

## **TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: ' Confession, Discovery & Revelation '**

'Transformation' is one of the most profoundly interesting words I know. Transformation literally means 'to cross shape or borders'. But a transformer to my sons as children was a car or truck that magically changes shape to become a machine with extraordinary powers. In electronics a transformer converts lethal current into power. In geology transformation is demonstrated in metamorphic rocks formed under extreme pressure or heat. An example being the formation of marble from limestone. In biology transformation occurs in the lifecycle of many animals and plants, including frogs, butterflies and oak trees. Transformation in the psycho-spiritual world involves a changed state of being. Usually due to states of extreme pain, suffering or intensive meditation. Hobart artist Roger Imms expresses the transformational experience of a lung transplant through metaphor in his painting 'Transformation, Baptism' (Figure 1.)



**Figure 1. "Transformation (Baptism)" 2014** by Hobart artist Roger Imms.

Reproduced with permission of the artist.

"During the hard times, when disabled with lung disease, one thing that I could manage to do with Dianne's help was to make my way to Seven Mile Beach and walk in the water with my stick. After the transplant I went there again, the scars now part of me. Salt water has always had that element of cleansing like new life for me".

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: Confession, Discovery & Revelation

On just about every measure the current health and human service system is in deep trouble. Multiple forces are at work impacting on sustainability in current health care systems including:

- Increasing life expectancy;
- Ageing of the population and the health workforces;
- Family make-up and distribution;
- Increasing health consciousness;
- Disease and morbidity patterns; and
- Technological expansion and information explosion.

Lateral thinking is needed to imagine and create a new future.

It is little wonder that there has been an increasing focus on the requirement for transformation in our health and human service system.

In Skills Australia's (Australia 2010) a national workforce strategy calls for a bold new approach (Figure 2). The Executive Summary states;

*'We need to transform the way enterprises use the skills of their employees so that we can make the most of the nation's human resources. This is a challenging, long-term objective that will require leadership and a concerted effort by individual enterprises..'*

**Figure 2. Health Work Force Australia LEADS**

The central place of leadership.

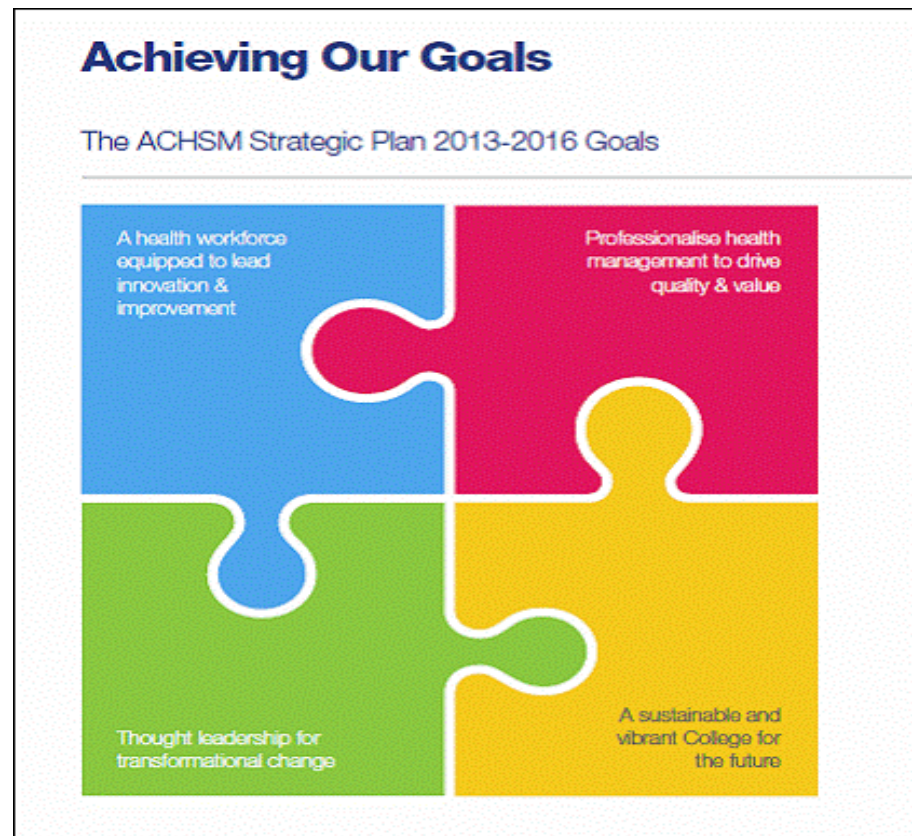


The current Australian College of Health Service Management Strategic Plan (ACHSM 2013) communicates a mission to;

*‘. develop leaders and managers who transform the quality and value of services and improve the health and wellbeing of the community’.*

One of the four (4) goals is ‘Thought leadership for transformational change’ . Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Australian College of Health Service Managers Strategic Plan (2013)**



The case for transformation in the Australian health care system is compelling. The need for leadership to support this is strongly acknowledged.

A number of questions arise;

1. How do you enable sustained transformative change in organisations?
2. What form of leadership enables this to occur?
3. Is there such a thing as transformational leadership?
4. Does transformational leadership works?
5. Can it be learned ?

I would like to offer my own story of the last 3 years as a contribution to answering these questions in this brief article.

***What is Transformational Leadership?:***

***Confession, Discovery and Revelation***

## CONFESSION

In late 2011 I was commencing my 'encore career' (Freedman 2011) after many years of working for the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). My working life in DHHS included time working as an occupational therapist in paediatrics and rehabilitation followed by a career in middle and senior management positions across a very broad range of service areas. The last 12 years involved working as part of the Tasmanian Senior Executive Service in state wide director roles with responsibility for areas such as disability, mental health, aged care, community health, palliative care, alcohol and drugs and correctional health services. I gained valuable experience along the way in policy development and service reform increasingly becoming an accidental expert in leading and managing change.

In mid 2011 the circumstances were right for me to depart from DHHS and commence the next stage of my career. The detail is part of a much longer story. My 'Encore' career (Freedman 2011) now involves three areas of work that excite my heart (O'Donohue 2008). These include firstly part time work at the University of Tasmania (UTAS) coordinating multidisciplinary postgraduate programs in management and leadership within for health and human services as well as and lecturing in leading and managing change via distance education. Secondly, I am involved in growing a small board portfolio. Thirdly I have established a consulting company that specialises in leadership and change management.

By early 2012, still in the beginning stages of establishing my Encore Career (Freedman 2007) **three forces aligned** to compel me to undertake some in depth discovery about Transformational Leadership:

1) I was invited to develop and conduct a **retreat for a non-government organisation on Transformational Leadership**. ; I had added transformational leadership to my list of consultancy skills in my promotional material even though I didn't really know what it was! This clearly needed to be addressed.

2) **Early work on my Professional Doctorate** through UTAS ('Exploring the Leadership Journeys of Allied Health Professionals') had resulted in very few relevant articles in the preliminary literature search. There were however two relevant articles heavily citing *Transformational Leadership* and the use of the MLQ (MultiFactoral Leadership Questionnaire) standardised questionnaire (Firestone 2010; Wylie and Gallagher 2009).

3) A chance encounter with a former colleague led to a number of discussions about what I was doing now resulting in a request to write and deliver a **tertiary level course as a guest lecturer for Tabor College** in Hobart on guess what; *Transformational Leadership*.

I now had a compelling and very urgent need to find out a lot more about *Transformational Leadership* and ensure that my early marketing propaganda was backed up by some more robust knowledge. A rapid catch-up job was the order of the day. My searching led to some very interesting discoveries and a revelation.

## DISCOVERY

Where to begin? A quick search in Google Scholar (mid 2012) revealed 139,000 key word references and a quick Key Word search in the UTAS Library Data Bases revealed over 67,000 references with over 30,000 of them in the previous four years. Far too many to read and quickly digest!

It didn't take very long to discover the academic origins of *Transformational Leadership* in the form of two gentlemen. Mr George MacGregor Burns and Mr Bernard Bass. Both are heavily referenced by other researchers and authors. *Transformational Leadership* has rapidly become the approach of choice for a significant proportion of the research and application of leadership theory

In 1978, James MacGregor Burns published *Leadership* (Burns 1978; Freedman 2011). In this seminal work he conceptualized leadership as either transactional or transformational. Transactional Leaders are those who lead through social exchange. For example: Denial of rewards for lack of productivity. He hypothesised that in the post industrial age a more inspirational style of leadership was required that required leaders to work in new and different ways with their followers.

If Burns was the original instigator of transformational leadership then Bernard Bass (Bass and Bass 2008) became the driving force. Bass and his colleagues developed the model of *transformational leadership* and the means to measure it. Bernard Bass's legacy is undoubtedly the explosion of research investigating and developing transformational leadership in multiple settings.

Transformational Leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity (Bass and Riggio 2006). Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the group and the larger organization.

Transformational leadership can move followers to exceed expected performance, as well as lead to higher levels of follower satisfaction and commitment to the group and organization

Transformational leadership provides a better fit for leading in today's complex work groups and organizations, where followers not only seek an inspirational leader to help guide them through an uncertain environment but where followers also want to be challenged and to feel empowered, if they are to be loyal, high performers.

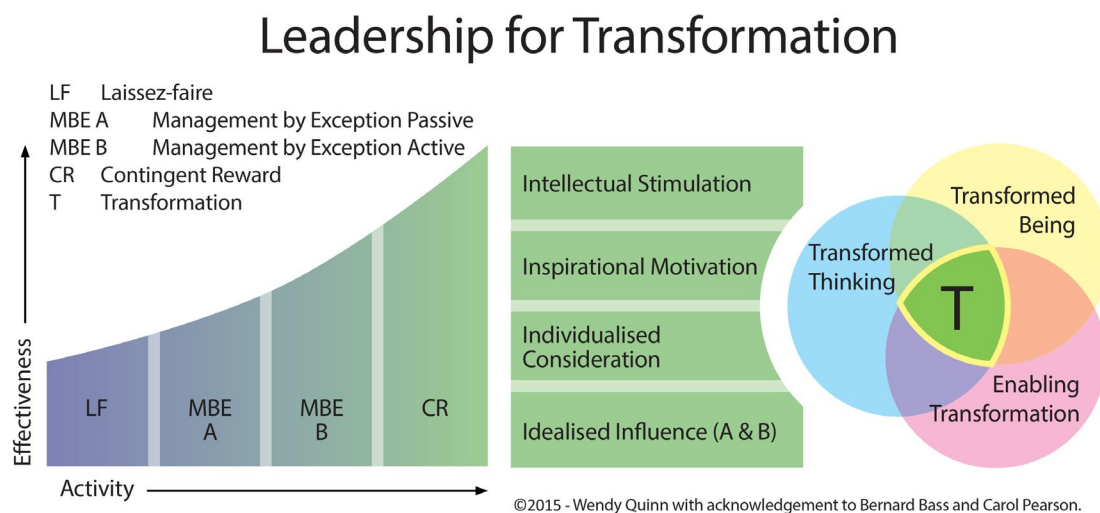
Research has accumulated that demonstrates that transformational leadership is effective in every sector and every setting (Bass and Bass 2008).

**THE FULLRANGE LEADERSHIP MODEL** as developed by George Bass. Each of the components are measured in the MLQ (Bass and Avolio 1994):

### The Transformational Leadership Model unpacked

The full range leadership model, as measured in the MLQ developed by Bernard Bass includes Laissez-Faire, Transactional and finally Transformational components that can each be separately tested, analysed and developed. Diagram 1 (One) *Leadership for Transformation* (Quinn, 2015) visually summarises the components and their relationship to leadership effectiveness.

**Diagram 1: Leadership for Transformation (Quinn, 2015)**



### 1) LAISSEZ-FAIRE & TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP (Bass and Avolio 1994)

Transactional Leadership occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines the follower, depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance

**1.1 Laissez-Faire (Avoidant) Leadership or non-Leadership** is a style where the leader avoids taking any initiative. Most leaders exhibit this behaviour infrequently and when they do, it almost always has a negative effect on effectiveness and satisfaction.

**1.2 Management-by-Exception (Passive)** is a style where leaders take action only when something goes wrong. They do not search out mistakes and only monitor matters that are brought to their attention. Their focus tends to be on letting things alone as long as they work in the usual and standard ways.

**1.3 Management-by-Exception (Active)** leadership is a form of transactional leadership. These leaders detect mistakes, are on the lookout for variances, and take corrective action when they detect a problem. This style works when safety is paramount but can handicap willingness to take calculated risks to do what is needed.

**1.4 Contingent Reward.** If you achieve the objective I've set, I will recognise your accomplishment with the following reward....".

This style is effective in motivating higher levels of development and performance but not as effective as any of the transformational components. It can however, be transformational when the reward is psychological, such as praise.

### **2) TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

(Bass and Avolio 1994; Bass and Riggio 2006; Bass and Bass 2008; Burns 1978; Burns 2003)

Transformational leaders behave in ways that achieve superior results by employing one or more of the four core components of transformational leadership (Diagram 1. Quinn 2015)

#### **2.1 Individualised Consideration**

Leaders pay special attention to individual followers' needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor. Followers are developed to successively higher levels of potential. Individualised consideration is practiced when new learning opportunities are created along with a supportive climate. Individual differences in terms of needs and desires are recognized. A two-way exchange in communication is encouraged. Interactions with followers are personalised and the leader sees the individual as a whole person rather than as just an employee. The leader listens effectively and delegates tasks as a means of developing additional direction.

#### **2.2 Intellectual Stimulation**

Leaders stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. Creativity is encouraged. There is no public criticism of individual member's mistakes. New ideas and creative solutions to problems are solicited from followers, who are included in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions. Followers are encouraged to try new approaches, and their ideas are not criticized because they differ from the leader's ideas.

#### **2.3 Inspirational Motivation**

Leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their follower's work. Team spirit is aroused. Enthusiasm and optimism are displayed. Leaders get followers involved and excited about envisioning attractive future states; they create clearly communicated expectations that followers want to meet and also demonstrate commitment to goals and shared vision. They use simple words with imagery providing meaning to a mutually attractive future state engaging the attention and imagination of followers.

#### **2.4 Idealised Influence (Attributes and Behaviours)**

Leaders behave in ways that allow them to serve as role models. Leaders are admired, respected and trusted. Followers identify with the leaders and want to emulate them; leaders are endowed by their followers as having extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination. There are two aspects to idealised influence: the leader's behaviour and the elements that are attributed to the leader by others. Leaders are willing to take risks and are consistent rather than arbitrary. They can be counted on to do the right thing, demonstrating high standards of ethical and moral conduct.

## REVELATION

My journey of discovery into the world of transformational leadership continued in earnest as I read more and more in preparation for the Transformational Leadership Course that I was now committed to writing and delivering.

One book proved to be a revelation for me.

This book is *The Transforming Leader: New Approaches to Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (Pearson 2012). It is an edited book containing a themed collection of chapters written by a range of authors/researchers grouped into three sections within the book including:

1. Transformed Thinking
2. Transformed Being
3. Enabling the Transformation of others.

It is Carol Pearson's simple and yet profound premise that that in order for a team, organisation, community or nation to be transformed there is a need for three things to be aligned (*Diagram 1, Quinn 2015*)

Firstly: Transformed thinking;  
Secondly: A leader who has been inwardly transformed; and  
Thirdly: A leader who has first been transformed who knows how to enable others to themselves be transformed.

The more that I thought about this and the more that I read the detail and wisdom contained within the three sections of the book, the more that I knew that this was the profound truth of my accumulated experience working within health and human service systems in many roles, in many service areas over the years attempting to guide service reform and lead significant change.

Wherever the three concepts have been present, in my experience there has also been organisational transformation. Wherever one of the three components has been missing or significantly weakened the level of transformation has simply not occurred.

### **Transformed Thinking**

Becoming conscious of what we want our leadership to be like, rather than just unconsciously enacting old patterns, can speed up our participation in a paradigm shift that is taking place in virtually all fields today.

Thinking in a more transformative ways can free us from being distressed by continuous change and the impact of global interdependence and allow us to recognize these realities as opportunities.

The essays in this first section cover transformational leadership theory, positive psychology, organizational development, social networking theory and contemporary science.

### **Transformed Being: Inner Work for Transforming Leaders.**

Changing the content and structure of our thinking is not enough. Leadership success today depends equally on developing our inner capacities in ways that fundamentally change who we are. The second section explores topics such as the inner work for adaptive challenges, wisdom beyond certainty, mindful leadership, the development



of the observing self, transmuting suffering responding creatively to challenges in a complex world

Deepening and Expanding Inner Capacities for Becoming the Change

### **Enabling Transformation in Others: The Art of Working with and Transforming Groups**

Leadership today is no longer just about directing people and energy toward solving problems. It is about creating settings and an atmosphere that enables people to flourish and grow and become leaders themselves.

This section explores how leaders can access their own unconscious knowledge to help others become aware of the impact of external influence and how to align energies and connections in groups of people sharing the wisdom they know.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

There are some implications that flow directly from these discoveries and revelations about transformational leadership related to transforming organisations within the Australian health and human service system.

1. Change strategies need to be mindful of the importance of transformational leadership to support transformation of systems.
2. The process of transforming systems requires an integrated focus on developing transformed thinking, supporting the inner transformation of leaders and supporting their capacity to enable the development of others.
3. Paradoxically, in order to transform the outer world we will need to focus on the inner world of leaders
4. Different kinds of leadership development will be required to support the transformation in our leaders of the future and their role enabling transformation of systems, organisations and the people within them. This will need to include a focus on inner development, self-awareness and capacity to enable that process to occur in others.
5. The Transformational Leadership (MLQ) provides an objective standardised method of measuring baseline and trend changes in transformational leadership collectively and by individual components and includes a balance of self assessment and assessment from others.
6. There is strong research evidence that transformational leadership dimensions respond to training and intervention.
7. There are a number of tools and strategies (with a strong research evidence base) that can be utilized to support leadership development programs to increase the effectiveness of transformational leadership in our health and human service systems.

***I am interested in hearing from and working with anyone interested in the further development of transformational leadership in health care settings.***

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Wendy Quinn currently has a part-time role at the University of Tasmania coordinating the Master of Health and Human Services, lecturing in management and leadership as well as progressing her doctoral studies '*Exploring the leadership journeys of allied health professionals*'. She also frequently provides facilitation of forums and gives public talks on leadership, transformation, collaboration, and designing and coordinating health and community services for people with complex needs.

Wendy was a member of the Tasmanian government senior executive service from 1999 to 2011. She held various State Director positions, with responsibilities at different times for aged care, rehabilitation, community services, palliative care, rural health, disability, mental health, alcohol and drugs, and correctional health.

For ten years prior to this, Wendy managed a policy development unit and several multidisciplinary teams of health professionals providing aged care and rehabilitation services. She began her working life as an occupational therapist, spending 12 years in clinical positions in NSW and Tasmania.

Wendy's roles over a 37-year career have seen her manage services employing up to 1200 staff and budgets of up to \$250 million, steer government service reform, implement new legislation, assist with coronial enquiries, set up new services, restructure existing services, form partnerships and manage contracts with private and non-government organisations, advise government ministers, mentor staff and support emerging leaders.

Wendy has had a longstanding interest in transformational leadership and is passionate about its importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For many years she was active in developing emerging leaders in the Tasmanian state service and she continues this commitment through involvement with the Department of Health and Human Services' management and leadership development program through a partnership with the University of Tasmania. She also has a longstanding interest in vocation and enjoys assisting people as they seek to discover their true vocation and live lives of meaning, purpose and value.

Wendy is a strong advocate for psycho-spiritual leadership and medicine of the whole person. She has an active belief that people operate through body, mind and spirit in all areas of their lives and life stages.

Having graduated from the Australian Institute of Company Directors in 2013 Wendy has been appointed to Director positions on three Boards as well as acting as Managing Director of WJQuinn Consulting.

Along with her Occupational Therapy qualifications through Cumberland College Health Sciences, Wendy has a Post Graduate Certificate in Management from Deakin University and a Master of Health Sciences; Developmental Disabilities from Sydney University (2011).

Wendy is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and an Associate Fellow of the Australian College of Health Service Managers.

