held by the individuals in these organizations that literacy programs were unnecessary, or might result in a public relations faux pas, or worse a liability risk. In particular, relationships with in hospitals and nursing homes never materialized:

> It's possible that the hospital didn't want people to know that they had an onsite literacy program. Some people are like that; a lot of companies are like that. "We don't have anybody here who's illiterate." When we first started, I was making a ton of calls and one sector that I called was nursing homes. "Well we don't have anybody here who doesn't read or write." Well that's where they work, and I said, "Okay that's fine, but if you should discover it give us a call, everything's confidential and there's no charge" . . . . One person even said, "please don't mention this to our clientele that we even had this conversation." I thought we really have a lot of work to do. They wouldn't like it if someone was taking care of their family member who couldn't read, and I get that—get the wrong medicine.

Even with Cynthia's awareness efforts, Cynthia was having difficulty attracting students. Some of the organizations she contacted were not interested, and her awareness campaign was still not generating enough students. Cynthia analyzed the situation as follows:

> People who needed help couldn't read, and people who could read didn't understand the need and couldn't believe there was a literacy problem in this area. And so they didn't pass on the word, or they didn't know that maybe their own friends, or the gas station man, or someone who they knew, like their next-door neighbor, or whoever might have a literacy problem. And they thought, maybe, it was a stigma.

Then an acquaintance suggested that she offer her services to a community college were there was an awareness of illiteracy and a there was a vested interest in its elimination for their students. It was there that Cynthia found someone who believed in the cause and had a population of students who could benefit from her services:

> So somebody told me go to a community college . . . and I finally did because I wanted students. And so I ended up [at the college's learning center] and I met the director of the center and he said, well I love volunteers, and he said I have this whole building full of students who need help. And I said, well I've got volunteers and they're trained to tutor. So we talked for a long time and then just before I left, I said do you mind if I make a couple of phone calls? He said as long as they're in [the area] that's okay. So he gave me a desk and I put my briefcase up on the desk and I opened it up and in it were all my files, my books, my stamps, stapler, and a phone book. And he said, what's that? I said, it's my traveling desk. I said I have no office and this is what I do. So that blew him away and he kind of stood and listened [as I made the phone call]. Who are you calling? I had an answering service because I had no secretary; it was $10 a month. So I called my service and got my messages, and he just couldn't believe it.

She expressed that she was comfortable with the idea of "being connected" to the center rather than maintaining her independent nomadic style, and so she aligned with the center's director. Cynthia's organization was now physically embedded within the context of the community college's learning center. Her organization was not part of the center, but it served the needs of some of its students. Cynthia considered the help they gave to the college's students as their "rent." Eventually, one of Cynthia's board member "treasures" established a scholarship to underwrite the basic skills courses offered at the learning center for students who needed the additional support.

Cynthia had the vision, and her new partner had credibility in the education field. Together they identified people to serve as board members with varying levels of commitment—use of their name (honorary member), service on board, tutor, and spokesperson. The center director gave Cynthia space for her operation and they were "opening doors" for each other—her new collaborator shared his space, his students, and some of his key contacts. Cynthia shared her expertise, her trained tutor volunteers, and a few of her "treasures" who supported the cause. They were people who embraced the mission and were willing to share their ideas, their time, and, perhaps, even their money.

As the organization's founder, Cynthia developed her organization while cultivating the very board to which she would eventually report. She selected community members who were "serious people," who had attained some status in their careers and would give the agency credibility while promoting the cause for literacy. She looked for professionals—lawyers, doctors, accountants, educators, and business executives. Cynthia developed the board's bylaws and committees, worked with committee chairs and the president, and eventually was accountable to them. The board members depended on her for direction and guidance, and she believed that—"my role was to enable them to lead."

Cynthia explained that she approached leadership "casually," by supporting people and following through. She does not believe in forcing herself on others. As director, Cynthia tried not overwhelm or smother people. She respected their privacy and is grateful for whatever contribution they are willing to make to the organization.

Cynthia knew that success meant developing relationships with people who were willing to give in order to get. She said that she looked for people who were friendly, personable, and willing to travel together on a "two-way street." She could offer them the satisfaction of doing something good for someone else while they donated their time and, perhaps, some money. As Cynthia noted, "it's figuring out what we can do for them and what they have to offer." Collaboration was an essential aspect of her job. She tried to get to the right people. "It's just a certain person. They have to understand [about illiteracy], they have to really get it." Each time a personnel change occurred at an organization where she had an ally, Cynthia had to try to reconnect by educating the new person about literacy and her agency's services.

When we began a discussion about power, Cynthia described her power as emanating from her knowledge about literacy, about volunteers, and about board development. She also felt that there was a power in her commitment. Cynthia recalled a point in the organization's history when the grant money they were receiving through the college ended. There was no money to pay for salaries, but Cynthia decided to keep going. She started as a volunteer and was not about to let a little thing like money get in the way. Cynthia went to the executive committee of her board and began to make plans to find other sources of funding. Once funding was identified, she accepted a small stipend until the agency was strong enough to afford a competitive salary.

Cynthia believed in promoting her agency and supporting other like agencies. It was important for her to have:

> a sense of progress and a sense of pride in what the organization or the effort, the overall [literacy] effort, has accomplished. . . . In the beginning, we were trying to support [other literacy programs] and give them volunteers and give them students to help with the training. I even recruited board members for them, to give the volunteers a choice [about which literacy program they wanted to be affiliated with].

Cynthia recalled that in the 1990s, illiteracy was recognized by the New Jersey State Department of Labor as an obstacle for employment. As awareness was being addressed elsewhere, Cynthia began to develop more tutoring and tutoring training programs. With a volunteer team that grew to 100, Cynthia created one-to-one matches for people with a variety of literacy needs ranging from reading and comprehension for American born citizens to English as a Second Language (ESL) for foreign born adults.

Cynthia shared that she believes that, regardless of how serious an issue, balancing professionalism and having fun while doing the work is important. She shared during the interview that fun means making the workplace a place where people want to spend their time. According to Cynthia, fun in the workplace included some pleasant insignificant disclosure, without burdening others with personal problems, but being open to hear their issues and concerns. Fun also included being “pleasant,” bringing in food treats for staff and board meetings, having a cup of coffee and an occasional lunch with a board member, and “being yourself.” She said that she worked best when she was comfortable with the people around her knowing that there was a “mutual respect.”

As a general practice, however, Cynthia said she did not develop “social friends” at work so she did not socialize with the people she worked with outside of the workplace. She does not. Her work life and private life remained separate. Cynthia does believe in supporting people, “and kindness, and favors, and friendliness.” She also explained that believed in “being nice, being polite, being courteous, and being respectful.” She had little time for “chit-chat,” but made it her business to visit everyone when she arrived in the morning, sometime during the day, and again before she left for the evening.

Despite the fact that she separates social friends from the workplace, Cynthia believes that leadership and friendship share some common characteristics. “In a way [leadership] is friendship. You become a friend to your organization and you become a friend in the workplace to your staff.” Cynthia believes that the people who work with and for you need to know that “they can come to you and that they can help you.”

Cynthia said that it is her style, with the exception of private conversations and when a student was with her, to always leave her office door open to staff, volunteers, trustees, and students. She said she encourages everyone to offer suggestions and give her feedback about the direction of the organization. She wanted to hear what they had to say and would allow them to influence her whenever they came up with a good idea.

She recalled that most of her time was filled with positive relationships. Cynthia shared several specific positive and negative instances. During the telling of positive examples, Cynthia was animated and upbeat, which contrasted her pensive demeanor when discussing negative examples.

In terms of a positive relationship, an important public sphere friendship emerged for Cynthia with a man who attended one of Cynthia’s tutor trainings. He was a minister who became one of her treasures, through his commitment to literacy. Cynthia recalled, "he loved the training and so he stuck with me. He went everywhere I went . . . he donated money, he volunteered, he trained, he worked with students, [he made literacy] his ministry." This was someone who "was there" in whatever capacity Cynthia needed.

Another positive relationship that Cynthia recalled was one of her public sphere friends she hired who had tutored for her prior to the organization's formation. It was the right time for both of them. Her friend needed a job and wanted to help Cynthia, and Cynthia had an open position with a fairly good salary and was pleased to work with her. Cynthia's friend recognized how important this was to Cynthia, and literacy became something that "was close to her own heart" as well. Cynthia recalled:

> Most people think I'm crazy doing all this, just giving, but she understood it and I thought, that's a good friend. And she stayed for a long time; she really did. And then she left; she needed to do something different, and I still miss her.

When we discussed friendship, Cynthia distinguished between friendship that is part of the work and personal friendships. She expects friendship to consist of:

> Loyalty, consideration, thoughtfulness, kindness, forthrightness, not overwhelming each other but just being there and understanding. Not always agreeing, but being supportive, and respectful, and considerate . . . but the difference between working [friendship] and [personal] friendship [is that] personal friendship is more intimate.

One of Cynthia's unpleasant relational experiences occurred after she had resigned but was still working as the organization's head until a new executive director was in place. Cynthia was disappointed when a staff member she had worked so closely with informed her that she was not Cynthia's personal assistant. This surprised Cynthia because cooperation and collaboration were essential aspects of the organization. Cynthia had resigned, but did not expect to be pushed aside by the person she had hired while she was still working there. Cynthia "recovered" by trying to make sense of her staff member's comment eventually attributing it to the woman's relatively short time with the organization and not understanding Cynthia's role as founder, or the organization's history. Cynthia noted, "that was not a happy time for me."

She also shared that being affiliated with the college at a point when the organization began to take on a more formalized structure helped legitimize the program, but it had one unexpected consequence:

> The director and I together set the organization. I think that we're friends, I don't think that we're social friends. I think quite frankly he's used our organization in a way. He promotes our organization but at the same time he takes the credit as the founding president and that's fine with me as long as we have the space, but I have this in the back of my head that I don't talk about to anybody that I feel used in a way, and I would never say that to him, never. So, it's kind of one sided weakening maybe, I guess there's a lot of truth there. But he's not a bad man.

When our conversation shifted to the question of gender and leadership, Cynthia discussed the incoming executive director:

> I prefer a male president and I was thrilled that the three top contenders for my spot were all male. And I thought, I really think for some reason I prefer that for speaking. You know women are fine, we do fine with the women but I'm thinking I like that part of it. . . . I consciously thought about that and I thought a change, fresh air, I thought 21 years they've had the same one there. . . . And I just thought that somebody different might have a positive effect. . . . We had over a dozen applications and the women their backgrounds all they showed on their resumes were volunteer positions or they would lead volunteers, which I thought would be fine for an assistant. I thought this person would be fine but they need a power person for the executive director. I felt we had grown to that and I never saw myself as a powerful person. I don't feel less powerful than a male president or a male replacement. I feel equal or even stronger because they really don't have all those years. . . . I guess it's in perception—how others perceive. I guess I'm maybe a little old fashioned along those lines, but I think I'm realistic. I really do think that. It doesn't make me back down. I mean if I felt the president was going down the wrong path, I would find a way to get him back on [track].

Cynthia felt that the next phase of the agency would be best served by a change to a male executive director with solid work experience and who would be viewed as powerful. "I never really felt the power, but I felt that I was impacting them, and I felt that I was enabling them to help the whole thing grow."

Cynthia stated that she worked toward ensuring that the volunteer nature of the organization did not undermine the seriousness of the cause. As she moved to the board, Cynthia's expertise would still be invaluable although less visible. What she wants for the organization now is to achieve a higher level of credibility and respect.

Just before our interview was formally over, Cynthia's husband returned. I interpreted this as an informal indicator that our interview was coming to a close. I asked my last question, and Cynthia answered it succinctly. I told her that my formal questions had ended and asked if she wanted to add anything. When Cynthia declined, I ended the interview.

Cynthia's story was full of strong relationships in the workplace with a few disappointments. Nonetheless, Cynthia was proud of what she had accomplished and her ability to persevere regardless of organizational variables. For this reason, and because of the way Cynthia's face lit up when she spoke about her organization, I described her aura as exuding pride.

Angel

"You don't mind taking risks, you don't mind making decisions, and you always look for what is wrong before you delve into a decision."

Angel is a 70-year-old woman who manages a public housing program serving families, mostly single moms with children, people with disabilities, and senior citizens in the New Jersey area. In addition to low rental housing and rental vouchers, participants in Angel's program can avail themselves of educational programs such as English as a Second Language, computer education, self-esteem, parenting, job skills, self-sufficiency, home ownership, and an annual event with a keynote address by a participant who transitioned to home ownership. While Angel's program is federally funded, the housing authority stands as an independent agency.

Angel is someone I was familiar with from my previous employment in the human services field. She had a reputation of being someone you could depend on and who was warm and giving. I had admired her from a distance, but did not have the opportunity or occasion to interact with her professionally. I chose to meet with Angel because of her years of experience, willingness to dig deeper into the issues, and because I believed she epitomized leading relationally. When I contacted Angel about this research project, she readily agreed and graciously invited me to her offices located with the public housing complex her agency operates.

The setting. Angel's enterprise occupies an entire street in a residential area of a densely populated suburban community. There is a small parking lot on the side of the building where the entrance leads to her agency. The surrounding vicinity is a quiet neighborhood with a mixture of houses and apartments. The small entrance area has three doors. The door on the left leads to her office area, the center door leads to the hallway of the housing complex, and the right door opens into a meeting room. Her offices are pleasant with lots of sunshine coming through the numerous windows, pictures on the walls, and a spacious area where staff sits in smaller cubicles. Angel's cherry-wood colored desk is neatly piled with the voluminous paperwork associated with government funding.

She preferred to meet in person in a room that doubles as a conference area and a meeting place for the senior citizens who live at the housing authority. We sat opposite each other and shared a cup of tea along with some small talk. Angel has a glow about her. She is joyful and deeply committed to the work she is doing. It was easy to be with her. Angel's positive energy and composure were both reassuring and engaging for me.

Angel was my third interview. I interviewed her three times, for a total of 2 hours and 14 minutes (55 minutes, 35 minutes, and 44 minutes, respectively). I chose to meet with her three times because she was one of the interviewees most able to go deeply into the issues and reflect on the themes of my study. She received all three sets of the interview questions by e-mail prior to our meetings. During the first interview, we explored her reflections on leadership and power, then moved deeper into work relationships in the second interview, and concluded in the third interview with a discussion about her leadership journey and her greatest achievement.

The interviews. The first interview began with Angel describing the various components of her organization. She explained that she manages a "family self-sufficiency program." Housing is provided for individuals and families who are unable to afford basic housing. Angel uses a holistic approach when addressing the needs of the people who require the assistance her agency offers. In considering the whole person, she offers housing, educational programming, and, if there is an opening, she gives them a position at the agency so they can improve their financial position while helping others. Angel stated that participants are being recycled out of poverty into a life of self-sufficiency:

> What we do here is more than just administer housing. We administer self-sufficiency, esteem, and, as they come off the program, it's a recycling. We give it [housing, training, employment] to the next person who needs it, and we start all over again.

Angel noted that she receives all of her funding from the federal government, which comes with a multitude of rules and regulations. As the executive director, the responsibility to ensure that federal regulations are followed rests with Angel. Everyone has a job to do and she is responsible for compliance and office operations. While providing needed safeguards, the rules can also be frustrating. Angel gave the example of an occasion when one of the rules negatively affected her funding:

> Because this type of organization is very controlled by all our rules and regulations, [the organization] does impact me, because sometimes I want to say those rules don't work when people are in need. I think those rules don't work because it's not the real world. You have to be in the trenches, and when people hurt it's okay if you could help them first, and you can't break the rules, because then . . . everybody would be taking whomever they want. There has to be a flexibility where you could divert sometimes just from the very stringent [rules] or you're [funders are] not helping us out, and also the regulations—the way they give you funding—they don't look at it rationally. For instance, they'll count three months from the year before and see how many people you helped. So if you're two short on those three months, but you catch up and you're five ahead on the next month, it doesn't count, so they cut off your funding. So it does impact. It impacts you because it's unjust . . . so you get impacted by the rules and regulations that nobody really knows if they work or not, and that's how I'm impacted, by the frustration.

Angel explained that she attempts to ameliorate this type of inadequacy and injustice by taking her case to Washington, by meeting with legislators, by testifying at hearings, and by writing position papers with her colleagues. She also keeps abreast of what is happening in the field, as well as with her peers by attending conferences and organizing meetings so that they can learn from each other.

I explored this a bit more in our second interview asking about the meaning of being in charge of this agency. Angel responded:

> In charge is a very professional thing for me: In charge means that I am responsible for the entire operation . . . that this has to work according to rules and regulations . . . that the staff has to know that the buck stops in my office, and that I'm in charge of them to make sure that they do it properly. If they do it properly our jobs are easier, because then we all benefit. So, in charge is everything.

Her agency has won awards for outstanding service and Angel believes that it is because "everybody works" and that she works with everyone. She noted that everyone is working for the same cause at the agency, which unites and gives them "a stake in the organization" connecting them to the purpose and each other. Most of the people working in the organization are women, and everyone uses their "talents" to move the mission forward. In return, Angel respects staff and includes them in decisions. She said that she creates a "climate of teamwork" by allowing them to share in management, to help each other get the work done, to care for one another when they face hard times, and through daily doses of humor. Angel explained that she cares about her staff and has an expectation that they care for each other as well.

Angel stated that she tries to lead through inclusion, respect, and most importantly by ensuring that the job her agency is entrusted to do gets done within the parameters of government regulations and requirements. Angel believes that "if we work together, we'll be a premier housing authority known for services in this system to those in need at their time of need." She reported that she is regularly influenced by her staff's kindness and understanding, and feels that lots of laughter helps everyone mitigate the stress of work.

Angel described herself as a person who is "tireless when it comes to doing the things that I truly enjoy," and described her staff as "kind." She can count on them to "go out of their way" to help the people who need their help. Angel explained:

> They've been there, done that, but they know that they'll do the right thing, because I'm the leader for them, and I make sure that things are right for them, and that I fight for them and everybody else's cause. And you know that's very contagious. It's very contagious because many people say this is such a lovely agency because we all do it together. I'm very proud of the agency. It's been a wonderful job.

Angel, however, does not remind staff about her status, "I never really call myself a leader; I just do it automatically." For Angel, leadership is an "energy" that is felt because of the way you interact with others: being pleasant, greeting people in the morning, being available for them to discuss work, or whatever else they need. "It's an open door policy." Angel maintains that an "open door policy is being open to people's needs."

Angel noted that she keeps her door ajar most of the time signifying to staff that they, and others, are welcome to come in. Staff, residents, and visitors all have access to her when they need her. Angel answers her own phone, talks to people who walk in the office, and reserves appointments for things that have to be scheduled.

According to Angel, doing the right thing is about discussing what should be done and can be done when clients present problems staff members have not encountered before. Even though Angel is responsible for the final decision, she says she encourages everyone to discuss the problem and offer suggestions when there may be some latitude in interpreting the rules and regulations. She expects employees to offer their input, to care about the work they do and about each other, and to share enough so that the positive "energy in the office continues to flow."

When our conversation in our second interview turned to authenticity, Angel replied that being authentic is "understanding who you are and what you're doing, and being able to convey that to people." She says that she believes she is always authentic even when she has to do the "political thing." Angel asserts that being aware of what you need to do in order to get funded is an important part of the job. It's not about "undermining yourself," it is about ensuring that you are in a position to help those who need it. Angel feels that she is authentic, "because this is who I am."

Angel values the "respect and the appreciation" she receives from staff and colleagues. She believes that being included in decisions conveys respect, and appreciation is demonstrated from the recognition you receive whether it comes from someone thanking you or something more formal.

Angel explained that she approaches her work and relationships positively and prefers to work with positive people. People who are not positive, she described as “people who are not responsive to what you do.” However, most of her relationships have gotten stronger. She reported that she works closely with people in the field and is “energized” by the housing work that is going on across the country.

A great deal of her work promoting the idea of self-sufficiency with other leaders in the industry is accomplished through collaboration. Angel stated, “I love to build housing. I love to develop. I have great relations . . . because I make it happen. You can count on me.”

Understanding that her counterparts have to deal with similar issues, Angel invited all of them to meet monthly to discuss issues and support each other. They share ideas and policies, solve problems together, and act in a more formal capacity if needed. Angel has also formed relationships with state and federal representatives whom she calls upon when their intervention is needed for housing issues. She also educates them so they can make informed decisions:

> I started a group called, “Meeting for Executive Directors,” and we meet once a month. Now, we have a smaller group, but we meet to talk about—it’s almost like a group where you can vent, and find a sense of humor, but at the same time we share a lot of things, so if someone has a policy that you don’t have, we send it to one another. If you need to discuss a problem, or we need a hearing officer, one of us could be a hearing officer. So, I think I created a camaraderie amongst a group of peers and colleagues, and we meet, and it’s really been a wonderful thing over the past 15 years for young and old . . . also, we’ve set up a lot of support from our congressman and senators, and we could reach out to them, and they reached back, because we made this pact that we would help them if they help us, and so we do that.

During our third interview she explained that her leadership journey started when as a child she began a small business running errands for the women in her neighborhood. Soon she was providing a range of other services such as manicures, permanents, and facials. From these early experiences, she learned that she enjoyed working hard and helping people.

Years later, Angel's capacity for hard work was tested when she secured a position as an administrative assistant in a large corporation. Angel worked tirelessly, seven days a week late into the night and was rewarded with several promotions just short of vice-president. However, she hit a wall when there was an opening for one of the vice-presidency positions. She was told that the job was not appropriate for her because she was a woman. After a male was hired to fill the vacant vice president position, Angel learned of an opening as a department director with a different housing authority with the responsibility to build housing. Angel gave up her corporate expense account, company car, and large salary to take the position. Angel said she gained time back for her family and a new career that respected her and positioned her for her current position. A short time after Angel resigned the man who was hired in the vice president position of her former company was dismissed. Angel was then offered the position for which she declined.

As our interview moved to the role of gender in her leadership practice, Angel explained that her office staff members are predominately women and so they share a "nurturing understanding of what it is to be a parent, a mother, a woman, a sister, or wife," however, the housing industry is mostly led by men with whom she interacts regularly. Angel feels she has a "wonderful rapport" with everyone. She enjoys working for a cause and will work with anyone who is willing to "fight" for the issues. Despite her earlier experiences, Angel stated that she does not feel like "there's a boys' club." She believes exclusion is a matter of attitude: "If you want to be in, you'll be in."

When speaking about her male counterparts, in the housing industry, Angel said:

> They are very, very respectful. They are attentive to the things I want to do. It really has been a wonderful understanding . . . I think we all have something. I never think that a male is going to dominate over me, and that I'm going to be intimidated. I think if you all work together, no one can be intimidated.

Despite her many achievements, Angel dismissed the inquiry into her power. She commented, "I never think I have power. I think I'm just at the helm, and I think it's easy for me to relate to people just because of who I am." When "influence" was substituted for power, Angel stated that "influence is how you present yourself; it's who you are . . . the energy, the feeling." For Angel, there was a distinction between power and influence. When asked to go further, Angel recalled a period when her comportment regarding a personal tragedy influenced her staff:

> When I went through a very dark period in my life, the women couldn't believe that I could rise above—I guess like a phoenix—I rise above the ashes, and they said, "We can't tell you how we admire whatever went on." Of course, you don't carry your baggage to work, but of course, everybody knows what you're going through. And I think some of the women who were going through their tough times—I know this is an office, but we're very small, so they'll say, "You were a great influence to me, because I know there's hope, and that if you have hope and you know things will get better, and at one point in your life you could turn things around, thank you for being there." And that carries through all the women that are on the program, and seniors. We have seniors in this building that come down and I become their social worker. They'll come down and say, "I'm really going through this," and after you talk to them you're an influence because you care and you listen. So, I think that's what I feel about influence, and my leadership is because of all these different characteristics you have, and how you present yourself. And I think you could have a wonderful relationship in an office. I think you can't carry it to such a personal level that you start talking very personal, but I think basically, the human character wants someone to care. They don't want to just come in, in the morning, and you're just a number. And I think we could do that for one another. Not on a heavy, heavy basis, but on a basis that they feel comfortable where they're coming into, and that they'll have a stake in this organization, because they all care.

This subject came up again in our second interview during our conversation about how Angel's emotional needs were satisfied:

> They're satisfied by friends, family, when I leave this office, I have a great support system, and that's really what sustains me. You don't have to do it here in the office, because you have a wonderful support system, dear, dear friends, that you could speak to, and we share whatever we have in our lives. So, that's my support system, but I can't say that the staff is not supportive, if there's something very grave and major, they will come in and say what can we do for you? I think that's a wonderful support.

> But it’s not expected, but greatly appreciated, because words are very important when you’re grieving, or you’re going through the worst time in your life, and those are good words. What can we do for you? But other than that, if they’re small everyday things, you know, which I really don’t go through too much of that, because I learned not to sweat the small stuff, but if I do, it’s not for me to share with them.

When our interview turned to the subject of friendship, Angel distinguished between a “heart friend” and the friendship aspect of leadership:

> I think friendship is a very intimate thing, if you have friends—and heart friends, it’s intimate. A heart friend is someone you can really talk to. It’s a personal assuring, understanding, unconditional caring and relationship. Leadership is also part affection, but you’re the more decisive person, you’re the more doing person. . . . You’re a team player. In the office, there’s restricted personal sharing, but not when you’re in a relationship with good friends.

For a limited time, Angel had a heart friend working in the office as a consultant. Angel had a wonderful experience, which she described as the “greatest pleasure” to know that there was someone whom she deeply cared for and respected, was good at her job, and whom she had “absolute confidence” in her ability. Angel values the “comfortable feeling” that comes from listening without judgment between friends.

Angel noted that her expectations for friendship include reciprocity, “openness, and an unconditional caring and sharing.” Angel believes that leadership and friendship share similar characteristics such as trust, respect for each other, loyalty, inclusion, humor, and sharing.

For Angel, the friendship aspect of leadership is expressed through understanding that sometimes people go through difficult times and being flexible when flexibility is what people need to grow. It is not the “heart friendship” you have with people outside of the office, but it is enough to create trust so that people can use their energy to do what the mission requires.

When asked about the role the work has on her leadership and friendship practices, Angel replied:

> I love helping people, and I love doing what I do . . . when you see a quality of life changing, and you see somebody not believing in themselves, then they believe in themselves—that to me is the most wonderful gift.

Angel escorted me to the door after all three of our interviews. After the third and final session, a 90-year-old resident who had just completed a two-mile power walk met us. He was visibly proud of himself—his eyes twinkled and although he was missing a few teeth, he smiled widely. He greeted Angel by telling her of his accomplishment before continuing on his way. She happily acknowledged and congratulated him on a job well done.

My impression of Angel is that she exudes an aura of vibrancy. For me, this is evident in her dress, decorum, and the positive way in which she treats people and talks about her life's work.

Pia

"I think your best product is one that includes people—the key stakeholders both within the organization, and outside the organization."

Pia is a 50-year-old woman who managed a large county level program for senior citizens for nine years. As director of an agency that served the needs of senior citizens, 28 employees and 15 volunteers reported to Pia. Her unit was part of a larger human and social services agency in the New Jersey area. Pia received input, support, and suggestions about her organization from an advisory board. The reporting structure included one level above her, which was responsible to elected officials in one of New Jersey's 21 counties. Two years ago, Pia retired from this position and moved on to establish an entity to assist newly disabled people and their families, which is where she currently works as director.

The setting. When Pia first began working for the senior services division, her unit, like the other divisions that comprised the department, was located in its own separate office space and almost everyone had their own office. About a third into Pia's tenure with this agency, several changes occurred. First, she transitioned from an assistant position to the director position. Second, all of the government operations of which Pia's unit was a part relocated to a different building. One result of the move was that many of the people in her unit involuntarily traded their offices for cubicle space. Another change was that most of the administrative offices within the department were located on one floor of the building unencumbered by walls separating the divisions. The design placed the majority of the offices along the outside walls with cubicle space positioned in the middle.

Pia currently works from home and much of her work is conducted over the telephone or e-mail. We met in a large living room with the furniture arranged to accommodate the movement of Pia's wheelchair. Pia is highly intelligent, very interesting, pleasantly witty, passionate about life, and has a strong support system of family and friends. She was also born with muscular dystrophy. As Pia engages you in conversation, her wheelchair disappears into the background.

I forwarded the questions to Pia by e-mail prior to our interview, which I conducted once at her home. The interview lasted 57 minutes. She answered the questions thoughtfully and slowly pausing to think about her response before she answered each one. Pia's responses were generally succinct, except for when she elaborated about her approach to leadership and when we discussed politics.

The interview. Pia's division was responsible for oversight of the continuum of services delivery in a New Jersey county and funding to the nonprofit community serving older adults. As the director of a division, Pia oversaw planning, program development, and care management coordination. Her organization's primary service was to provide information and assistance to older adults regarding pharmaceutical assistance, volunteer opportunities, Medicare/Medicaid, adult day care, meals on wheels, respite care, senior activity centers, and other areas of interest to this segment of the population.

Pia's division was embedded within a larger department of county government. As such, she was acutely aware of the fact that while she was the director in charge of the daily operations and was held accountable for results, major changes in direction had to pass through two other layers of approval—department level and governing officials—as well as be congruent with state guidelines.

Pia described her career with this organization in three phases in approximately three-year intervals extending over nine years. Her first phase was a period of caution and observation. She gathered information, accessed her own capacities, the staff's abilities, and the agency's strengths and weaknesses, looked for people she could depend on, and tried to invite resisters and refusers of change to join her. Pia's mentors helped her see that the organization needed some structure, some reorganization, and some direction. The impetus was the agency's primary funding source called for a more streamlined and effective service delivery process.

The second three-year phase of her leadership at the organization occurred during a period of organizational growth and development where the mission was revitalized and a new vision for the future was conceptualized. Pia recalled that this period was marked by engaging staff and the community in planning and gaining support from public officials and superiors. The reorganization resulted in the loss of some staff, the gaining of new staff, and a change in job duties for some of those who remained. Pia felt that there were many people in her unit who had difficulty succeeding in other units of the organization. Nonetheless, Pia tried to find their strengths and make the best use of their talents. The enthusiasm of staff, stakeholders, and clients continued as everything and, from Pia's perspective, everyone aligned behind a new direction. "Everyone's signature was on our decision."

Pia commented that one of her greatest passions is to build a team. "There is something that is generated in me, an excitement, about getting a group of people together on one common cause and one goal, and to see team building, and how it can work." Pia had an opportunity to build her team on many occasions, but the grandest effort began shortly after she was appointed as director the division. In this case, the state provided the unifying concept to "ease" the way for senior citizen to access services. All of the directors in like agencies throughout New Jersey were asked to make Easy Access Single Entry (EASE) for older adults a reality throughout the state. According to Pia, this was an opportunity to address an organizational issue that she inherited from prior administrations—the agency was perceived by internal and external stakeholders to lack structure and commitment. Pia recalls, "As everyone was singing 'Happy Birthday' and eating cake, the phone went unanswered. It wasn't that people did not care; they just weren't engaged."

Pia stated that her goal was to use this opportunity to change public opinion. She wanted to shift the perception of internal and external stakeholders to see the organization as committed to serving older adults. In addition, Pia recognized that this new direction was the impetus she needed for the agency to be perceived as a place where clients' needs would be met and to become a client's first choice for services.

This new direction was in line with Pia's inclination toward inclusion and provided the opportunity, according to Pia, for her to build her team, to generate excitement about the work they were doing on behalf of others, to align everyone behind a common cause, and to help the agency reaches its potential. Pia strived to include staff, volunteers, and anyone else who wanted to be involved in the vision. She envisioned, listened, re-envisioned, listened again, and then staff helped make it a reality.

This phase provided the best opportunity for Pia to exhibit her leadership. Pia's biggest challenge was getting people to understand that serving the needs of clients in accordance with state guidelines superseded their personal beliefs about what was important. Pia would listen to their point of view and, whenever possible, be receptive to opportunities where their ideas could be entertained.

Pia's approach to leadership is that she expected that once she set a goal, she could meet that goal and make it happen by directing others:

> My approach to leadership is when I have an idea, or a vision, or a direction that I want to work towards, I look to the individuals in the organization who have the skill level that I think is necessary in order to execute that vision. I spend time explaining what that vision is, and then really utilizing the community as well, in the most appropriate way to get them engaged to move forward an idea. I guess a good example would be if we were to develop an education program for caregivers. I would utilize staff [members] who were involved in working with caregivers, and the key players who would be responsible for moving that program forward, but I would also look to perhaps advisory council members, because they, themselves, have the care-giving experience. I would get their feedback and input, and utilize the information that was put on the table among the entire group, and then bring that idea to the table. And I always kind of let that count, because they could then—meaning the caregivers or the consumers—could then help to be the ambassadors, and spread the word about this new project that's happening in our area, and get other people on track and involved. And it also built up the trust level between individuals because they would see the final product, and they would make sure that the final product would have pieces of what they believed in, because what people offer you is really important.

Pia explained that her greatest leadership strength, as she sees it, is that she is disabled. Having a physical disability requires that she lead others in order to get her needs met and that she pay attention to her relationships because everything had to be accomplished with and through others. Pia noted that her dependence on staff and the organizational change she was leading required her to be cognizant of relational boundaries—responsibilities, roles, emotional, and physical. Pia reported that she needed staff to help her, but she also wanted to maintain enough distance in order to be viewed as a professional, as the leader. This simultaneous dependency and directorship is a healthy tension that Pia has lived with because of her disability but it sometimes shifted out of balance.

Pia depended primarily on her assistant whose work area was physically located in Pia's office—creating an inherent intimacy from a continual degree of close and constant interaction. "When you're working so closely with an individual, it's sometimes difficult to not get very personally involved with one another."

Pia had several different assistants during her tenure. She shared an example of an incident where the performance of one of her assistants was adversely affected because of a personal problem. Consequently, the direction Pia wanted to move the organization was also hindered because Pia could not count on her assistant to follow through on her requests. Pia struggled with trying to help her assistant, only to realize that she was being overly tolerant, her assistant was preoccupied, and the agency was neglected. The experience taught Pia to approach the next relationship, with its physical and informational closeness, with some emotional distancing so that she could make the needed decisions from the position of leader first, friend second.

During another point in her tenure, Pia decided to hire a personal friend in the assistant's role. "I knew her skill level. I knew her ability. I knew I could trust her. I knew she was organized. I knew I wasn't, and that she had what I needed." Pia chose not to hide the fact that she hired a personal friend. At the time, Pia did not think she needed to separate her personal and work life, and still believes that a separation was not necessary, "but then I don't know how that may have impacted other staff members who didn't feel as close a relationship." Both women were friends before the work relationship began, so they understood and appreciated each other's unique talents and needs. This friendship provided Pia with a special partnership where both she and her friend could serve the mission of the organization.

Pia stated that she tended to get closer to staff members with whom she had the most interaction and who were also the people who could help move the vision and goals of the organization forward. According to Pia, the closest relationships also included compatible values and interests:

> The individuals that you need to depend on more directly just—it's going to be natural that you're going to develop a closer relationship with those individuals, because you're working with them more frequently; you're involved with them more. However, there were staff members who, just because of compatibility, I think on a different level than a work level, was there, and had the same interests, the same types of values that you—that I would tend to gravitate towards those individuals more, and I didn't realize that as much as—until again, after I retired, because I maintained friendships, or I built friendships with individuals who while I was working with them it never even appeared that we had a certain bond, but there are a handful of women who some are close to my age, some aren't, that I have kept in touch with that I spend time with socially, and so that did happen. But I think while working the people that you need to move your vision and your goals forward are the ones that you are going to be the closest with.

One type of relationship that was important to Pia was the mentoring relationship, which she believes is a bridge to leadership. Pia explained that some of her most significant work relationships involved a mentor relationship where someone she reported to guided and supported her in her leadership. "They also gave me a chance having a disability and never allowing me to use that as an excuse for not being able to move forward." Pia gravitated to people who believed in her, which helped her to achieve her goals. She explained that she matured from both good and bad experiences, because they increased her understanding and knowledge.

When we discussed the role of gender on her leadership, Pia suggested that gender issues were overshadowed by her disability. Pia remarked that being a woman with a disability might have made it difficult for some people to initially recognize her abilities and strengths. However, she did not see gender as having much to do with how she leads, rather it is her disability that distinguishes her leadership. Her leadership training actually began when she was a child. Pia quickly learned to involve others in order to make things happen. She called this "good life training:"

> Because I have a disability, and I've had a disability all my life, I've always been put into a role of directing people in order to get what I wanted. I'd have to explain and utilize other individuals whether family members or friends, in order to get something done since I physically could not move . . . so I believe that is what made me, or put me in a role as, a leader.

The third and final leadership phase for Pia began when she decided to leave the agency to serve another sector of the population. The agency was fully functioning, but the people to whom she reported changed. More importantly, there was a philosophical shift from serving the needs of people to serving the needs of the governing body. If she could not work for the people, then Pia had no desire to continue:

> Towards the end of my career, it was the most frustrating time in my life, and because in the early part of my career in the first six years or so—and there was a lot about politics—it never felt like it was an issue to the people I had to report to. We were there to help the people. And I think that's why I believe that's why the first six years I had the opportunity to move an agenda forward and let it happen, because the needs of getting a public official elected had nothing to do with what was going on day-to-day in the community, because it was clear—and this was a vision that—and these are a lot of my mentors—it was clear that as long as we did our job, that was to meet the needs of the community, we were going to let the officials who hoped to get back into office again look good. Then there was a change; it was very clear that the approach and the philosophy was very different, and it was a feeling that I had and I think others had shared that, as well, and it's that if you didn't do things that would promote an individual, as opposed to continuing to help the community, that you're no longer needed in this organization. So, that's how it influenced me. As a leader, I just felt not only because I physically couldn't do it, I think that philosophically, and just based on principle alone, I couldn't work in that environment and feel good about what I was

> doing, because it's pretty basic. It's for the people. And that's what government is, and we weren't able to do that any longer.

The decision to move on to another challenge was very freeing for Pia. The old barriers of the past were lifted as Pia decided that she no longer had to emotionally distance herself from anyone. She could connect on a more intimate level because there was nothing left to prove. Pia reported that the positive experiences she had with mentoring taught her that mentoring is a rewarding part of leadership, so during the last few years of her term, Pia completed the circle of giving and getting by engaging in a mentor relationship with a student worker. Now that Pia has moved on to a new phase in her career life, their relationship transitioned from mentorship to friendship. In considering the metaphor of leadership as friendship, Pia drew correlations between the two relational concepts. Pia informed me that key elements for both leadership and friendship include respect, trust, patience, listening, "give and take," communication, and active listening. "Not only listening, but making use of what's being said and utilizing it."

I believe that calm is the right description for Pia. From an obvious perspective, Pia's physical body is still, which contrasts with the animation of her facial and vocal expression. More striking, however, is the ambience of composure that radiates from Pia.

Maggie

"To me leadership is all about relationships. To me there is a boundary between friendship and leadership. The way they're the same for me is being authentic."

Maggie is a 43-year-old woman who manages a nonprofit organization that assists victims of domestic violence in the New Jersey area. She is a high-energy person with a passion for her work. Maggie calls herself a "talker" and "feminist" who is leading a feminist organization in a feminist way. She has lectured on feminist leadership and the domestic violence movement. The social justice work she does is one of her personal goals. Maggie has been with the agency for two years and has a full-time staff of 15. There are also seven part-time employees and 10 volunteers. Maggie also belongs to a larger association of people working in the domestic violence field as well as a nonprofit community. She is connected to both of these associations and tries to collaborate with them whenever appropriate.

My impression of Maggie was that she is full of energy, loves what she is doing, and is a strong advocate and activist for women's rights. At the same time, Maggie is humble, agreeable, and fun loving. We were linked together by a friend and former colleague of mine who recommended Maggie and spoke with her about this research prior to our initial telephone conversation and subsequent e-mails.

Maggie was very cordial and answered questions without hesitation. Throughout the interview, her tone stayed the same. She was upbeat, passionate, proud of the progress they had made over the last few years, and hopeful about the future. I felt that we understood each other. The interviews were fun and we laughed often.

Maggie was one of the leaders I chose to go a little deeper with in a subsequent interviews. I believed she had the ability to reflect deeply and did not hesitant to explain inner feelings. She appealed to me for several reasons. First, even though she had administrative experience prior to taking the executive director position with this organization, with only two years at the helm she is very new in her job. Second, as a new leader, she is doing a considerable amount of reflection as she ponders the decisions she makes and their effect on others. Third, I liked the contrast of a new leader with a seasoned leader. I was interested in looking at the similarities and differences in the views of participants with the shortest and longest current leadership experience. Fourth, I wanted to understand how she became a leader.

Finally, given her overt feminist lens, I felt that she would bring a critical eye to reflecting on leadership and friendship.

I interviewed Maggie three times for a total of 2 hours and 19 minutes (77 minutes, 31 minutes, and 31 minutes, respectively). The first interview was in-person; the other two interviews were over the telephone. We had not met prior to our first interviews, so my intent was to put Maggie at ease. However, our meeting was easy and natural requiring little effort.

The setting. Maggie's agency is located in a house that blends in with the other buildings in a residential district of a major New Jersey city. Only a small sign secured to the front of the building identifies the agency by its name. It is a small house with offices and programming located on the first and second floors. The third floor is being converted into administrative offices. Once the renovation is complete, some of their off-site programs can be relocated into the central office.

When I arrived for our initial interview, Maggie was at another meeting outside of the office. The new office manager escorted me to the kitchen where I relaxed and enjoyed a cup of tea. Maggie soon arrived and greeted me with a big smile. Before our interview began, she gave me a tour of the building. Maggie moved quickly, but not hurriedly, introducing me to her staff along the way. Most of the building was in disarray because of a renovation project, but some of the rooms where intact, like the children's art therapy room, which was colorful and filled with toys, art supplies, and games. The program coordinator was very happy to talk about her program and the positive impact it was having on participants.

Economic realities have resulted in the need to consolidate services, so Maggie recently gave her office to a program coordinator whose off-site program has already relocated to the administrative site. Maggie proudly spoke about the ongoing construction work and how staff was managing the disruption. Once the renovation is complete, Maggie will have an office on the third floor. In the meantime, she is floating to wherever space is available.

We met in an office of one of her staff members. The space was small, but large enough to accommodate both of us. Because of the construction issues, Maggie elected to participate in subsequent interviews over the telephone.

The interviews. Maggie manages an organization that provides both residential and non-residential programs for survivors of domestic abuse, including a hot line, shelter, legal advocacy, counseling, art therapy for children, and community education and training. She discussed her goals for the agency—including strategic planning, board development, and long-range plans for permanent housing. In light of economic realities however, her current goal is to maintain the current level of services and staffing.

During our first interview, three areas emerged as important to Maggie—doing feminist work by empowering women, building relationships, and having the power to do what is needed. She explained that the size of the staff has an impact on how they work together:

> People often come to [nonprofit] agencies with their own mission, with their own vision and purpose. So, we often don't need to get the buy-in on the mission, but we need to work together to meet that. And so, they're often smaller agencies. We don't deal often with hundreds of people. A large staff in a domestic violence agency would be 50 people. And so, we get to know, or we have the opportunity to get to know all of the staff, whether it's a part-time or a per diem person, or a full-time individual, as a person—a complete person, not just the work person, but they're . . . we get to know about their lives, their families, what means a lot to them. We can just support each other's children like buying cookies, and so it's an atmosphere that allows people to come together with a shared vision and a shared mission, and get to know each other as human beings, really. So, our work together is very personal; the personal is professional. The personal is political.

This is also true for Maggie who arrived at the domestic violence field because of a combination of factors. She described herself as naturally introspective, but was attracted to social work because of its societal perspective and her desire to serve. Domestic violence had also touched a relative, eventually moving her life path to the domestic violence area.

I asked Maggie to explain what "the personal is political" meant to her. She explained that she is doing feminist work that is about empowering women, both clients and staff alike. For clients, empowerment is about helping them live lives free of violence. For staff, it's about their own empowerment while they are empowering others:

> The personal is political is an old feminist statement, and that is that we can't separate our person from our politics. If you believe in the empowerment of women, if you believe in social justice, you will take that wherever you go. So, whether it's in your workplace, whether it's at the grocery store, your place of worship, you believe in that, so we can't separate that. I find that people in this movement don't separate their professional from their personal values and beliefs, and that's what often brought them there. So, it's very meaningful. And that could be a challenge, too, because we can take things personally, because it means so much to us. This is feminist work; this is about empowering women; they [the staff] chose careers that may result in a lower salary, and well—they will make personal sacrifices to be in this field, and they are aware of that. I mean, I have people who are licensed therapists who could make double the amount, but they're choosing to be part of this. So, they come to this field with a passion, and I guess one of the challenges of the leadership is not to thwart that in any way with some of the realities of the work, internally and externally.

Maggie's interpersonal leadership style is supported by her greatest strength, as well as by the organization itself. When asked whether her leadership was influenced by gender, Maggie said that being a woman was her greatest strength:

> It's something that I bring with my experiences. I work primarily with women. Women share an understanding—many women, a collective understanding of what it means to be abreast of the oppression of women, so I bring those experiences with me, and I bring them also with me to a leadership style.

Maggie explained the role of the organization on her ability to lead relationally. She noted, "it's easy for me to lead in this style in a nonprofit feminist environment." Maggie feels that the mission of the organization allows her to empower others and to share resources. She referred to her agency as "Noah's Ark," referring to the close environment staff shares, which Maggie believes has tended to "breed support and unity."

We explored the idea of Noah's Ark in more detail during our second interview. I wanted to know what this meant to Maggie. She also forwarded me the lyrics of the song she referenced so that I could have the full text with her interpretation of lines that were the most meaningful to her. What follows is Maggie's elaboration of the topic during the second interview:

> That actually was where I got [the idea about Noah's Ark] from. It was from the Indigo Girls, *The Wood Song*, and I highlighted a few areas of the song, and gave you my own interpretation from the workplace. But it's—quickly one of the lines is, "The thin horizon of a plan is almost clear. My friends and I have had a tough time, bruising our brains hard up against change." And that is just the fight, like the good fight—fighting against injustice. And then the part where Noah Ark's came in was, "Now I see we're in the boat in two-by-twos. Only the heart that we have for a tool we could use." So, in our field we use ourselves to move forward, "and the very close quarters are hard to get used to. Love weighs the hull down with its weight." And so that reminds me of just what you saw—the small physical environments that we work in. [Laughter] And we really do—we are—there is a friendship here, and there is a love, I think, for each other, because I think we all respect the work that we do.

The love and friendship of which Maggie refers is bounded around the work and within the workplace. She values the same thing in her work relationship that she does in her personal friendships, "honesty . . . respect, trust, grace . . . accepting everybody for who they are." For Maggie grace, is about "forgiveness."

Maggie explained that she makes a distinction between her work life and her personal life and prefers to bring her work problems home, rather than her personal problems to work. "If I'm struggling—I'm stressed out, I'm overloaded, I'm upset about a grant we didn't get . . . I try very hard not to bring that here . . . I go to my friends in my personal life and I'll talk about my job woes." Maggie believes that her role is to support her staff—their role is to support the mission of the organization, not to support her emotional needs.

Work relationships play an important role for Maggie. She stated that she believes in "talent pools" always looking for people with the talent and the passion. She believes in "inviting everyone on board" and has expanded her workforce and her board of trustees to include men advocates and supporters.

In building her leadership relationships, Maggie has identified her approach as "interpersonal:"

> You get people's buy-in through relationships, and what it creates is fierce loyalty to the leadership and also to the agency. A challenge is boundaries, because it's very much a friendly type of interaction. The roles have to be clearly defined. Everybody's job description has to be very clear, so I know what I'm responsible for, and you know what you're responsible for. It's an equal playing field, and everything is valued. The boundary part would be that it's not an authoritarian style, and sometimes people almost look for it [an authoritarian approach]. And sometimes it's a struggle for them, like just tell me what to do, and one of the greatest learning curves I've had with my—grooming my directors into being directors—has been, well, what I said yesterday, in fact, to somebody. I explained the situation, and she called me back, and she said, "Well, how do you want me to do this?" And I said, "this is a test. What do you think a good response would be?" And I said, "You got 100." And so, just in sharing power, and tapping into the talents, but I often have to throw things back onto people in order to—they want to succeed. They want to please their supervisor. They want to first figure out what I want them to say, but I'm really looking for what they think, and I can say that all day long, but if they ask me a question, and I just answer it, I'm never going to get it. So, interpersonal.

When the interview moved to questions about friendship, Maggie stated that when she befriends someone, she does it through "random acts of kindness . . . being consistent . . . and helping when they're not expecting it." Maggie believes that "regard and trust" develop over time, so she inquires about the lives of staff and not just about the work. She stated that she supports them and builds loyalty by giving them the tools they need to do the job.

There is also an element of nurturing that takes place:

> [Nurturing] is taking an interest in the entire person, not just the work person, so it's tuning into your staff, and it doesn't happen automatically. I actually have to—regard and trust is something that develops—so I have to demonstrate things over and over and over again, not forget if somebody says that they were sick to ask them how they

> are feeling. Something is going on with their child, to follow up. If something is happening at work, I see they're distressed at a meeting, to make sure that I did it this morning on my way in.

Maggie noted her natural tendency to gravitate to personalities that she feels comfortable with such as feminists and advocates. Because of this, she explained that she makes a conscious attempt to "get closer" to the other people around her. Maggie gave an example of two contrasting work relationships.

She has known one of her directors for 15 years, "We click, we giggle together, we laugh together, [we have a] similar sense of humor" so being with her is natural. Maggie has another director who is more reserved so Maggie makes sure she spends time getting to know her as well:

> I don't want it to appear that there's any type of favoritism, and I tell them everyone's of equal value, so I want to build independent relationships definitely with my own supports. I'd love to do it over time with the staff—the entire staff—but I started with my leadership team and the [program] directors . . . if you really take the time to get to know people personally, there are wonderful things about every person, and so it pushes me out of my comfort zone to forge different types of relationships.

Maggie says that she builds trust with staff, her board, and her donors through transparency. "If you are honest and you are transparent, and you're consistent with that over time, that will build unbelievable trust."

When asked about what she values in her leadership relationships, Maggie mentioned "accountability, the ability to be flexible and the importance of reciprocal honesty—knowing yourself and being transparent about it." The most significant relationships for Maggie are those where she feels like she "can improve as a supervisor [and] improve the quality of their [staff's] life." As Maggie said this, she realized it was in contrast with her desire for "balance" in ensuring that the needs of the clients are met. She gave an example of a staff person who was going through a particularly difficult time as a single mom. Maggie spoke with her about her professional goals and her personal life and together they came up with a course of action that would benefit both the employee and the agency. Maggie believes that this type intervention, or "act of kindness" serves two purposes—it creates a fierce loyalty and it can serve the mission of the agency in the long run:

> It's random acts of kindness too. It's the silliest stuff—bringing coffee over to staff who show up [to work] for the holidays—Christmas, New Year's. The first year, I came in and just thanked them for coming in, and it's starting things like Secret Santa where I bring in extra gifts for everybody who can't bring in a gift, and again, it doesn't have to be monetary, it can be just checking in on people and seeing how they're doing. So the relationships that stand out to me are the ones where I've watched people become empowered themselves.

Another type of relationship to which Maggie has been a party is the mentor relationship. "You have to have mentors. There is no way that anyone can come into a position like this, at this level of leadership, without the support and guidance of women leaders, and good ones who have come before you." After Maggie began to lead the agency, she moved from merely respecting her predecessors to understanding what it takes to do domestic violence work and realizing that she still needs their guidance:

> Because we talk a lot about the cause, but, to me, that's the reward, that pride in yourself and that self-respect, and then other people, of course, will follow suit. So I have created for myself a network of a few select women who are or were in leadership positions . . . and I get their advice and I take their feedback and I've never been judged, and I've never been embarrassed for something I don't know. They are so committed to the cause that they are so committed to grooming the next generation. There's no ego involved and that I found amazing.

Maggie pointed out that she is aware that part of her responsibility as a leader is to pay attention to the effect she is having on the staff. She makes a conscious effort to put people at ease "so they can do their job." According to Maggie:

> I set the tone. If I walked around unhappy, we would be unhappy. If I walk around feeling confident, I instill confidence, so I've never been an executive director, and it's amazed me that people are constantly looking to me to set the tone, and I tell you . . . it takes work to come into this office, and keep my head high, and make sure I smile,

> because it's putting people at ease so they can do their job. If I walked in all stressed out—and believe me I get stressed out, I'm not saying that—but I actually mentally prep myself every morning before I come to work—it's a conscious thing. You're walking in the door; everybody has got to feel good about being here. Everybody has to feel good about their work. And so to me that's it. It's really about setting a tone. That's the most significant thing.

Maggie stated that she also empowers her staff by setting clear expectation, fostering cross-program support, and facilitating operations meetings. She described herself as "tough" in that her expectations for performance are high, but she also tries to be "fair" by closely working with new staff members until they are established and ready to work on their own. Maggie lets them "have their own victories, and come to [her] with ideas." She encourages them to "think outside the box" and does a lot of cross training. Maggie also expects accountability and transparency from the staff and provides the same for them, even though there may be information that she can only share on a "need to know basis" (such as the reasons someone leaves the agency), "being honest and being transparent doesn't mean that they [staff] know all the details of everything, because that, to me, would be impossible."

Maggie reported that she also empowers staff by encouraging them to learn from each other and to get support from each other. The intent is to let staff receive some recognition from their peers when they have done a good job or have successfully managed a bad situation. "We need to really realize that we need everybody, and that even though I'm in a position of the designated leader, it doesn't mean that I have all the answers." Maggie suggested that she also invites staff to influence her decisions by offering sound arguments. "I want to surround myself with people who are smarter than me, so give me a better argument than what I have, and I'll do it."

Maggie considers empowerment as an aspect of the operations meetings she implemented to provide project directors with a platform to discuss whatever is on their mind.

She also created a reporting structure so staff members know who to go to with problems and concerns:

> "I've moved [the organization] away a little bit from the kind of grass roots, where everybody does everything, and I think that there's a time where everybody may need to do everything together, but I think that before everybody does everything, everybody had to know what they are individually responsible for, and that's going back to accountability.

Sometimes, however, the balance between leading an organization and empowering staff can have an adverse effect. Maggie has had to make some unpopular decisions including having to dismiss a staff member. Maggie explained that this was a particularly difficult time for her because the employee was a "good person [that] people liked and respected." Maggie knew that this termination would have a "major impact on this person's life," but the employee did something particularly egregious. Maggie hopes that, in time, staff will trust that her reasoning was sound even if they are not privy to the reason for the dismissal.

Power is the third important component for Maggie—she stated that she understands its value. Maggie pointed out that when power is viewed from a position of "oppression . . . power can be seen as a negative thing, because people have used power to be very hurtful to others—to other minorities. For her part, Maggie believes that power's effect depends on whether it is used for positive or negative ends and so she seeks it out. She does not seem to be uncomfortable with the notion of power or using her power for what she believes in:

> If you seek power to do the right thing, or the just and fair thing, you could do wonderful things. So, I seek to have power, and that's from the feminist leadership style. I seek to have power to even out the playing fields. It's not personal power [rather] power is the ability to make things happen [for others].

Maggie's power is "authorized" by the position she holds, but she noted that it is also "shared [and] responsive" to the organization's stakeholders. Additionally, Maggie views power as the "responsibility" to do the job she was entrusted to do.

According to Maggie, leadership is a process as well as a journey. Her lessons came from mentors and supervisors—some whose actions were helpful, others whose actions were not, which taught her what to do, as well as what not to do. What she admired most, however, was authenticity, and this is what she took away with her. As for the women leaders in the field who have achieved so much, Maggie described this as a "humbling experience."

Maggie answered all of my questions readily and without hesitation. She was cheerful, energetic, and confident. She spoke about her role in social justice and helping women become empowered with the passion of someone who has found their calling. For me, Maggie set the tone of exuberance about doing important work.

Lola

"They had to have an environment of nurturing and harmony, and I'd like to think that this is what I do—that I create that kind of environment for the youth and people in the community to come to."

Lola is a 54-year-old African American woman who founded and manages a nonprofit arts education program. As CEO, this organization fulfills Lola's dream—to bring arts education to the community, especially the youth though after-school programs, and to provide a venue for local and up-and-coming artists. As far as I could tell, Lola and the organization are inseparable. It is part of her, the way she carries herself, her vision, her dream brought to life by hard work, persistence, determination, and a life path filled with good company whom she refers to as mentors. Her mentors have been both male and female, but it was female leaders whom she sought out as mentors.

When I spoke to a professional acquaintance about this research project, she immediately recommended Lola. I looked at Lola's website before I called her and decided that

I wanted to know more about Lola and the organization she created. I introduced myself over a telephone conversation. At the time, she was distracted by the writing of a grant, but agreed to hear more about my research after the grant was submitted. Lola was receptive. She had been involved in research before as both researcher and participant. Lola is influencing her part of the world by providing a cultural education to youth and the community. I was intrigued and so I made the two-hour trip in a heavy rain to meet Lola. She was what I expected and I wondered what she thought about me.

When I arrived, we did not spend a lot of time getting to know each other and apart from having to wait a few minutes for her to finish a phone call we began the interview right away. I interviewed Lola once in a face-to-face meeting, and she was my last participant. At first, I felt a little awkward meeting her for the first time, but this soon abated when we got into the interview.

Lola provided a detailed account of her organization and her leadership journey in a two-part interview that lasted 1 hour and 32 minutes. The first part (36 minutes) was in-person, the second part (54 minutes) took place over the telephone several hours after our originally scheduled meeting due to a recorder malfunction. During the first part of the interview, it felt to me like both of us were trying to read the other.

Our breakthrough came at a point when the recorder had stopped working and Lola and I had an opportunity to laugh. Lola received a telephone call around this time, and I went to pause the recorder only to discover it had already stopped. Flustered and embarrassed, I spent a few minutes trying to resolve the problem. I was both grateful and relieved when Lola agreed to finish the interview later in the day over the telephone, so I excused myself.

When I returned home I discovered that a few minutes of our exchange were not recorded—that moment of connection was lost. In the process we also lost the ability to read each other's facial expressions and body language in a face-to-face encounter. Lola was accommodating despite the double interruption of her day, and the second part of our interview, while disembodied by the telephone, continued without incident.

The setting. Lola moved to her current location only 10 months ago. She has created a full service arts education center, which we toured prior to the interview, replete with a 100-seat theater with video and audio recording equipment, a classroom, and an art room with every wall exhibiting a mural painted by the youth who attend the center. Her organization is located in a strip mall at the forefront of a large performing arts center in an urban community where a high percentage of people live in poverty. The entrance is accented in bold colors of maroon and blue violet contrasting the cream colored walls in the background and decorated with the artwork of children.

When I arrived, there was a GED class in progress with about 10 young adults focused on the large books before them. A woman who Lola described as mentor, friend, and occasional employee was leading the class and other female volunteers were beginning to arrive. Everyone wore a welcoming smile. Lola's funding determines the extent of programming she is able to provide, so her staff needs expand and contract correspondingly. At the time of our interview, Lola had three employees and five volunteers reporting to her.

Lola's office is nontraditional. Our interview took place seated at a high wooden table with matching wooden chairs that reminded me of a bistro. Lola worked at a laptop computer with a cell phone and cordless phone within reach. Her walls were painted in a color that looked like mustard. One rug runner on the floor led to Lola's bistro-style desk. Lola's attire was equally artful with a beautiful patterned red silk jacket, red shoulder-length earrings, and a headband.

Although there is an artful look and feel of this aesthetic environment, the responsibility to provide organizational structure falls on Lola. She is the one who has to keep the dream alive by using her creative talents.

The interview. Lola explained that she manages an arts education organization. It is the "kind of organization you come to if you have a passion." Her dream was to "create peaceful, creative environments . . . where youth and artists can come to use their talents to make a difference." Her job is to do everything necessary—"public relations, program and grant development, as well as going after public and private support"—to make the organization work. Lola's "creative learning organization" provides a setting where "the youth of the community can begin to see their dreams come true."

Lola describes herself as having a "creative spirit." Her career path was self-made. She moved through a variety of fields and met some "significant" community people—artists, activists, and agents of change—along the way. As the organization's founder, Lola can set any direction she chooses. She and the organization are united. She describes her work as a major personal goal that has to be balanced with other aspects of her personal life. Lola has sole responsibility for maintaining the viability of the organization and carries the full weight of keeping it going. Early in her career, Lola said she was "using male influence styles of leadership." She looked to people who were successful, such as her father—who was a big influence in her life, and she modeled his behavior. She has not abandoned this approach, but she has broadened it and evolved from it to better fit the person she continues to become. When asked whether gender influenced her leadership practice, Lola replied, "absolutely no."

Lola explained that she had matured to a more relational form of leadership after being disappointed in herself for following a male-model of leadership:

> I could say that I was overbearing; I was domineering; but I also felt that in the process how unreal that felt to me, and how very disappointing it was in my psychic experience. And so, for me for my own life, for my own ability to have a healthy and joyful experience, as a leader I had to evolve. I had to become much more compassionate. I had to become much more aware of what I said—of my words, my thoughts, my deeds. I had to be really much more conscious of how I was coming across.

Lola said she struggled with trying to find the "middle-road" between being a "bitch" or being "too nice" as she balanced the need for an organizational structure and the creative energy of the professional artists who help her deliver services to the community. It is important for her to continue growing toward being compassionately "firm and effective," a task which is eased by hiring artists "who think about everyone else and not just themselves." Lola's organization is not hierarchical, and, as such, she does not recognize herself as *the* leader, rather it is a respect that people afford you. Her philosophy is that "If you give people a platform, or if you give people an opportunity to express themselves on their terms, then they just give you that respect." She depends on these artists to follow her vision:

> And because they see the bigger picture of where we're going here, of how we're trying to change behavior in youth; of how we're trying to be role models to create a better community, when they see that picture, then they become loyal to me; they defer to me. They give me that respect.

Lola believes that serving as a role model is an essential responsibility for leaders as is maintaining one's integrity and keeping in mind the major effect that a leader can have on people's lives. For Lola, leadership means "being straightforward, being responsible" and learning about oneself and seeking ways to improve.

Lola reported that she depends on others to contribute to the organization so that the youth in the community can continue to be served. As part of her services to the community, Lola regularly allows artists to use her facility, but it is up to them to do whatever it takes to bring in an audience, rather than drain the organization of resources it does not have. She explained:

> I give everybody a chance. When they walk through the door, I give them my time, and I pretty much listen to the direction they want to go to, and then I give them an opportunity . . . and if they take it and make it work—and they know that pretty much means also putting time back into the development of the center—whether it's a donation or contracted where we get a percentage of what they do.

Over time, Lola has been able to attract some notable performing artists to her organization. One of her earlier opportunities came when she was asked to submit a proposal to address the needs of some youth in her community who were attending an alternative school after being expelled due to behavioral issues from their regular school. Lola recalls:

> We wanted to see behavioral changes. We wanted to see their lives change, their ability to develop team collaboration and team building, and we wanted to see them change their perspective on life, and so we had big, lofty goals. And I needed big, lofty-minded people to make this work.

Lola recalled that it took two attempts to come up with the right person who wanted to be around these youth, who was compassionate and concerned, and who recognized that the impact he could have was more valuable than anything he could receive in return. It was all about relationship building through trust and collaboration and about "making a difference in these children's lives."

Mentors played an important role in Lola's career path and in the realization of the organization she has been leading for the past 14 years. She explained that some mentors came into her life; others Lola purposefully sought out. In both cases, they have been a source of inspiration, guidance, and wisdom. "The mentor relationship allows me to feel like I'm constantly learning and that I'm always open to discover myself in this process."

Lola reminisced that her first mentor had a profound influence on her life path. He helped her to see her ability and convinced her that she had the talent to go after her dreams. One of her early mentors moved her toward radio and then television. She also wrote for a magazine before moving on to conduct diversity training throughout the country.

One of her current mentors is someone that she has known for quite some time and who provides invaluable work and life guidance ensuring that Lola cares for herself as she is caring for her organization. Their relationship was a turning point for Lola. It began when Lola became the assistant of a woman who conceptualized and founded an innovative museum for children of all ages. Lola soon became her assistant director and they worked on an action research project that became a standard for engaging community members who are experts in “their own culture.” Lola described the relationship she had with this mentor as a “colleague relationship:”

> And the colleague relationship was—I called it “liberating leadership,” because she gave me the opportunity. She trusted me enough to let me do what I felt was correct—was right—and I advised her; she advised me, and so she became my mentor in that whole process. As my mentor, and because she believed in what I was doing, it gave me the opportunity to be very influential in the outcome of this particular program that we had. And this particular program was working with mainstream organizations, and grassroots organizations, many of which were grassroots of color—[arts] organizations of color.

When asked about the metaphor of leadership as friendship, Lola referred to the relationships she has had with her mentors as emblematic of leadership as friendship. She said she believes that the people come into your life with “potentials” and “experiences” and are there for a purpose. What this means for leaders is that it is their responsibility to discover and utilize the potential of the supporters around them. In turn, these supporters use their ability to take the mission in the direction it needs to go. Lola believes:

> The friendship comes from when you learn how to look at [people] as if they matter . . . that you believe that they matter in whatever role that they're in, and I think that that's been why I've gotten so much support in my life.

As a leader, Lola has tried to take this approach with the people who work with her. She gave the example of three women who are working at her agency through a community employment program for low-income older adults. Lola said that they are concerned about her and are willing to assist her in whatever she needs. In turn, Lola engages them by relating to them, respecting them, and gaining their friendship, all of which are essential to the organization's success.

Lola is comfortable with friends around her and has known some of the people that work for her for a very long time. She brings people into her organization she trusts and shares mutual respect. There are only a few people with whom she will confide. Some of them continue to come in and out of the organization on a voluntary basis whenever she needs them. Referring to one of the women who has been with her for quite some time, Lola said:

> She's one of my buddies that I talk to about everything, and in many ways she has been sort of an amazing mentor to me, and the work relationship is also the kind of personal relationship where I can talk to her about any and everything, and she's always giving me guidance, or giving me advice on just our role as women—what's important in terms of our relationships, and what's important in terms of how we're dealing in the workplace with people.

Lola's expectations for workplace friendship include: respect, trustworthiness, empathy, listening, and support for the work each of them is doing. She explained, "Because they've seen how committed I am and how passionate I am about the children . . . I have a lot of friends out there who are willing to support me, whenever I need to make a phone call." Lola also has a lot of male friends. She attributes this to having "a strong sense of self" that allows her to maintain a separation of her public from her private life, as well as being able to "really hear what they are saying."

Lola explained that she is facing several challenges right now. She depends on grants to keep things going and is doing everything herself including, looking for funding, working with staff and volunteers, developing programming, and working with the youth. Another challenge is that her board needs to be revitalized. She is looking for people who will "advocate for the cause." Lola feels she could better serve the community if her time could be spent "promoting, and marketing, and going on a corporate level to advocate my cause:"

> People cannot begin to imagine the responsibility that encompasses having a place like this, and then having to market and get people to see the vision for how this place can be utilized and effectively benefit the foundation of this organization. . . . But this particular place is—it's an unbelievable opportunity.

My overall experience of Lola was tranquility. It felt this way to me from the mood of the people I met, the aesthetics of the environment, Lola's desire to find the middle ground in her approach to life and leadership, and the gentleness I heard in Lola's voice.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have told the stories of six women. I have presented their understanding of relational leadership and their evaluation of the metaphor of leadership as friendship. Some participants described their experience of leadership as being influenced by gender; others did not. Some of the participants have friends in the workplace; others did not. Some recognized the metaphoric significance of friendship to leadership; others did not. All of the participants, however, are leading relationally. I have attempted to report their experiences as clearly and accurately as possible.

In chapter 5, I will review the themes that emerged through this process. The themes provide a structure for understanding relational leadership and the metaphor of leadership as friendship.

Chapter V: Interpretation

> Relational leadership is getting to know your staff. I know what they are hired to do. I know what job I need them to do, but I'm going to also be able to tap into their individual strengths and let them really shine. (Maggie, 2009, research participant)

Repositioning

I was inspired to begin this inquiry as a result of reading an article by Perreault (2005) who offered the metaphor of leadership as friendship to describe a relational way of leading. The metaphor picked at my subconscious, interspersing between gentle and strong tugs over the course of several years. It tickled my memory as flashbacks to another time, another place, and people that I knew were remembered anew through the lens that Perreault presented. Soon it was apparent that my journey of discovery had already begun. I had found my area of research interest. The seduction was complete.

This research allowed me to explore Perreault's (2005) metaphor from a practice perspective by interviewing six relational leaders. I was intrigued by the possibility of uncovering living, breathing representations of leadership as friendship. These women furnished a glimpse of their worlds with which I was given the opportunity to find meaning and offer an interpretation.

The purpose of this study was to understand the leader's experience of relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship describes its qualities. The six leaders who participated in this study are, or were, in positions of authority within their organization. They generously shared their experiences of leadership, relational work, and friendship. Their stories are as different as they are. Each person's story was presented in her own words. Each person's story is her own.

Process of Interpretation

The work of this chapter was to interpret the interviews by drawing on the participants' voices in relation to relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship describes their experience. I initially considered organizing the themes around the question areas: leadership, relationships, friendship, and organizational influences. So that my voice was restrained as Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997a) cautions, I kept on looking, reading, and rereading. There were, however, the study's "relevant dimensions" (Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 114) of leadership and relational practice, which offered the appropriate frame because these categories suggested a way to shape interpretation without over-determining it.

Given that this study explored leadership as friendship as a possible depiction of relational leadership, leadership and relational practice inform each other and are interwoven with the study's purpose. While these relevant dimensions helped "guide inquiry and shape interpretation" (Hoffmann Davis, 1997, p. 113), the ensuing themes identified in chapter 5—mission, responsibility, authenticity, relationship, engagement, caretaking, accessibility, boundaries, influence, fun, friendship, and mentorship—came from the words of the participants themselves. I used their words and phrases to co-create the themes, which provided the texture to the relevant dimensions. I looked for repetitive and congruent expressions and descriptions, noted their use of metaphor, observed their environment and interaction with staff (when possible), and was receptive to any surprises they may have presented. The themes that emerged were a result of "synthesis, convergence, and contrast" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997b, p. 193) of their words and expressions.

I have presented the participants' stories, sharing their words and ways in which my judgment was suspended as much as possible in the prior chapter. Now, the focus shifts to the conscious relationship of relational leadership and the leadership as friendship metaphor, and explores the learning about these issues that came from closely attending to their words.

For the first set of interviews, my questions around four topical areas. The first area of inquiry was the participants' description of leadership. The second was a reflection on relationships. The third area of inquiry was an exploration of friendship within the public sphere. The fourth delved into organizational influences on their leadership and workplace relationships. For the second interview, relationships along with characteristics and qualities of friendship were more fully explored. The individual woman's leadership journey, was the focus of the third and final interview set.

Using these categories, I attempted to bracket my meaning making in the context of my experience and relevant literature, so that I could present the participants' words as they emerged from the narratives. At the end of each section, I drew meaning from these stories and the ways in which their lives and experiences enrich the literature and our understanding of relational leadership. The literature and my own experiences and perspectives informed my understanding, and consequently my interpretation, of their stories. To minimize some of my disabling prejudices, which are those preconceived ideas that interfere with understanding, in order to allow the enabling prejudices to assist in interpretation (Gadamer, 1997), I relied on their words and their expressions.

I placed the participants' stories into two primary categories, leadership and relational practices, which represent the relevant dimensions of inquiry and are headings in this chapter. These categories formed the basis for discussion with the participants and are used to group the themes that emerged from the interviews. While the themes could have easily stood alone without separating them into categories, I believed that the themes that appeared to be more relational in nature should be distinct from themes generally associated with leadership.

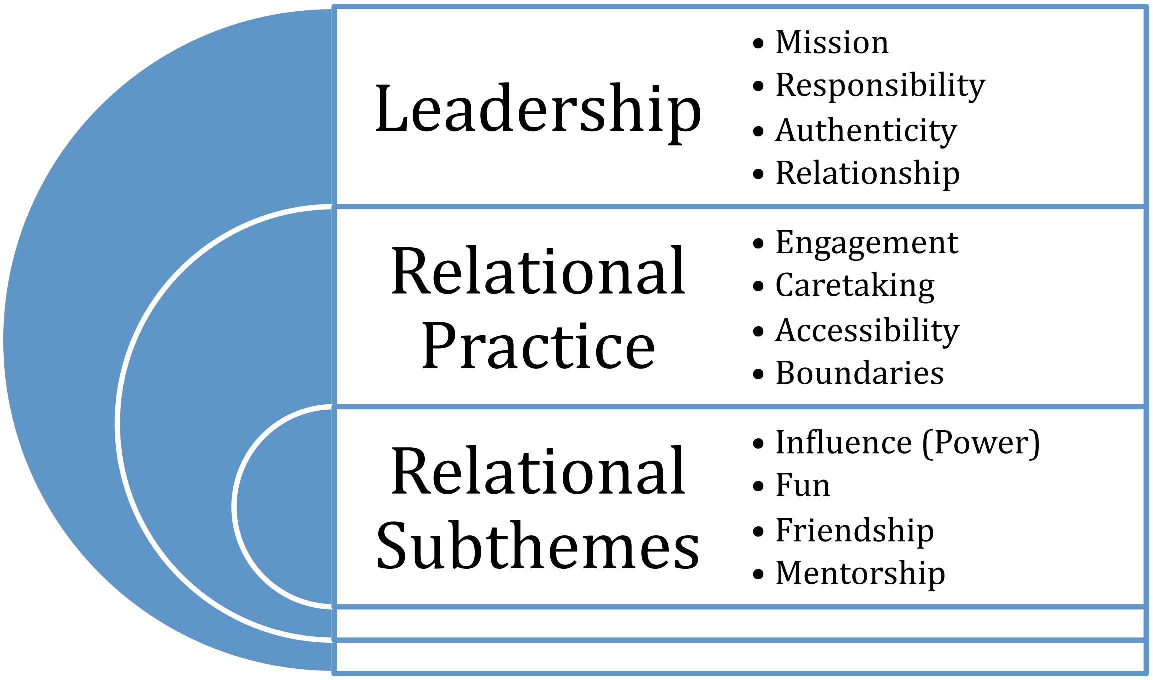

Figure 5.1. Themes.

Leadership themes include the organization's mission, responsibility, authenticity, and relationship. The themes of relational practice include engagement, caretaking, accessibility, and boundaries. Separating these two areas, leadership and relational practices, into categories is somewhat artificial because they are conjoined and could have just as easily been listed under leadership. My purpose in separating them in the interpretation was to highlight the nuances of these leaders' relational practices and to illustrate that they are actually embedded in the leadership process. The merging of all these concepts creates a more complete picture of how relational leadership is expressed in this study.

The third category, relational sub-themes, gives more depth to the lived experience of the participants and provides more detail to the leadership-relational practices nexus. The relational sub-themes correspond to the experiences of at least three of the participants. Relational sub-themes include influence, fun, friendship, and mentorship. These relational sub-themes differ from the elements of relational practice, which were experienced by all of the participants, in that they particularize the experience of some, but not all, of the participants. A discussion about gender follows along the participants' views about the correlation of their leadership practices to the metaphor of leadership as friendship, the five essentials of relational leadership offered by Fletcher (2007), and the five criteria offered by Perreault (2005) for leadership as friendship.

As discussed in chapter 4, the participants' stories were dissected and compartmentalized into themes, which illuminated aspects of their narratives that were buried within the whole. I arrived at these themes after multiple reviews of the transcripts immersing myself in their stories, attending to their words, and becoming acquainted with the participants' views and priorities. In order to let the themes emerge from their stories, I did not go back to the literature during this process. Once the themes materialized and were documented in this chapter, I reviewed the literature to check for similarities and gaps. My findings are presented herein following the description of each theme. The categories, themes, and sub-themes are layered with meaning—some of which may overlap and are repeated in more than one theme (e.g., trust). The themes represent my interpretation and understanding of the participants' stories. They provide an opportunity to understand the essence of relational leadership using the metaphor of leadership as friendship as a lens.

My goal for this chapter was to deeply read the participants' words when placed in particular thematic categories, to interpret and place those thoughts within the context of what is known thus far about relational leadership, and to explore whether the metaphor of leadership as friendship resonates with these women leaders. This chapter contains some quotes from the participants. When the participants are used as sources, their pseudonym is included in parentheses.

The Leadership Experience

Mission. Mission emerged as one of the important elements within the leadership category. All of the participants are leaders responsible for organizations varying in number of employees and volunteers, size of budget, funding sources, population served, needs being met, location, and degree of government regulation. Each of the participants recognized the value of the people who work for, and with, them and the people who avail themselves of their services. Regardless of the distinctions just mentioned, the mission guides the actions and commitment of these leaders. Each leader serves the mission of her organization and recognizes the mission as the driving force in her work life. For almost all of the participants, the mission also satisfies an important personal goal. Their level of passion can be represented on a hermeneutic circle where ardent passion (the mission is their life) and committed passion (the mission is separate from their personal life) are represented at the top and bottom of the circle, respectively. What is essential about their passion is that they are serving an important cause that positively impacts the lives of clients and staff alike. The mission has been referred to as a "gift" (Angel), a "calling" (Maggie), one's "life's work" (Adele), "my dream" (Lola), "my baby" (Cynthia), and "exciting" (Pia). The mission provides the platform for these women to lead relationally by including staff and deferring to their expertise when appropriate. They serve the mission with and through responsibility, authenticity, and relationships. All of these leaders are committed to a cause that fills a human need. Their affinity to the work and the people they serve supports an environment where others are enticed to do the same.

The mission fits into relational leadership literature. The earliest reference to the mission or common purpose in the literature reviewed for this study comes from the foundational work of Mary Parker Follett (1949) who in the early part of the 20th century, referred to the common purpose as the invisible leader:

> Leader and followers are both following the invisible leader—the common purpose. The best executives put this common purpose clearly before their group. While leadership depends on depth of conviction and the power coming therefrom, there must also be the ability to share that conviction with others, the ability to make purpose articulate. And then that common purpose becomes the leader. (p. 172)

Building on Follett's theory, Sorenson and Hickman (2002) suggested that the common purpose connects people to something bigger than themselves:

> Sorenson and Hickman call this unifying thread *charisma of purpose.* They contend that its powerful effect on group members is a direct result of the worthiness and attraction of the purpose itself. . . . Key components of this type of leadership are the common purpose, a passionate commitment to and ownership of the common purpose; opportunity to act; self-agency; the ability to rise above self-interest; and fluidity of leader and follower roles, which may be either invisible or visible. (Hickman, 2004, pp. 750-751)

Other seminal theorists also cited the purpose as an important feature of leadership. Greenleaf (1977) asserted that the central function of leadership is to achieve a higher purpose that satisfies some human need. Burns (1978) explained the leader-follower relationship as a reciprocal and joint effort in the pursuit of a common goal. His discourse advanced the idea that leadership is relational, collective, purposeful, and is bound with the values, needs, and goals of followers.

Each of the participants spoke about the mission of their organization in a way that reflected their commitment to the ideas of these theorists. While none of the participants referred to the mission of their organization as "invisible," they made it clear that it was their raison d'être. According to Adele, Angel, Maggie, and Lola, the staff working in the agencies of also share this passion. All of the participants also allowed others to lead with their expertise, being open to their ideas and suggestions, which is the concept of "fluidity" expressed above. The group of people needing services would be the same, but as these leaders became aware of the intricacies of their clients' needs, these leaders would begin to view the intent of the mission more comprehensively and provide more holistic services. In other cases, the participants' discussion of the fluidity of the mission involved expansion and contraction of services as a result of external influences such as economic, societal, public policy, and governmental intervention.

Responsibility. Responsibility emerged as a second essential element under leadership. Responsibility is multi-directional, extending across and between the layers of the organization, staff, funders, and self. Responsibility is the focal point of being in charge of an organization, and represents the locus of where the "buck stops" (Adele, Angel). Being responsible means these leaders attend to the professionalism of their operation. Performance standards and job responsibilities are clear, and the organization follows good business practices.

The participants believed that acting responsibly as a professional is apparent in adherence to internally and externally imposed rules and regulations and when everyone performs with the decorum appropriate for their field. These leaders were aware they "set the tone" (Maggie), and that people are influenced both positively and negatively by their words, actions, moods, character, treatment of others, and the direction they establish for the organization. They are cognizant of how their tone—mood, narration, emphasis, attention, and priorities--impacts employees who look to these leaders for guidance about job performance and about how to interact with the leader and others. For instance, Adele, Angel, and Maggie commented that employees search for meaning and understanding in the leader's words and actions, which trickles down to staff's performance and treatment of clients. The participants saw that their responsibility also involves creating a pleasant environment where people want to work, and recognizing that goals cannot be reached without the involvement and support of others.

The concept of responsibility is an important attribute of relational cultural theory. Jordan, Kaplan, et al. (1991) offered that responsibility for others was essential to the concept of a person's relational self. For instance, Miller (1991) pointed to Gilligan as a reference in regard to self-development. "Gilligan's work in development psychology suggests that women's sense of self and of morality revolves around issues of responsibility for, care of, and inclusion of other people" (p. 25). Individual growth and development may also occur from assisting others with their growth and development (Surrey, 1991).

Greenleaf (1977) also referred to the responsibility a person has to themselves and to others:

> I think of responsibility as beginning with a concern for self, to receive that inward growth that gives serenity of spirit without which someone cannot truly say, "I am free." One moves, then, to a response to one's environment, whatever it is, so as to make a pertinent force of one's concern for one's neighbor—as a member of a family, a work group, a community, a world society. The outward and the inward are seen as parts of the same fabric. Responsible persons have both. (p. 306)

The ideas about responsibility to oneself and others expressed by Gilligan (1993), Greenleaf (1977), and Miller (1991), echo the sentiments of the participants. As Maggie noted, the leader sets the tone. The tone in itself is a compelling consideration, and due to its ethereal nature, can be easily overlooked when considering the responsibilities of a job. Tone, replete with its visible and invisible, tangible and intangible, and intended and unintended consequences, is reflected by the impact a leader has on employees.

In each case, the participants in this study spoke of their responsibility to their board of directors or trustees, funders, donors, employees, and to their clients as an essential element of their leadership. They also recognized that their actions influenced the organizational environment in tangible and intangible ways by establishing a sense of appropriate behavior, decorum, comportment, and responsibility.

Authenticity. Authenticity emerged as another dominant theme as participants spoke of their leadership journey. All of the participants spoke about authenticity as consisting of two elements: the ability to be yourself regardless of the activity, and being comfortable in your role. In examining how participants experienced authenticity, some of them used the term authenticity to describe how they communicated to staff and other stakeholders. Others referred to it figuratively, such as "being yourself," (Cynthia), "nothing to hide" (Adele), "understanding who you are and what you're doing, and being able to convey that to people" (Angel), "letting down boundaries" (Pia), "being straightforward [and the] sense of self" that comes from accepting who you are (Maggie). Participants remarked that authenticity can be as simple as showing your human side by being open to learning from staff about their areas of expertise, as well as their lives, or being transparent about matters in the organization other than confidential issues. In some cases it is the willingness to disclose inconsequential aspects of their humanity such as sharing personal stories or immaterial work mistakes. These leaders view authenticity as a strength that builds relationships.

The relevance of this theme is that authenticity affects the entire organization, as well as the leader's ability to perform the job she was entrusted to do. It may also include some of the minor forms of disclosure mentioned above.

Authenticity is explained in various ways by different theorists, which, when taken together create a coherent picture of authenticity. The dimensions of authenticity in this study are reflected in arguments offered by the following theorists.

First, the participants characterized authenticity as the ability to be themselves regardless of the activity. Authenticity is the ability to "feel emotionally 'real,' connected, vital, clear, and purposeful in relationship" (Surrey, 1991, p. 60). Authenticity is also one of eight relational skills Fletcher (1999) identified in her study which she described as the "ability to access and express one's own thoughts and feelings" (p. 86). The terms used by the participants to describe their relational interactions are consistent with both of these definitions.

As Kahn (2007) suggested, the more closely the work aligns with an individual's identity, the more likely their authentic self will emerge. "The depth of such connections enables people to bring themselves more authentically into their work—to say what they think and feel, to display their true gifts and capabilities, to react honestly to what they see and experience" (p. 190). This is also the "complete and therefore authentic self" (Regan & Brooks, 1995, p. 13).

Because the leaders in this study suggested that they relied on the expertise of staff when they their knowledge was lacking, being open to learning from staff was grouped under the theme of authenticity. Fletcher (2007) was another researcher who identified authenticity as an important skill for relational leaders, "leaders must be learners, open to influence from multiple sources" (p. 348). Each of the participants stressed their openness to hearing the viewpoints of others and recognized that "your best product is one that includes people—the key stakeholders both within the organization and outside of the organization" (Pia). They were willing to defer to those who had expertise in areas they did not and were genuinely interested in the viewpoints of others. Another aspect of authenticity is the opportunity to learn about the self by interacting with others, such as in a mentor relationship. "The whole idea of the mentor relationship allows me to feel like I'm constantly learning, that I'm always open to discover myself in this process" (Lola).

Two additional components of authenticity also emerged in this study—being comfortable in the leadership role and transparency. Authenticity is being comfortable in one's role as a leader, which is the willingness and ability to evolve:

> For my own ability to have a healthy and joyful experience as a leader, I had to evolve. I had to become much more compassionate. I had to become much more aware of what I said—my words, my thoughts, my deeds. I had to be really much more conscious of how I was coming across. (Lola)

The other aspect of authenticity that emerged from this study was the importance of transparency, which involves leader honesty and accountability to internal and external benefactors and beneficiaries. Transparency builds trust with people who report to the leader as well as the people to whom the leader is responsible, and involves keeping staff informed about decisions and the reasons behind decisions. However, transparency is also balanced against confidentiality and privacy needs, something that Maggie called a "need to know basis." This topic is discussed further in chapter 6.

As noted in the literature, the ability to lead relationally assumes an ability to be authentic to self and in relationships. The participants' views on authenticity mirror the literature emphasizing the value of being authentic and the many ways in which authenticity is communicated.

Relationship. One area of research was the relational nature of leadership. All of our leaders agreed that leadership is relational. They elaborated on the relational aspect of leadership by discussing the value of building and nurturing relationships to further the mission and purpose of the organization. This section examines how the participants described the relational aspect of their leadership. Each of them forged relationships with people internal and external to the organization in order to serve the mission of the organization, but also because they value people. This was evident from all of the leaders in this study, and was best expressed by two of the participants. When speaking about the dignity and respect she affords people, Adele said, "what's more important than another human being? Really, there's nothing that important." Maggie shared this sentiment and stated, "if you really take the time to get to know people personally, there are wonderful things about every person." Relationships develop over time and are maintained through interaction and exchange such as letting people know they are appreciated by thanking them for the work they do, taking an interest in them, inquiring about their needs, being receptive to learning about their work and personal lives, and listening to them "as if they matter" (Lola).

Relational dynamics also involved expecting that the people who work for you are really going to do the job they were hired to do and then letting them know by the way you look at them and speak to them that you trust and respect them. "You have to trust in their ability, and you have to serve their ability . . . you're going to respect the person's ability; you're going to monitor it; you're going to make it a friendship in the workplace" (Angel). Trust and respect are conveyed through positive, welcoming, and inclusive interactions that let staff know they are accepted and valued, such as being genuinely receptive to their suggestions and supporting them in developing their own leadership abilities.

The respect that comes from interaction and exchange flows from the leader to others, from others to the leader, and from person to person. It speaks to acknowledging others, recognizing and appreciating the role each person plays, and helping each other.

Relationship building and nurturing were core, rather than superfluous, activities for the leaders in this study requiring that the leader like people and be willing to interact with others. Relationships are an indispensable component of leading constituting the heart of relational leadership. As Fletcher (2007) notes "the construct of leadership is and always has been inherently relational . . . all perspectives implicitly acknowledge the fundamental relationship between leader and follower" (pp. 347-348). Russell (2003) identified the relational aspect of leadership as a "relational purpose" (p. 152). Her description encompasses the attributes of relationship for this study as well. According to Russell:

> Relational purpose is found in both leaders and followers, and in both individuals and groups. It is generally implicit, is influenced by individual and group history, and may change with time, context and group membership. My concept of relational purpose may be loosely defined as what the various participants hope to gain from the relationship, and the needs or purposes they hope the relationship will fulfil [sic]. (p. 152)

For this study, the relationship itself is the relational purpose. Participants interact with each other in furtherance of the mission, but also because the leaders believe that people are their first priority. These leaders are inclusive, receptive, and supportive because they want people to feel good about the work they do and about coming to the organization so that they can attend to the needs of clients with kindness.

As this section has discussed, the elements that emerged within the overarching category of leadership were mission, responsibility, authenticity, and relationship. These themes along with the themes that follow represent core features of the participants' leadership experience. The next section deals with the relational components of their leadership.

Leaders' Relational Practice

The second overarching category, relational practice, is comprised of the themes with which participants further illuminated their relational leadership experience. This section looks more deeply into the themes that emerged during the interviews. The essential relational elements are: engagement, caretaking, accessibility, and boundaries. Each of these themes further clarifies dynamics of leading relationally.

Engagement. One of the characteristics that participants identified as an element in their relationships as leaders was the quality of engaging staff in the mission. The title of this section came from Pia who described her process of inclusion and collaboration as "engaging" staff. In examining how the participants named and described this characteristic, engagement represents how these leaders work together with others. First, it includes allowing staff to share in management and to influence decisions whenever possible. Second, it is showing people that they are part of the team by seeking their input. Third, it is trusting that staff will do the right thing. Engagement is attempting to uncover the "particular potentials" (Lola) employees bring to the job and putting them to the best use. It is a process of discovering their ability so that they can support the mission and may require designing jobs around employees' skills and abilities. Fourth, engaging staff is a process of encouraging them through positive reinforcement and suggestion.

Engagement denotes the mutual understanding among these leaders and the people in their organizations about the quid pro quo the work and the work relationship offer. Engagement is similar to the concepts of inclusion and collaboration. Symbolically, engagement represents the connection between leaders and the people who work with and for them. The theme of engagement directs our attention to interconnection and the idea that the very nature of work entails collaborative and mutual commitment to the people who support the mission.

Engagement is represented in the literature through concepts of connection and collaboration. It aligns with the idea of self-in-relation as an essential component of relationship. "The fundamental processes of mutual relationship are mutual *engagement* (attention and interest), mutual *empathy*, and mutual *empowerment*" (Surrey, 1991, p. 167). It was also addressed by Quinn (2007) who argued that "high-quality connections create an energy" (p. 78)—eagerness and capacity to act—in people that benefits the organization. "From an exchange perspective, high quality connections generate energy because people drive utility or receive valued goods through the connection" (Quinn, 2007, p. 78). Part of the work of leadership is to uncover the "particular potentials," (Lola) or untapped ability employees bring to the job, which adds to our understanding of engagement in the literature set.

Caretaking. Caring for others was another essential characteristic of their relational practice as for participants. Leading with care is a fundamental aspect of a leader's responsibility to staff and extends to organizational values of accountability. There are numerous ways in which these leaders demonstrate their caring for staff: treating them with dignity and respect by not "talking down" to them (Adele) and "without being harsh," (Angel), being kind in word and deed and through forgiveness, which Maggie calls "grace." According to the participants, care is giving people an opportunity to be successful. It involves recognizing staff for their accomplishments and taking the time to let them know that their ideas, comments, and concerns are valued.

Care does not imply that these leaders neglect the tasks they were entrusted to accomplish, or that they avoid decisions and actions that are unpopular such as the dismissal of an employee when necessary (such as expressed by Maggie, Angel, and Lola). Care encompasses the conviction that everyone is accountable for himself or herself, to the leader, and to the mission. Part of the leader's role in caring is to provide needed resources so employees can support the mission. Care is being supportive and in return, these leaders expect respect and loyalty.

Care, caring, and caretaking are related concepts described by participants as assisting others, as well as the self to grow and actualize. In her book dedicated to the concept of caring, Noddings (1984) stated, "as human beings, we want to care and to be cared for" (p. 7). The germaneness of this statement is echoed by the participants, but also by other theorists, such as Gilligan (1993), Kaplan (1991), and Mayeroff (1971). Each of these writers contributed to the understanding of caretaking the leaders in this study referenced.

First, Mayeroff (1971) suggested that caring for another involves the growth and actualization of the other as well as the self:

> Through caring for certain others, by serving them through caring, a man lives the meaning of his own life. In the sense in which a man can ever be said to be at home in the world, he is at home not through dominating or explaining, or appreciating, but through caring and being cared for. (pp. 2-3)

Second, Gilligan (1993) noted, "the ideal of care is thus an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left out" (p. 62). Third, Kaplan (1991) highlighted that "higher socialization processes prepare women more generally for the caretaking and relational work of our society—whether that work be in the home or in paid employment" (p. 49). Taken together, these three approaches to the concept of care address the beliefs held by the participants.

Taking the idea of care a step further, care also involves personal accountability that extends to self, leader, followers, clients, stakeholders, and the mission. Accountability means that each person does what they were entrusted to do and what the job requires, and is a necessary part of the caretaking.

Accessibility. Being accessible to staff members was another essential characteristic of leading relationally for these leaders. Participants mentioned two types of accessibility, being physically accessible to staff and being psychologically open to hear what people have to say. For all of the participants, accessibility was represented by an open door to their office. The open door is both literally inviting everyone in, and symbolically reflecting their accessibility to staff for any reason. Their doors are usually open and they are always available and receptive. Lola described her approach as, "I give everybody a chance. When they walk through the door I give them my time, and I pretty much listen to the direction they want to go to, and then I give them an opportunity."

The participants expressed a desire to answer questions, hear suggestions, and respond to concerns and complaints. In some cases, "the open door policy means that I don't shut you out" (Angel). In other instances, it serves to let people know that they will support staff in whatever capacity is needed. "People have to know that you have their back, and especially in an environment where there's crisis, that something might come up, and that you're accessible" (Maggie).

The open door communicates to others that the leader is approachable, reachable, and welcoming. It represents an element of disclosure and honesty, and makes the leader visible to all. It also suggests the continuity of the organization and inclusion of others in leadership. It is a figurative gateway leading to the other themes of the mission, responsibility, authenticity, relationship, engagement, and caretaking discussed earlier. It would appear that to lead relationally, one must be open to engage in and with those relationships. Thus, accessibility would be a paramount characteristic of this type of leadership practice.

Boundaries. Boundaries—setting them, honoring them, and shifting them—were highlighted by all of the participants as a characteristic of leading relationally. Boundaries represent the line of demarcation between what is acceptable and unacceptable, or appropriate and inappropriate. The discussion that follows represents a composite of the types of boundaries that are possible. Although not every leader spoke to every area, they each spoke to one or more category depending on the closeness of the relationship (i.e., employee acquaintance or employee friend).

First, the most expected boundary is between the leader's personal life and work life. As Emmy stated, "I didn't believe in socializing with them [outside of work]." These leaders invested a lot of time and energy in the workplace. Some had family demands that required extra effort to ensure that the overflow of work into their family life did not have a deleterious effect on life outside of work. This was accomplished through conscious action to keep priorities in balance to the degree possible with the knowledge that the divide was imperfect.

Second, each of these leaders maintained a degree of emotional distance so that they were able to continue to serve the mission and serve the greatest number of people. For Pia, maintaining an emotional distance is something she had to learn. "It's sometimes difficult to not get very personally involved with one another, and I think that's where I grew, and I learned about boundaries, and I had to keep distant in certain areas."

Third, boundaries also were important in the area of disclosure to maintain their privacy around deeply personal issues, as well as respecting the privacy of their employees. As Angel stated, "the relationship ends where I think it should end, and that's no intimacy as far as my personal life [is concerned].” There was some disclosure subdued with the knowledge that asking staff to support them with their personal needs is an unnecessary burden for them. It takes away from what staff should be focusing on and may create speculation, doubt, and uncertainty.

A fourth type of boundary arises around roles. Part of their role as leaders is to support staff, and the role of staff is to support the mission of the organization. At times, the support the leader gives to staff will extend beyond the workplace to personal issues. For instance, Angel said, “I think I’m not really close to anyone, but I take you under my wing to be close when I think you need my support.” Emotional distancing was seen as an important component as staff members experienced personal hardships. Recognizing the crisis and assisting to the degree possible with a personal problem can serve the mission of the organization because most people will come back more committed and available.

A fifth type of boundary setting, for leaders like Cynthia, extended to the recruitment of volunteers and tutoring sites. She approached people courteously; she did not force herself on others by insisting that her services were needed. If they became a volunteer, she did not overwhelm them by providing too much information and did not smother them with frequent interactions.

The sixth boundary area involves a set of examples related to friendship. While some of these leaders had friends who worked with them, they were clear about the boundary between friendship and leadership. This means that leadership can be friendly and friendship can involve leadership, but the work is at the center of the relationship. For those leaders who maintain public sphere friendships with employees, there is a boundary around the level of relational closeness. Adele, who is one of the leaders who has friends in the office, explained closeness this way: “I have a lot of acquaintances; I have a lot of people that like me; I have very few friends.” Most of these leaders are able to maintain their boundaries, but recognized that the “friendly-type of interaction” (Maggie) did present the possibility that boundaries could be challenged.

Boundaries play a fundamental role in defining the limits and responsibilities of the relationship including acceptable behavior, and serve as a counterbalance to accessibility. Boundaries are also literal in the sense that the leader is a distinct individual from others. Metaphorically, boundaries represent emotional, psychological, experiential, and physical distance.

The role of boundaries appeared several times in the reviewed literature. First, Kahn’s (2007) discussion of the role of boundaries serves to generalize the specific distinctions identified above. “Positive relationships occur within the context of boundaries that enable people to feel safe. Boundaries define our groups and communities. They show who is clearly inside. They enable people to feel contained within a social system” (p. 280). The one area from this study that may not be easily associated with Kahn’s description of boundaries above is the restraint Cynthia used in her work relationships. “But I don’t overwhelm; I don’t smother people.”

Boundaries can also be viewed as varying degrees of relational closeness expressed by Kahn (2007) as relational constellations. “Relation constellations are created at the intersection of circumstance, opportunity, chance, and individual agency. There are, of course, situational constraints that shape people’s relational constellations” (p. 195). The idea of relational constellations was prevalent in the narratives of these leaders when they spoke about the people with whom they were the closest and their efforts to include others who were acquaintances and staff members rather than friends.

A third view of boundaries concerns a possible challenge of maintaining roles that have been viewed as incompatible. Morrison and Nolan's (2007) research suggests that combining work and friendship between peers has the potential to distort role boundaries because of their discordant expectations:

> Although friendship may be valuable both for both employees and organizations, some aspects of these relationships (such as the blurring of boundaries, time available to devote to the friendship, and distraction from work) mean that having friends within the workplace can create numerous difficulties for employees. The secondary effects from these difficulties are that employers may have reduced work outputs, a result of distraction or anxiety caused by employees having to manage their workplace friendships. (p. 34)

However, the participants in this study do not see the incompatibility. The leaders in this study maintained boundaries by separating leadership from friendship, meaning that the first priority was the work. Participants were attentive to the organizational structure and culture and that the purpose of the organization was the nucleus for interaction regardless of whether they maintained public sphere friendships. For instance, Lola replaced one of her friends with someone who had the skills she needed for a particular grant project. Adele only socializes with her friends outside of the office. Pia learned to keep the needs of the organization at the forefront while attending to the personal needs of one of her assistants. She realized that regardless of the magnitude of the problem, she could not allow her assistant's personal issues to interfere with fulfilling the mission.

Uhl-Bien (2006) has referred to relational leadership as an array of interactions resulting in the generation of some form of cognitive, affective, or behavioral responses. The themes that emerged from this study can be viewed as an elaboration of her overview. The different participants articulated the overarching category of relational leadership in different ways, but essential characteristics emerged that have been articulated in this section. Their relational approaches differ as described in the narrative, but the same essential themes emerged. Their relationships are very important to them and they invest in these relationships by investing in people.

Relational Sub-themes

Relational sub-themes—influence, fun, friendship, and mentorship—were those ideas articulated by at least three, but not all six, participants. So they were less prevalently articulated characteristics of relational leadership, yet still significant to at least half of the participants. These sub-themes, while somewhat less prevalent than the themes just discussed, are still aspects of relational practice. They are separated into this section to distinguish them from essential themes for all the participants and to illustrate the individualized aspect of leadership-relational practice nexus.

Influence (or power?). Participants conveyed that their personal expertise and position or status provided a platform to influence others. However, not everyone was comfortable with describing their influence as power. Of the six participants, only Maggie and Lola perceived and named power as their ability to make positive change and influence outcomes and readily associated power with their roles as leaders. They understood power as the ability to bring about change, as well as a requirement and responsibility of the job. Cynthia interpreted power as having two components: expertise and the perception of others—the latter of which was connected to her views about the role of gender and leadership discussed later in this chapter. For two of the other participants (Adele and Angel), power carried with it the negative connotation of control and force. Adele described power as a "male-dominated" approach to leadership and a "silly . . . dirty" word in line with the view of power as "domination" over others (Holvino, 2007, p. 362).

Adele's reaction to power may have been due to the "social context of patriarchy," which Fletcher (2007) refers to as a "power dynamic" (p. 359). Fletcher continued:

> the [relational cultural theory] RCT analysis of gender and power dynamic has important relevance for the study of relational leadership. Specifically, it suggests that the inappropriate association of relationality with femininity and powerlessness is an important factor to consider in understanding the experience and consequences of enacting relational leadership. (p. 359)

None of the participants in this study considered themselves powerless, rather they considered their relational sensibility an asset in performing the duties of their responsibilities as leader and organization head. As noted earlier, some were very aware of their power and comfortable in describing it as such. Others were not.

Follett's (1927) distinction of power with and power over seems to aptly capture the experience of the participants:

> It seems to me that whereas power usually means power-over, the power of some person or group over some other person or group, it is possible to develop the conception of power-with, a jointly developed power, co-active, not a coercive power. (p. 103)

As noted by Holvino (2007):

> Scholars in this tradition [relational practice] suggest that there is a difference between traditionally masculine power, which is defined as "power-over," and feminine power, which is defined as "power-with" or "power-to." Thus this framework focuses on shared power, relational power, collaboration, feminist collectives, and the mutual empowerment of women. (p. 366)

Power with, rather than power over, represents the way in which the participants lead. Their power is used for the good of others, and is reflected in their relational practice. Burns (1978) also had something to say about power referring to it as "a *relationship* among persons" (p. 12). He asserted that both the leader and follower have some form of power (e.g., ideas, skills, contacts), along with motives that are exchanged for some purpose. While this study did not delve into the leaders' perception of the followers' power, their power is implied through the competencies they bring to the organization.

The significance of this section is that all of these leaders are in positions of authority and are able to bring about positive change in the lives of others because of their actions. Yet, some of them used a connotation of power that caused them to reject the word. Regardless of whether these leaders described their transformative capabilities as influence or power, they each were able to use this capacity to accomplish tasks and take action that ensured that the mission of the organization is well served.

Fun. One of the unique characteristics of relationships that almost all participants practiced, and noted in our interviews, was the importance of having fun. While fun may have been described differently by participants, it shared the quality of facilitating the work. What was striking was that, regardless of how serious the issues these women faced and how critical the mission and purpose of their work, they spoke of balancing professionalism with fun. Fun is often an effect of the work and assists, rather than interrupts operations as it dispels stress. In some cases fun was an aspect of organizational culture. For these leaders, fun is revealing their playful side, having a sense of humor, and laughing. Fun might include bringing in food treats for everyone to share, having a cup of coffee or an occasional lunch with someone, or going for a walk while discussing a work issue. They mix laughter and fun with the work because they believe laughter simultaneously keeps people going, while giving staff members a break. The leaders' role in promoting fun and laughter in the office includes some pleasant small talk or chitchat, and being cordial. There may also be some self-disclosure involved. However, disclosure did not include burdening others with personal problems while being receptive to hearing the issues and concerns of their staff members. As Maggie stated, "we could talk about our favorite restaurants, or our favorite clothing stores, or an activity, or something we did on our anniversary [like going to] a nice restaurant."

Laughter and fun are taken-for-granted aspects of experience that are typically outside of the discussion about work. Notwithstanding, the participants in this study placed fun directly in the line of work rather than something extraneous. Fun provides the counterbalance to responsibility and a bi-directional channel to the primary themes of authenticity, relationship, engagement, caretaking, and accessibility.

Fun was not addressed in the literature reviewed for this study. It adds richness to the expansive nature of relational leadership. The absence of it in the literature appears to be a gap. Ideas about relationship and friendship may imply fun, but this is not a concept that was specifically mentioned as a core concept. Nevertheless, fun has emerged as a secondary theme in this research and warrants further study.

Friendship. Most of these leaders' work relationships fall in the category of professional acquaintance, colleague, or employee. However, when asked about the role of friendships with employees, four of the participants shared that they maintained friendships with one or more members of their work group. For three of the participants, their public sphere friendships extended to their personal lives. This section discusses the major components of the friendship relationship.

As discussed in the course of the interviews, like friendships formed in the private realm, public sphere friendships develop over time, and usually occur with a small number of people. For these leaders, the best prospect for friendship was with people who were independent workers and did not need a lot of supervision. The value of this type of friendship is that there is an added level of comfort because leaders can count on the extra effort that accompanies close relationships and the leader can focus on relationship building with other members of the organization. Attraction is based on personality, values, and common interests. There is a mutual concern and caring for the individual along with respect, loyalty, and trust, balanced against their individual roles and the needs of the organization. When the friendship extends to the private sphere, there is a higher level of intimacy and confiding that takes place. Friendships contained within the workplace have less intimacy than a personal friendship or a "heart friend" (Angel).

The participants who maintain public sphere friendships shared how they tried to be careful not to show any preferential treatment or to spend time exclusively with their friends. The "art" (Pia) of working with friends is to separate the friendship from the work relationship. These leaders do this by taking time to forge other types relationships with other staff members, and treating everyone fairly. Adele approaches her friendships this way, "I never let [friendship] interfere. I never go to lunch and sit alone with a person. I talk to everybody. You just have to include everybody, be as inclusive as possible and then your friendships are simple."

The theme of friendship adds to our understanding about relational leadership in several ways. First, it demonstrates that leadership and friendship can occur together. It also suggests that friendships between a leader and follower can be mutually satisfying in that leaders and their friends have an additional outlet for stressful work situations. Third, friendships increase the leader's awareness about attending to relationships with other people in their organization, thereby making everyone feel valued and appreciated. And, as represented in their stories, public sphere friendships also make the work fun, contributing to a positive work environment.

Research addressing leader-follower friendships suggests that the workplace is a fertile area for this type of friendship to develop (Boyd & Taylor, 1998; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Song & Olshfski, 2008; Tse et al., 2008). These studies brought out the following observations. Leader-follower friendships develop as a result of repeated interactions, but do not progress to the best friend level (Boyd & Taylor, 1998), positive employee work attitudes correlate with leader-follower friendship opportunity (Song & Olshfski, 2008), open and honest communication that includes some disclosure facilitates leader-follower friendships (Sias & Cahill, 1998), and leader-follower friendships affect work attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions (Tse et al., 2008).

Participants who engaged in public sphere friendships found that the workplace was more enjoyable because of the level of closeness they shared with their friends. They were also mindful of the possible impact their friendships could have on others and interacted with other staff members regularly. For instance, disclosure of insignificant details could be part of office sharing rather than only reserved for friends. Like friendships in the private sphere, these leaders are attracted to others because of factors such as personality, values, and similar interests, and the friendships are developed over time. The difference in the workplace is that work roles and organizational requirements not only provide the organizing principle for the work; they also provide the link for the friendship and a platform for leadership.

It is interesting to explore this further in relationship to Perreault's (2005) metaphor of leadership as friendship. In the cases above, it is not the metaphor of leadership as friendship that is being made apparent, but friendship in leadership, which is being experienced. Not every leader in this study maintained public sphere friendships, but for those who did, they found a way to balance seemingly incongruent roles. In addition, for some, their public sphere friendship enhanced the relationships they had with other members of the organization when they purposefully formed relationships with them.

Mentorship. The mentor relationship was the final relational sub-theme that emerged from four participants--Maggie, Lola, Pia, as protégés, and Adele as mentor. The three leaders who are also protégés rely on their mentors for guidance, support, and, sometimes, friendship. Their mentors recognize their talents and freely give their time and advice. These mentor relationships are reciprocal, and depending on the field, the mentors were both men and women (as in the case of Lola). The mentor relationship is considered an opportunity with a high degree of trust where advising can go in both directions. The mentor relationship can also extend beyond workplace advice:

> I can talk to her about any and everything, and she's always giving me guidance, or giving me advice on just our role as women—what's important in terms of our relationships, and what's important in terms of how we're dealing in the workplace with people. (Lola)

Adele is a mentor to one of her public sphere friends. When speaking about the woman she mentors, Adele noted, "she's very warm, very friendly. . . . She's very much my right hand person. I bounce things off her. I trust her confidentiality when it's something that's tricky."

There are two theories in the literature review in chapter 2 that are relevant to this study. The first theory came from Kram and Isabella (1985) who suggested that peer relationships present a complementary alternative to the unequal relationship implied by traditional mentoring understanding. Their perspective is relevant because two of the participants (Maggie and Lola) maintain mentor relationships with peers, and Adele considers her protégé as having equal status because of her position in the organization. The second theory comes from Fletcher and Ragins (2007) who advanced the concept of relational mentoring. According to Fletcher and Ragins, "the concept of relational mentoring makes visible the reciprocal and mutual nature of high-quality relationships . . . [and emphasizes] . . . interdependence and connection" (p. 375). Using the relational cultural theory lens, relational mentoring recognizes the fluid nature of the mentoring experience and is the concept most closely aligned with the mentoring relationships experienced by the participants.

Research Surprises.

As much as I attempted to enter the research process as objectively as possible, I was surprised at a few points during discovery. I attribute these surprises to preconceived notions about certain areas such as the role of fun, disability, and gender. For this, I referred back to Gadamer (1997) who cautions, "the important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its one truth against one's own fore-meanings" (p. 269). Fun emerged as a subtheme and has already been discussed, so this section concentrates on disability and gender.

On to Itself—The Role of Disability

Pia was particularly in touch with the role her disability played in her leadership practice. She described her disability as the greatest influence on her development as a leader. This was a surprise to me. The word *disability* conjured up a frame of inconvenience so I had not considered the leadership significance of Pia's physical limitations. Pia spoke of her disability in terms of how it made her a better leader—far from impairing her it strengthened her capacities. As I reflected on this concept, I realized that it had never occurred to me to connect leadership and disability as complementary concepts. Some leadership literature speaks to the impact of person's background, childhood experiences, and physical characteristics on their leadership style and practice. Most notable in the literature review are Sinclair (2007) and Sinclair and Wilson (2002), who recognized the leadership-shaping impact of a person's early development:

> Backgrounds and personal histories cannot be ignored. Values and habits learned from family; major changes in schooling; landmark circumstances like a parent's death or even moving to a new place—all these life events shape the way in which individuals interact with the world, including the world of work. (Sinclair & Wilson, 2002, p. 16)

Sinclair (2007) continued this theme by recognizing the effect of childhood experiences. "All childhoods shape people's appetites for and vulnerabilities in leadership" (p. 59). Sinclair noted that knowledge of one's background creates a pathway to understanding one's assumptions, motivations, sensitivities, difficulties, and advantages for individual leaders.

Pia was particularly in touch with the role her disability played in her leadership practice, and the need it created to being sensitive to building relationships. Pia believed that learning to work with others in order to get her needs met was the best leadership training possible. She was also aware that, while her disability taught her to be a leader, it also created a more intense dependence on others than is expected in a leadership relationship. Keeping this in mind, Pia was sensitive to her individual need to build relations across the spectrum of the organization. The role of disability is discussed further in chapter 6.

A Word on Gender

Participants were asked to discuss whether their leadership was influenced by gender. Three of the participants in this study consciously thought of their gender as a significant factor in their leadership. While all identified aspects of their relationships with others that aligned with their relational self, their views about the impact of gender on their leadership are attributed to their perspective and particular experiences in their lives and leadership journey. The three participants who considered gender a lens for their leadership style include Maggie, who identified herself as a feminist, Adele, and Angel. Adele commented, "women, by nature, are much more nurturing, are much better listeners, [and] are more compassionate . . . I think women by nature of who we are . . . by our compassionate natures, by our motherly concerns for people that we involve ourselves more emotionally." Angel asserted that she shares with the female members of the office staff a "nurturing understanding of what it is to be a parent, a mother, a woman, a sister, or wife." Motherly concerns as well as the idea of mother as a metaphor for leadership appeared in research conducted by Erkut (2006). Specifically, Erkut noted, "Mothering metaphors for leadership tended to highlight the people-oriented relational practices associated with leadership such as fostering talent and empowering others" (p. 8). Angel is equally comfortable working with her male counterparts and believes that exclusion is a matter of attitude, not gender "if you want to be in, you'll be in."

There are several references to gender in the literature, each adding a view that gender may add a positive variable to leadership. For instance, Eagly (2005) cited research suggesting "women in powerful roles promote somewhat kinder more socially compassionate version of organizational goals and social policies" (p. 467). While, "cooperation, mentoring, and collaboration" (Eagly, 2007, p. 2) as well as "inclusion and connection" (Helgesen, 1990, p. 26) are typically associated with a feminine style of leading, these same characteristics are also considered vital leadership qualities (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003).

Fletcher (2007) notes that "relationality [matches the] social construction of gender" (p. 360) presented by West and Zimmerman (1987). As women practice relational skills, they in effect "do gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 125)—because their experience differs from a man's, their experience is therefore gendered (Arp, 2000). Some of the participants recognized aspects of their personality traditionally attributed to women that inform their leadership. They considered these attributes strengths that have helped them succeed whether working with men or women. Despite possessing relational skills, three of the women in this study did not view gender as an overriding consideration in their leadership practice.

I believe that a distinction can be drawn between what is found in much of the literature and what is understood by individuals who may not be naming their experience the way it is found in the literature. This highlights their unique frame of reference about life events and the meaning assigned to them. For instance, the prominence of Pia's disability appeared to her to be more significant in the shaping, and practicing of, her leadership. Whether how she led had anything to do with gender never occurred to Pia. The same is true for Lola who initially followed what she called a male model of leadership that she intentionally adjusted to align with adjustments in her worldview rather than gender. Cynthia's comments about gender—that men had and were perceived to have power--were very telling. Cynthia lead collaboratively and inclusively, believing that she was able to influence others while also believing that the next director needed to be a man in order to be taken seriously. The interview provided them an opportunity to consider the role of gender in their leadership. Despite the literature and the description they provided about their leadership practices, comments by three of the participants were discordant with the scholarly understanding of role gender in leadership.

Relational Leadership: Leadership and Friendship

This study began with the premise that relational cultural theory was the overarching relational philosophy that formed the outermost concentric ring framing relational leadership, and that positive work relationship theory was the public realm expression of that theory. Fletcher (2007) also made this connection in putting forth her ideas about relational leadership. She said that the standard for leadership to be considered relational was that it had to meet the touchstone of mutuality, for leaders and followers, on the five principles of relational cultural theory's self-in-relation model: "zest, . . . empowered action, . . . increased sense of worth, . . . new knowledge, . . . [and] desire for more connection" (p. 353).

While a true exploration of mutuality requires research that includes all parties to the relationship, the comments by the leaders in this study suggested that, from their perspective, mutuality may be present in their leadership relationships. First, participants used "passion" (Adele, Angel, Maggie, Lola, Cynthia) and "energy" (Angel) to describe their experience and spoke about the passion that the people who work for them bring to the job. This is corresponds to Fletcher's (2007) "zest" (p. 353). Second, in agreement with Fletcher's "empowered action" (p. 353), these leaders reported that they and their staff were committed to the work they were doing. Third, an "increased sense of worth" (Fletcher, 2007, p. 353) was expressed as feeling good about their contributions. As Adele stated, "we enjoy each other, and it's a good way to work." Fourth, these leaders expressed a desire to learn from their employees, and they took the time to teach them. This is similar to Fletcher's "new knowledge" (p. 353). Fifth, these leaders are inclusive and collaborate whenever they can, as in Fletcher's "desire for collaboration" (p. 353). They allow their staff to influence them and value the input they receive from others, and the leader also influences staff members. Sixth, the relationship among leaders and followers extends to the clients, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the relational leadership experience. In order for this to be a true measure of mutuality, a more complete study involving leaders and their followers is needed.

Perreault's (2005) metaphor leadership and friendship inspired this study, therefore, I gave the participants an opportunity to reflect on her metaphor and whether it resonated with their own understanding of their leadership practice. Prior to being asked this question, none of them would have looked at leadership in this way. Each of them readily accepted the relational aspect of leadership and promoted a friendly atmosphere within their workplace. Some even had friends who worked for them and others had personal friends outside of the workplace that provided support for their personal and work lives. The participants recognized that most of their relationships were professional and that some of these relationships could become friendships. There were two reactions: rejection of the suggestion of leadership as friendship or consideration of its metaphoric significance.

For those participants who understood the figurative significance, they referred to valued characteristics attributable to both leadership and friendship: communication, trust, patience, authenticity, mutual respect, teamwork, honesty, forgiveness, as well as giving staff a stake in the organization, doing the work together, sharing in management, sharing a sense of humor, recognizing their talents, performing random acts of kindness, and mentoring. Leadership as friendship was described as a friendship and love as a result of the work (Maggie) and as a process of recognizing the talents in others, trying to accept people as they are, and believing and acting on the belief that everyone, regardless of role, is valuable. The most accurate description of this phenomenon came from Angel who explained that there is a "friendship in the office" that has resulted from the "understanding" and "respect" that is given to each person. Angel continued:

> I think it's a matter of personality, and who you are when you're a leader, when you're in that position. I think it comes—It just comes easy to befriend people, and just to have like a family—a friendship, but it's not a friendship that you have with others [in your personal life], but it's enough of a trust in each other.

While none of the participants had heard of this metaphor before or applied it to their own leadership journey, this research gave them the opportunity to reflect on it in relation to their organization. When considering relational leadership through the lens of leadership as friendship, Perreault (2005) proposed that the relationship involves the quintessential factors associated with relational leadership: concern for others and self, connection, listening, support, respect, collaboration, and optimism. All of these relational aspects were identified in some form in this study and were discussed in relation to the study participants and the essential themes garnered from their narratives. While all of the essential components Perreault proposed run through all of the themes identified in this study, there are certain themes that are particularly relevant.

The first component is whether leaders consider their welfare as well as that of others. The leaders in this study revealed that the relationship they shared with staff and other stakeholders was an essential aspect of their experience. Their welfare and that of others was demonstrated through the theme of caretaking. Feeling connected with others is the second factor demonstrated through the theme of engagement. Listening to others and trying to understand their point of view is the third factor recognizable through the themes of responsibility and accessibility. The fourth component, affirming the best in people regardless of their affiliation (support), and the fifth component, respecting others as moral equals, are present in the theme of relationship. The final factor, optimism, was prevalent in all of the themes, especially the mission, which provides the participants motivation for their work. All of Perreault's (2005) essential factors are qualities these leaders exercise in their relational practice. The lived experience of these relational leaders certainly gives real world examples of friendship in leadership, and a recognition of the ways in which relationally leading can be referred to as leadership as friendship.

Conclusion

I have explored the themes of relational leadership and the degree to which the metaphor of leadership as friendship described its qualities. The themes arose from a careful review of the interviews and reflection. To the best of my ability, I have ventured to bracket my own experiences and disabling prejudices. Part of this process was to step away from the questions and to look for the themes the participants were presenting. The themes reflected in this chapter surfaced from their texts.

I identified three levels of themes: leadership themes, relational practice themes, and relational sub-themes. These themes include the mission, responsibility, authenticity, relationship, engagement, caretaking, accessibility, boundaries, influence, fun, friendship, and mentorship. I also compared the participants' experience with the five components of mutuality from relational cultural theory that relate to relational leadership. Finally, I presented the participant's views on the metaphor of leadership as friendship, their views on gender, reflected the participant's unique experiences, and presented, as accurately as possible, the essence of relational leadership.

In chapter 6, I discuss implications for my own leadership, for the study of leadership theory and practice, and for future research. Study limitations are also explored.

Chapter VI: Implications and Limitations

"You emanate who you are, the kindness that you accept people for who they are, I think that's very apparent. I think you attract people because of the energy field you give" (Angel).

My purposes for chapter 6 are to reflect on the learning from this research, to consider its value, and to discuss what it has contributed to our knowledge about relational leadership. Chapter 6 explores implications of this research for both the theory of leadership and the practice of leading change. I draw from some additional literature to discuss some of the concepts within the themes not covered by the literature set in chapter 2. The implications and limitations of this study for future research and a discussion of the research's impact on my own practice are also considered.

Implications for Leadership Theory

This dissertation considered the experience of women leaders who consider themselves relational leaders and explored their understanding of and resonance with the notion of leadership as friendship. The experience of these leaders was described in chapter 4 providing the reader with individual point-in-time snapshots of the leadership practices of participants. Emerging literature on relational leadership has shifted the focus of leader-centric models of leadership to a focus on the relationship between the leader and the led. This study explores Perreault's (2005) leadership as friendship metaphor using a phenomenological approach to view the experience of relational leadership. Because little research has focused on relational leadership using the lens of leadership as friendship, this study expands the leadership literature. By examining the experiences of the six leaders to uncover the degree to which they resonated with Perreault's metaphor, an enriched image of relational leadership is offered. The relational leadership practices of the women in this study provided examples of essential components of a relational approach to leadership such as authenticity, engagement, caretaking, and accessibility.

The leadership as friendship metaphor presented by Perreault (2005) has been reviewed through phenomenological inquiry. The lived experience in relationship to the metaphor of leadership as friendship has been examined and adds to the leadership literature on workplace (public sphere) relationships. As discussed in chapter 2, the literature on relational leadership includes relational leadership theory (e.g., Boyd & Taylor, 1998; Fletcher, Jordan, & Miller, 2000; Uhl-Bien, 2003, 2005; Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003), and relational practice (Buttner, 2001; Fletcher, 1999). This dissertation looked at relational leadership from the leader's perspective and considered the metaphor of leadership as friendship to describe its qualities. This research has shown that real leaders can, and do, find ways to lead with friends, to lead with characteristics one finds in friendship, or both. It demonstrated that leaders can have actual friendships (with each other and with their followers or subordinates), provided boundaries are maintained. Leader-follower friendships present another opportunity for research and is discussed later in this chapter.

This research constructs a composite of the possible expressions of relational leadership in consideration of leadership as friendship. Four literature areas were reviewed. Relational cultural theory (Jordan, Kaplan, et al., 1991; Surrey, 1991), positive work relationship theory (Dutton & Ragins, 2007), relational leadership theory (e.g., Brower et al., 2000; Drath, 2001; Murrell, 1997; Perreault, 2005; Uhl-Bien, 2006), and public sphere friendship theory (e.g., O'Connor, 1998; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Song & Olshfski, 2008) as lenses for understanding relational leadership in relationship to leadership as friendship.

Each participant was given an opportunity to consider the statement pondered the question of leadership as friendship. While they had not considered this correlation prior to the interview, several of the participants reflected on aspects of their leadership that shared similar characteristics with the metaphor. Other participants did not see leadership and friendship as congruent concepts.

This research also contemplated the relationship between gender and relational leadership. There is a considerable amount of literature in this area, some of which is reviewed in chapter 2 (e.g., Acker, 1990; Deutsch, 2007; Eagly, 2005; West & Zimmerman, 1987), suggesting that gender is a significant factor. Yet, the leaders in this study were divided in their views about the role of gender in their leadership practice. I believe that there are several possible reasons for this. The first may simply be the differences in the experiences of each of the participants. For instance, Pia's physical disability overshadowed any gender issues. Lola modeled her early leadership style after significant male role models and viewed her leadership as evolving as a result of her personal growth, rather than gender. Cynthia suggested that her leadership was a result of doing what needed to be done, noting that gender may be a factor in terms of the perception others may have about a leader's power. However, Maggie was definitive that being a woman was her greatest leadership asset, and both Angel and Adele believed that some of their inclinations toward listening and caring for example could be attributed to gender. A second possible reason for the disparity in the belief in the role of gender may be the difference between scholarly understanding and practitioners' understanding of their experiences. While the literature is rich with references to the impact of gender, without this baseline of understanding, it is possible for a person to name their experience without being informed by the literature. It is also possible that having knowledge of the literature does not preclude an individual from naming their experience differently.

Finally, this research adds to our understanding of essential elements of the relationship between leaders and staff. Accessibility and fun have been added to the list of relational competencies offering more detail of organizational realities, particularly mission-driven service nonprofits.

Implications for Leadership Practice

The findings from this research can assist leaders in understanding that the affinity that builds between relational leaders and followers results in positive work environments, can also be a source for public sphere friendship, and might bring fun into the workplace. Leading relationally also has some inherent risks, such as the possibility that professional boundaries could be affected. All of the leaders in this study who maintained actual workplace friendship identified some challenges such as maintaining boundaries and ensuring that other members of the organization felt included. Despite the risks, workplace friendships can be an added source of satisfaction.

A picture of six different leaders has been presented. My motivation for conducting this research was two-fold. First, I had hoped to tell the stories of the participants in order to illuminate some of the ways in which relational leadership is practiced. Second, I hoped that other leaders in the field would be able to relate to these leaders and their stories. I learned that these women were able to maintain a variety of different positive relationships while attending to the organizational purpose. The mission, in tandem with relationships, drives them. In addition, having fun is as important as making tough decisions and having high expectations. The synergy created by a balanced approach to leadership provides them with a sense of satisfaction and connection. The participants in this study had an opportunity to reflect on what is important in their leadership relationships. I hope their stories are an inspiration for other leaders.

Limitations and Implications for Further Study

Every research study has limitations—this study is no exception. The research design was qualitative using phenomenology. The study was comprised of a small sample consisting of six women leaders who were studied through one to three interviews. All of the information was a self-reported construction of reality as the participants saw it. The very nature of this method is both a strength for revealing its truths in that each participant is an expert of their subjective experience and a limitation in that some personal biases may exist and because it may not be possible to extend its meaning beyond the experiences of the participants. Observation at the worksite was limited by two factors: interviews conducted at the worksite and in conjunction with the interview. No additional observation was conducted and staff members were not included in data gathering. Because the purpose of this study was to describe the experience of leaders, no attempt was made to explain or predict behavior. My goal was to explore lived experience. Nonetheless, the research design was appropriate for the goal of learning from the participants who are experts on their own experience.

This research has been limited to the experiences of six women leaders. All of them are, or were, leading an agency with a human-services focus, serving different segments of the population (i.e., poor, homeless, illiterate, the elderly, victims of domestic violence, and youth). There are some minimal demographic distinctions. Four of the women are Caucasian, one is of Spanish decent, one is an African American, and one woman has a physical disability. The women range in age from 43 to 73 (two are in their 50s; one is in her 60s; two are in their 70s).

All of the women work or worked somewhere in New Jersey for a nonprofit or governmental agency as an executive director or director, and would be described as middle class. At the time of the interview, their staff included paid workers and volunteers ranging from five to 120 members. For the participant with the smallest workforce, the size of her staff was connected to funding opportunities. For my purposes, this design was appropriate; however, other research approaches may add another dimension of understanding and significance.

Given the demographic distinctions, there are some areas for further research. Expanding this research to include other ethnicities, nationalities, other parts of the country, organizations with a higher number of staff, and other business segments would broaden the research horizon. It would also be interesting to conduct a mixed-group (male and female leaders) comparative study.

Approaching the study of relational leadership looking at leader-employee dyads, leader-employee friend dyads, or an ethnographic or case study of a workplace would also add another dimension of understanding to leadership theory. The topic could also be explored from a perspective of relational progress and friendship development. Another research possibility is a quantitative design using a larger survey to study trends across a broader array of leaders.

This research began to explore the leader's experience of relational leadership. It is, however, only a beginning. While the participants' approaches to leadership are uniquely theirs, all of the participants are relational leaders. Prior to this research, none of the participants would have linked leadership and friendship. An interesting follow-up study would be to determine whether anything has changed in their practice as a result of their participation.

Additional Literature and Other Areas of Possible Research

Like other research, this study resulted in additional questions and areas of possible inquiry. While the areas that follow can always be added to, and therefore do not represent a comprehensive listing, they are offered here as an introduction to literature that addresses some of the theme areas as well as suggesting additional research areas**.**

Disability as a leadership strength. Theorists such as Sinclair (2007) have noted the influence on childhood experience on one's leadership, and several of the participants spoke about the impact their childhood had on their leadership pursuits. This bears special relevance for Pia who was born with a disability. Contrary to common perceptions, she identified her greatest leadership strength as her disability. Pia stated that having a disability put her in a position of having to lead others her entire life. Pia's experience is consistent with how Wills (1995) describes the experience of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Wills suggested that Roosevelt's defining moment was when he was stricken with polio, noting that Roosevelt's disability actually made him a better leader.

> If Roosevelt had power, it came precisely from his responsiveness to public opinion. And that came, indirectly, from the crushing blow that took from him, at the age of thirty-nine, all future use of his legs. . . . Roosevelt's polio did not separate him from others but drove him out toward them. (p.26)

Studying the development of leadership skills from the vantage point of a disability would be a fascinating area for further research and could present an intriguing paradigm shift.

Transparency. One of the themes that emerged from this research was authenticity, which has been called one of the "highest virtues" (Roberts, 2007a, p. 329) for business leaders as it assists in building and sustaining relationships. Authenticity also subsumes the idea of transparency. The leaders in this study have made a conscious choice to be transparent with staff, board members, and the public whenever possible, which is consistent with a "culture of candor" (p. 3) described by Bennis, Goleman, and O'Toole (2008). The authors described the two components of transparency as candor on the part of the presenter and receptivity on the part of the listener suggesting further that transparency and candor have a bi-directional feature. As a cultural component, the responsibility for transparency would emanate from the leader and encompass all members of the organization. This study only dealt with the leaders' perspective, so a study exploring the followers' perspective on transparency would add to our understanding of how transparency is interpreted and received.

Fun. The importance of fun does not seem to appear anywhere in the literature that was researched for this study. Fun is a taken-for-granted concept that seems counterintuitive to professional life. Yet, it was significant for four of the participants. Exploring fun as a relational concept would continue the dialogue about relational leadership and would add a dimension that has not been fully explored.

Accessibility. Another concept that seems to be implied, rather than explicitly addressed, is the open door metaphor. This figure of speech appeared as a common reference in this study, and presents another opportunity for continued exploration. Exploring the significance of an open door and its role in leading others would add to our understanding of the implicit communication that occurs among leaders and followers. Considering the follower's perspective along with the leaders would provide a view from both sides of the door.

Leader accessibility was not very prevalent in the literature reviewed for this study but was mentioned by Russell (2003) in her ethnographic study of Anglican benefice and a state primary school in England. Russell referred to leader accessibility as a corresponding presumption by followers who were accessible to leaders, "the flip side to [access to people] was followers' expectation of [the leader's] constant availability" (p. 149). Her observation parallels the features of the open door conveyed by participants in this study.

Leader-follower friendships. The area of leader-follower friendships within the workplace is also under-researched, both as a metaphor and as actual friendships. Leading relationally lends itself to the development of stronger ties with some staff members providing an opportunity to explore friendship development within the workplace, the effect of bringing friends into the workplace, and how other relationships within the organization are affected by the friendship. The results could be a list of conditions, considerations, and consequences (positive and negative).

Leader-friend dialogue. Another research opportunity involves a study of the dialogue that occurs between leaders and their friends in the public sphere, especially because the roles a person has within the workplace are usually tied to performance rather than friendship status. The obligations of the latter group of friends are somewhat tied to the organization making the stakes higher. Understanding the communication process that misunderstanding and mending takes with this group may have implications for leadership studies, as well as leadership training. As Keller (2008) states, "perspective taking is hermeneutically demanding; some people may not readily possess the subtlety of thought and imagination necessary to enter into the other's perspective" (p. 176). This statement is equally valid regardless of the position a person holds and also has implications for whether a person is willing to engage in the type of reflection that perspective taking demands. Keller (2008) combined feminist friendship theory with Habermas's (1990) discourse to develop a phenomenology of friendship. She outlined the process of possible dialogue between parties when some occurrence or change of attitude breeches implicit or explicit relational agreements could be used.

Mentoring. Mentoring was one of the sub-themes that could be explored more fully in another study. For two of the participants, the mentoring relationship was an essential aspect of their leadership practice. Several decades ago, Lola had an experience with one of her mentors that she described as "colleague leadership" and "liberating leadership." They are still in each other's lives today. Sinclair's (2007) model of liberating leadership, along with the concept of relational mentoring presented by Fletcher and Ragins (2007), offer an intersect for consideration of this multi-pronged relationship. Both liberating leadership and relational mentoring start from a collaborative perspective and a relational focus. A study that focused on the liberating effects of mentorship would be very inviting. Adding the dimension of friendship as a third lens would also contribute to the literature on friendship along with literature on leadership and mentorship. The enduring bond of the friendship nexus extends beyond the context in which the mentor relationship occurred.

Relational followership. This study did not look at the role of followers in relational leadership. Yet, followers are what make both leadership and the leadership relationship possible. Kellerman (2008) stated that "the exercise of good leadership as well as of good followership depends not only on the nature of the relationship between supervisors and subordinates but also on the nature of the relationship between subordinates and other subordinates" (p. 242). Indeed, both Kellerman (2004) and Wills (1995) point out the important role of the bad behavior of leaders. Kellerman's book is titled *Bad Leadership* rather than *Bad Leaders* for that very reason—to emphasize the relationship with followers and others in the leader's realm. Yet, the literature on followership, while growing, is narrow. Kellerman (2008) and Riggio, Chaleff, and Lipman-Blumen (2008) are two sources that have augmented the followership literature acknowledging the reciprocal and corresponding importance of followers to the leadership, as has Hollander (2009). Augmenting the emerging literature about relational leadership with models of relational followership would create a continuous ring of understanding about relational leadership and add to literature in a way that truly embraces relationship.

The relational leadership journey. During her leadership journey, Lola grappled with using what she referred to as a male style of leading and her own sense of harmony as she traversed through the corporate sector where “organizational leadership inevitably has come to embody the preferences, lifestyles, and responsibilities of the men who usually have held these leadership roles” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 137). She eventually followed the advice of one of her male mentors and navigated her “labyrinth” (Eagly & Carli, 2007) by attempting to find her middle road. Lola eventually found the way out by listening to her inner voice about whom she was and how she wanted to lead, and by following her dream. Continuing the research into the effects of the labyrinth, it would be appealing to hear the stories of women, like Lola, who created their own path.

Criteria for Evaluation

In the first chapter of this document, I listed trustworthiness and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) as the criteria for which I had hoped to be judged and I have attempted to the best of my ability to meet this objective. The first criterion, trustworthiness, is an expression of the reliability of the inquiry and the results. It is determined through a review of the document’s credibility, transferability, and confirmability. The credibility of the document was addressed by retelling the participants’ stories as accurately as possible. Equal attention was given to interpretation as I allowed the themes to emerge from their stories and then made sense of themes in relation to the literature, while noting any gaps that emerged. Using thick description of the participants, research sites, and research methods, I have provided a framework for readers to determine whether this study is transferable to other situations. Another aspect of trustworthiness is confirmability, and I believe that another researcher conducting the same study would be able to confirm the results.

The second evaluative component is authenticity, which is also multifaceted. Authenticity is characterized by fairness and the validity of ontological, educational, and tactical standpoints. The fairness criterion was met by providing a balanced depiction of the participants' perspectives. Verbal feedback from several participants suggests that participation in the research increased awareness of their leadership and provided an opportunity to reflect on who they are as leaders. For this reason, I believe the ontological component of authenticity has been obtained. Participants who were interviewed multiple times expressed a curiosity about what I was discovering from other participants and were eager to learn about my findings. It is for this reason that I believe the educational aspect of authenticity has been reached. Finally, tactical authenticity, or participant empowerment, can be garnered from their willingness to share their stories so that others can learn from their examples.

Impact and Implications for Leadership

This study provided an opportunity for me to understand aspects of my own leadership in both its congruent and dissonant expressions from the participants while keeping their stories in the forefront. As Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997a) framed this experience, "the portraitist inevitably renders a self-portrait that reveals her soul, but she also produces a selfless, systematic examination of the actors' images, experiences, and perspectives" (p. 86).

According to Sokolowski (2007):

> the core doctrine in phenomenology is the teaching that every act of consciousness we perform, every experience that we have, is intentional: it is essentially "consciousness

> of" or an "experience of" something or other. . . . In phenomenology, "intending" means the conscious relationship we have to an object. (p. 8)

As a researcher, I learned about myself through the use of hermeneutic phenomenology. It has had a profound effect on me. I have always believed that I was a good listener. However, reviewing the interviews, becoming immersed in their stories, and reflecting on their similarities and differences, has brought to light the level of depth that goes unnoticed with ordinary, casual listening. Hermeneutic phenomenology provided me with an opportunity to really hear what the participants were saying without judgment and without any other purpose except to capture their experiences as accurately and deeply as possible.

This research has been a wonderful exploration that has broadened my awareness and stimulated my interest to look deeper into relational leadership. I learned about relational leadership and about myself in the process. I feel an intimacy with my participants for having been included in their leadership circle for that moment in time and I have discovered leaders who are living life purposefully and joyfully.

I was also surprised by some of my discoveries. I was surprised to find fun in a place I had not thought to look for it, and to realize its importance when intertwined with work. I was awakened to the idea that a disability can actually be the basis for developing a person's leadership skills. As a result, I have since recalled many successful people who have found their strength through some type of disability. I was surprised to find so many leader-follower friendships in the workplace. Overall, the experience was well worth my effort.

It was an honor to spend time with these six amazing women. All of these leaders provided me with many gifts: their time, their insight, their narrative, and an opportunity for discovery. From each one, I gained an important insight. From Adele, I learned that you could be tough and kind at the same time. Cynthia taught me that, regardless of the circumstances, the only thing that really matters is helping those in need. Angel showed me that loving what you do creates the energy to keep going. I discovered from Pia that it is possible for others to mistake your greatest strength as your greatest challenge. Maggie taught me that authenticity is a reflection of your sense of self. And from Lola, I learned the value of seeking guidance as a path to your dream. I have learned from all of the participants that helping others can be a gift that serves not only people in need, but also the people who provide the service. I have also learned that seemingly incongruent concepts, such as tough and fair, accountability and flexibility, role modeling and seeking guidance, professionalism and fun, and leadership and friendship actually share an affinity. Additionally, I ascertained that working hard can be fun, and that fun is indispensable to hard work. Most importantly, I have learned that valuing others is also valuing self.

> Friendship is inherently a magnet. As with its own drawing power, it locates and draws to the surface, spreads before our eyes poems, stories, essays, letters in widest variety. The qualities of playfulness and frivolity adhere to friendship as rightfully as those of devotion, heroism, sacrifice, of meditation and retrospect. (Welty, 1991, p. 35)

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Antioch University
PhD in Leadership & Change
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Application for Ethics Review

IRB Chair comments:
Instructions

- All research (by faculty and/or students) involving human participants must be reviewed and approved prior to initiating the project.
- This version of the form is intended for you to complete in Antioch Online. Once it is completed, including the attachment of any necessary documents, please press the Submit button. Submissions will 1) send you an email copy of the application for your own records, 2) email the application to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Dr. Carolyn Kenny E-mail:ckenny@antioch.edu

NOTE: IRB Approval for projects is valid for one year only. Investigators must request a continuation if the activity lasts for more than one year. IF APPROVAL FOR THE PROJECT LAPSES, CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH IS A VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY POLICY AS WELL AS FEDERAL REGULATIONS.

1. Name and mailing address of Principal Investigator(s):
Deborah Fredericks
557 Franklin Lakes Rd

Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

For Faculty - Other Principal Investigator:

2. Departmental Status: Student

3. Phone Number: (a) Work (b) Home (201) 848-8095

4. Name of Core Faculty Advisor: Laurien Alexandre

5. Name & Contact Information of other Program Faculty Involved in this Project:

a. Antioch Faculty and/or Primary Evaluator for Learning Achievement or Research Project: Laurien Alexandre

E-mail address of non-PhD faculty person:

Note to students: Please have your primary evaluator send an email to Dr. Carolyn Kenny indicating his/her approval of your research proposal.
b. If this ethics application is for your dissertation, the name of your Dissertation Chair appears below.
Laurien Alexandre

6. Learning Achievement Dissertation

Title of Project: Friendship in the Leadership Relationship

7. Source of Funding for the project (if applicable): N/A

8. Expected starting date for project: 03/16/2009

9. Anticipated completion date for data collection: 05/16/2009

10. Describe the proposed participants- age, number, sex, race, or other special characteristics. (Up to 250 words):
The proposed participants will consist of six adult women purposefully selected for this study varying in age and ethnicity, and working in the non-profit sector in different size agencies. They will be appointed leaders within the human/social services field. Participants will have at least three years in their current leadership position as agency directors. They will have some experience with friendship in the leadership relationship. Participants will also have the ability to verbally express themselves and reflect on their experience as a leader.

11. Describe how the participants are to be selected and recruited. (Up to 400 words):
Recruitment for this study will begin informally. The researcher will contact known leaders in the human/social services field informing them of this study and requesting their participation. The researcher will also ask for recommendations of other leaders who would be appropriate for this study. The researcher will contact potential participants by telephone or e-mail to determine their interest in the study, their willingness and ability to reflect, along with their willingness and availability to participate in this research study. This will be followed by a letter outlining the process and expectation to present to their board of directors or other governing body. Face-to-face conversations will be subsequently scheduled.

Three rounds of interviews will be conducted. In subsequent rounds, participants will be selected from the initial participants based on their willingness to delve deeper into the subject area of leadership and friendship. Each successive round will involve fewer participants and be determined based on their willingness and ability to articulate the intricacy of the leadership-friendship nexus. Participants for the second and third interviews will be selected in light of concepts that need further clarification, their ability to commit additional time, their ability to reflect, and their willingness to delve into deeper levels of consciousness.

12. Describe the proposed procedures, e.g., interviewing survey questionnaires, experiments, etc. in the project. Any proposed experimental activities that are included in evaluation, research, development, demonstration, instruction, study, treatments, debriefing, questionnaires, and similar projects must be described. Continue your description on following page if necessary. USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE AND AVOID JARGON. Please do not insert a copy of your methodology section from your proposal. State briefly and concisely the procedures for the project. (500 words):
Participants will be invited to participate in in-depth interviews. Once agree upon, a mutually agreeable time and place for the interview will be established. The preferred location for the interviews is the participants' workplace. However, interviews are also possible at the researcher's workplace or another mutually agreed upon location. Participants will be assured of confidentially and their right to withdraw from the research at any time. They will also be given an informed consent. All interviews will be tape recorded.

The researcher will define relational leadership and leadership as friendship and will ask participants to reflect on the following areas:

Please describe some of the positive leadership relationships in which you have been a party.

Please describe your experience of friendship in relation to leadership.

Is your practice of leadership influenced by gender? If yes, please explain.

How does your power and positionality in the organization impact your ability to lead relationally?

13. Project Purpose(s) and Benefits: (400 words):
The purposes of this research are to fulfill the dissertation requirement to: receive a Ph.D. in Leadership and

Change from Antioch University; contribute to the literature about leadership; and understand the essence of a leader's experience of leadership as friendship.

14. If participants in this proposed research may thereby be exposed to an elevated possibility of harm—physiological, psychological, or social—please provide the following information: (UP to 500 words)

a. Identify and describe the possible benefits and risks.
NOTE: for international research or vulnerable populations, please provide information about local culture that will assist the review committee in evaluating potential risks to participants, particularly when the project raises issues related to power differentials:
Benefits: It is possible participants will gain some satisfaction from the reflective process. Participants may also find that having the opportunity to reflect can positively impact their experiences as leaders. It is also possible participants will view the opportunity to contribute to the understanding of leadership favorably.

Risks: It is possible that participants will be recalling experiences that are uncomfortable. Since participation in this research is voluntary, participants may choose to discontinue the exploration of a topic or the interview at any time without consequence. Confidentiality will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms

14b. Explain why you believe the risks are so outweighed by the benefits described in (13) as to warrant asking participants to accept these risks. Include a discussion of why the research method you propose is superior to alternative methods that may entail less risk:
The risks are minimal. Participants can choose to disclosure or not based on their comfort with topics. Women selected for this study will have experience with relational leadership and friendship. Discussing this topic as part of research process should not be entirely unfamiliar. Volunteers for this research will understand that it will involve in-depth interviews with the potential for a better appreciation of their leadership.

14c. Explain fully how the rights and welfare of participants at risk will be protected (e.g., screening out particularly vulnerable participants, follow-up contact with participants, etc.):
Participation will be fully voluntary. Participants can choose not to share information about a particular topic or they can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Participants will be given the opportunity to review their interview transcript to check for accuracy and if needed to request that sensitive information be excluded from the final document

15. Explain how participants' privacy is addressed by your proposed research. Specify any steps taken to guard the anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of their responses. Indicate what personal identifying information will be kept, and procedures for storage and ultimate disposal of personal information. (400 words):
To protect the anonymity of participants, all names and other identifying information will be changed in the written analysis. Interviews will be transcribed by a secure transcription service. The electronic recording will be transferred to a disk and will be stored in a locked cabinet along with the transcriptions of interviews, signed consents and any other indentifying information.

16. Informed consent statements, if one is used, are to be included with this application. If information other than that provided on the informed consent form is provided (e.g. a cover letter), attach a copy of such information. To submit or fax these documents, refer to the instructions in the next question.

If a consent form is not used, or if consent is to be presented orally, state your reason for this modification below:

17. If questionnaires, tests, or related research instruments are to be used, then you must submit a copy of the instrument, or a detailed description (with examples of items) of the research instruments, questionnaires, or tests that are to be used in the project.. Copies will be retained in the permanent IRB files. To submit documents
i. Go to end of on-line form to upload attachments; or

ii. Fax to tblIRBChair.name at tblIRBChair.fax

Please identify all attached documents.
Informed Consent Form
Draft letter to participants
Initial Interview Prompts

18. Will electrical or mechanical devices be applied to participants? No

If YES, describe:

[x] I agree to conduct this project in accordance with Antioch University's policies and requirements involving research.

Office Use Only
Application approval type: Expedited
IRB member assigned (dissertation or faculty research): Mitchell Kusy

Participant Letter

Dear:

As we discussed, I am conducting a research study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D. in Leadership and Change at Antioch University, and am writing to formally invite you to participate in this study.

My area of interest is friendship in the leadership relationship. I will be researching leaders' experience with friendship within an organizational setting. The purpose of this study will be to capture the perspective of leaders and gain insight on how women experience friendship in their role as leaders. My hope for this study is to learn about the role of friendship as it relates to leadership in both its literal and figurative expressions. By uncovering the meaning of the friendship-leadership relationship, my goal is to inform and enhance our understanding of leadership.

I have selected accomplished women of your caliber who are leading a department or agency and are willing to reflect on their experience of leadership and friendship. This study is qualitative in design and will involve one to three in-depth, one-on-one interviews of an hour or less with six women leaders in the human/social services field. I will be conducting these one-on-one interviews during the months of March and April, 2009. Your total time commitment is up to five hours.

You will need to obtain written permission from your Board of Directors or other authority in order to participate as well as sign an informed consent form (attached). Please assure your Board or administration that your identity and that of the agency will remain confidential.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by telephone 201-414-2588 or e-mail dfredericks@optonline.net. Thank you for your anticipated participation.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Fredericks

Informed Consent Form

The Leader's Experience of Friendship in the Leadership Relationship
Deborah A. Fredericks
Antioch University
Ph.D. Program in Leadership and Change

You have been asked to participant in a research study conducted by Deborah A. Fredericks, a doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change program at Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

This research will explore the lived experiences of friendship in the leadership relationship of women leaders. This study involves use of in-depth interviews. You will be asked to describe your experiences of friendship in relation to leadership. The researcher will ask questions designed to uncover the meanings of this experience for you and how you have lived it.

At a minimum, you will participate in one conversational interview which will last about 1 hour and be scheduled at your convenience. The interview will be tape recorded. Once the interview is transcribed, I will provide you with a copy of the transcription for your review. If there are any follow-up questions, you may be asked to participate in a second and third interview of shorter duration. The total time commitment for the conversational interviews, review of transcripts, and any needed follow-up should be not exceed 5 hours.

Benefits. You may find that having the opportunity to reflect on your experience as a leader can enhance your leadership practice as well as how you think about leadership. It is also possible that you could view positively the opportunity to contribute to the understanding of leadership.

Risks and Voluntary Participation. You have been selected for this study because you have experience with relational leadership and friendship. Discussing this topic as part of research process should not be entirely unfamiliar. The risks to you as a participant are minimal. Participation is fully voluntary. You have the option not to disclose information about a particular topic if you so choose. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Confidentiality. The participant will share only information that she chooses to share. Your name will be kept confidential. In addition, all names and identifying information will be modified when the information is included in the written research document. You will also have the opportunity to review the interview transcript and to remove any quotations you wish to discard. The results from these interviews will be incorporated into my doctoral dissertation. The electronic recording will be maintained on a disk and stored in a locked cabinet along with the transcriptions of interviews, signed consent form and any other indentifying information.

Questions. The researcher, Deborah A. Fredericks, can be reached at 201-414-2588 or dfredericks@optonline.net. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Carolyn Kenny, Ph.D., Chair, Institutional Review Board, Ph.D. in

Leadership and Change, Antioch University, telephone: 805-565-7535, e-mail: ckenney@phd.antioch.edu.

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participant in this research. One copy is for you, the other is for me.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research study.

Deborah A. Fredericks

Name of researcher

Signature of researcher Date

Name of participant (please print)

Signature of participant Date

Appendix B

Initial Interview Prompts

Leadership is a collaborative relationship involving influence for the purpose of achieving goals.

Relational practice is the process of engaging others.

Workplace friendship is defined as a relationship between two or more persons within an organizational setting characterized by sharing strengths and resources, assisting in life/work goals and interwoven with work tasks.

I am interested in your experience with leadership and with friendship in the workplace.

I am also interested in how your position and the organization impact your work relationships.

Leadership Questions:

Tell me a little bit about what you do.

Please comment on the phrase “leadership as friendship.”

Please describe your approach to leadership.

Is your practice of leadership influenced by gender? If yes, please explain.

What are your expectations for leadership?

What do you value in your leadership relationships?

How does your power and position in the organization impact your ability to lead relationally?

Relationship Questions:

Please describe some of the significant relationships in which you have been a party.

What specific events or interactions resulted in relationships deepening or weakening?

Do your work relationships help you accomplish personal goals? If yes, please explain.

Please describe any differences in terms of relational closeness with members of your work group.

Please describe process of interaction and conversation with your work group.

Do people within your work group influence the decisions you make? If yes, please explain.

Workplace Friendship Questions:

Please describe your experience of friendship in relation to leadership.

What are your expectations for friendship?

What do you value in your friendships?

When and how do you befriend as a leader?

Organizational Influences:

What role does the organization have on how you lead and interact with your work group?

What role does the workplace context play in your work relationships?

What role does the work itself have on your leadership and friendship practices?

What opportunities are available to you to accomplish organizational goals through collaboration? Please explain.

Please describe any influence you have had on organizational structure as well as any influence the organizational structure has had on how your leadership.

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