

Fall 2005

Leadership in Darkness and Light: Gender Considerations

Susanne Dumbleton Ph.D.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj>

Recommended Citation

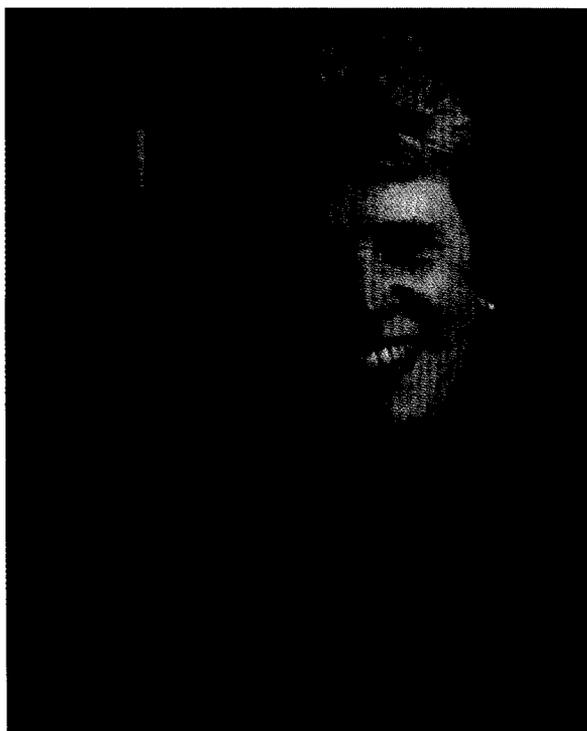
Dumbleton, Susanne Ph.D. (2005) "Leadership in Darkness and Light: Gender Considerations," *Vincentian Heritage Journal*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 1 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/vhj/vol26/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Vincentian Journals and Publications at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vincentian Heritage Journal by an authorized editor of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact digitalservices@depaul.edu.

Leadership in Darkness and Light: Gender Considerations

By
SUSANNE DUMBLETON, Ph.D.



Susanne Dumbleton, Ph.D.
Courtesy of The Hay-Vincentian Leadership Project

The Sisters of Charity served as my teachers for the first thirteen years of my schooling. The quiet values of respect for others, of gentleness, kindness, self-denial, and generosity of spirit permeated my days. So, too, did the assertive values of dedication to active service of persons in need permeate the classroom and schoolyard in New York's famous borough – the Bronx. In Kindergarten and grades 1-8 we received rewards for energy, enthusiasm, good work, cooperation, and good behavior – the deportment grades on the back of the report card emphasized as definitively as academic grades on the front.

After primary education, we split by gender and class – most of the boys going off to the Jesuits or Christian Brothers, the girls continuing with the Sisters of Charity or moving to the Sisters of Mercy or Ursulines. That small group of students whose parents could not pay tuition flowed into the city's public schools.

I went to Elizabeth Seton School, a small private school for girls. There, the Sisters of Charity continued to pass along values of the early years, with a few additional messages tailored especially for the girls: you are responsible for the feelings of others; though you may aspire to great deeds, the things of the world are minor; humility is more important than triumph; the primacy of love of others will bring you inner peace; family is central to a good life; and the rewards of self-sacrifice will enable you to engage in socially effective actions. We learned the standard lessons of Catholic theology and Christian humanism, with an overlay of gentility in its broadest sense – behave in a way suited to those to whom much has been given. Even on the sporting fields, though it was nice to win, it was more important to show courtesy to the opponent, respecting their dignity.

Within this context, those who stepped forward to lead did so primarily to serve; there were few rewards in the community: no real power, no significant recognition, no meaningful stature, no public distinction. It was, quite simply, pragmatic service. Probably for these reasons, it was open to multiple players with a wide range of styles. Indeed, one was discouraged from being considered for a position (class president, or team captain, for example) for more than one year. Not surprisingly, leadership shifted from person to person. Indeed, within the religious community itself, leadership shifted every six years so that no person would become proud or dominant – or too skilled.

So, while I made my way forward into the otherwise rough

and tumble environment of New York, I developed a world view filled with optimism and self-abnegation, a world view which resonates dramatically with the descriptions that often come forward in literature about contemporary leadership – both secular and spiritual – such as *The Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Exemplary Leadership*: ‘enabling others to act; modeling the way; challenging the process; enlisting others; and encouraging the heart.’¹ This seemed the natural way.

However, across town, my former classmates were receiving quite different lessons. At Fordham Prep and Manhattan Prep, the boys were learning that winning matters, that leadership goes to the bold, that those who step forward receive power, stature and adulation; that a leader can hold onto the position as long as he is firm, assertive, determined, fiery, savvy; indeed, the longer one practices leadership, the better one gets, so it is best to attack the task hard and early. They jostled for dominance in every way; their personal goal was to maximize their powers, to aim at victory in every endeavor. Encouraged by their teachers, both leaders and led filled their conversations with derogatory comments about “losers” and “wimps,” that is, those people who demonstrated the skills we were learning at Seton.

At nearby George Washington High School, on the other hand, the boys and girls were learning directly that race and gender define access, no matter what a person’s potential; that authorities lie; that fear is more potent than love; that physical violence can reduce even the strong to comply; that life can be very short; that mercy, hope, humanity, sincerity and faith are fine during easy days, but that one must be ready to be relentless, selfish, tough, and brutal; that one can get one’s way by lying, flattering, deceiving, and battering. Dedicated teachers and diligent students interacted in classrooms, but in the public spaces, bullies held sway. The stairways had grilles; people leaped, pushed, and shoved their way along. When I attended summer school there (to take a physics course not offered at Seton) people smiled quizzically at my demure behavior and allowed me to go my way, surely not seeking me out as a potential colleague, much less as a leader.

This broad continuum of human experience and these

¹ James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Five Practices and Ten Commitments of Exemplary Leadership* (San Francisco: Pfeiffer, 2003).

multiple lenses on leadership are not unique to youth in the Bronx or to an earlier time. Throughout the world today, people learn partial truth about leadership and try to live by it. It does not suffice; in fact, it limits their capacity to lead. Some of the lessons came because of gender and class. Women raised in the “feminine” model try to lead complex populations using gentle persuasion and find they are not able to challenge authority or conceptualize change. Their naiveté can paralyze and sideline them in crucial areas. Lamb-like behavior makes for sweetness, but is easily ignored.

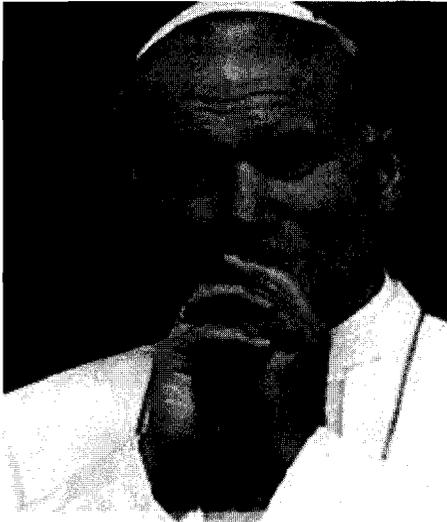
Men raised in the macho tradition, on the other hand, try using tough strategies and political tactics, focusing on self-advancement and immediate consequences. They find that they cannot understand complex human interactions, cannot empower others, and cannot balance the personal and professional. Literature, the daily press, and our own experience present us with multiple illustrations of the way in which this approach to life fails too many of these boys who, as men, find themselves disappointed, aimless and alone.

Women and men raised in the tougher world of deception and violence, on the other hand, try using deceit and physical power. Often excluded by communities of social and financial power, they find themselves caught in a cycle of fear, loss and destruction, excluded from the rewards of gentle human relationships. And, of course, many die young or spend years in prison.

Thus, while I am extremely grateful to the generous women who dedicated their lives to teaching me, I am saddened to recognize that I learned some inappropriate lessons about leading and following, and was deprived of others. While I respect the education provided to the young men by the Jesuits and Christian Brothers, I am disheartened to recognize the distortions of reality they passed along and the great gaps they left; and while I value the commitment of educators in urban public systems to those under trying circumstances, it is discouraging to acknowledge the dire lessons their students learned while their potential languished.

Clearly, leadership is contextual. Anyone seeking to stand before a group as the person with principal responsibility must attend to the values of the individuals within the group, the goals to which they aspire, the capabilities they demonstrate, and the external factors defining their landscape. The gender of the leader and his/her followers is certainly one of a score of elements which form the context. But defining leadership skills by gender is simplistic

and counterproductive. I come to this assertion, in part, because of my experience and in part provoked by what I consider to be the “breeziness” of many of the texts on leadership today – texts focusing on psychological profiles and lists of idealized qualities. (In 1999 alone, 2,000 books on leadership hit the bookstores.)² Most have subtle undertones attending to gender. Written primarily for a male audience in the western world, they seem to urge that men take on more of the qualities formerly defined as “feminine,” urging men to consider qualities of “servant leadership,” an approach at which women have traditionally excelled. While I value the gentleness presented in these newer models, admire the recommendation of more flexibility, genuineness, openness, engagement, networking, and caring, I find an unflagging optimism that does not ring true. It derives, I believe, from an oversimplified interpretation of the human condition, diminishing, thereby, for women and men, the complexity of effective leadership.



Pope John Paul II.
Public Domain

Current events make clear that while decency, reason, responsibility, sincerity, civility, tolerance, faith, trust, and charity characterize some human behavior, the world is also marked by hatred, fanaticism, racism, graft, violence, robbery, deceit, a prevailing lack of

² Robert Goffee and Gareth Jones, “Why Should Anyone be Led by You?”, *Harvard Business Review* (September–October 2000).

tolerance, and a quest for certainty which leads to a lack of reason.³ As appealing as “servant leadership” descriptions are, they are deeply flawed if they do not take this into account. I think Pope John Paul II was hinting at this in his papal message to the Vincentians: “...Search out more than ever, with boldness, humility, and skill, the causes of poverty and encourage short and long-term solutions – adaptable and concrete solutions.”⁴ Recognizing that the causes of poverty are as often human as environmental, Pope John Paul II seems to be noting that while providing support for individual poor people is good (short-term solutions), there must be active commitment to ferreting out the causes of poverty and leading efforts to long-range solutions. If this is to be the case, followers of Vincent de Paul must penetrate facades to uncover the greed, hatred, bigotry, criminality and ignorance that create poverty, and then create solutions. In the Pontiff’s list, skill is as critical as boldness and humility. I posit that this must not be construed to be gender-specific.

The crux of the argument lies in an idea we find in the assertions of Louise de Marillac: “If the work to be done is considered political, it seems that men must undertake it; if it is considered a work of charity, then women may undertake it.”⁵ While this may have been an effective strategy for getting the Herculean daily work of developing and managing a broad ranging social service and spiritual support system (the short-term solutions), it is not a tenable approach for women to ignore the causes of problems and not think about long-term solutions. And, I will attempt to argue, women in the past must surely have violated it repeatedly in order to accomplish great tasks. Politics, as defined by the use and abuse of human power, permeates daily life. Women must undertake political work.

I have to believe that great leaders, such as Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, had looked into the heart of darkness as well as into the soul of God, learning both intuitively and through experience that human nature is both exalted and depraved. It has become clear to me that without knowledge and experience of contradictory truths, one can only partially lead. Further, compartmentalizing such knowledge by gender has proven to be highly problematic, denying

³ Vaclav Havel, *Summer Meditations* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

⁴ Robert P. Maloney, C.M., “The Challenges for Vincentian Higher Education at the Dawn of the Third Millennium,” 3.

⁵ Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

as it does any essential commonality of human nature. History and Scripture imply that wise humans understand the full spectrum of behavior and experience. Good leaders are able to hold their own when faced with adversity, without trying to escape or evade the difficulties of life in this world. This is not a new suggestion. In Isaiah we get a description of a leader within the context of ancient Jewish tradition:

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. (Isa 11:1)

But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. (Isa 11:3)

Within the context of such leadership comes marvelous peace:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together.... (Isa 11:6)

This brings me to the question of the divisions of leadership by gender. We do not have to look far for dramatic distributions of labor across gender lines. For the past quarter of a century scholars have attempted to define the nature and impact of these differences. Jean Baker Miller, Sally Helgesen, and Carol Pearson are particularly articulate. Miller first defined the idea of the male approach as "The Warrior." She noted that this image of leadership permeates all spheres of human endeavor, from business and medicine to law and government, shaping the language and values of culture, providing images and ideals. "The Warrior is the traditional male hero who charges into the battle with the aim of dominating and winning, and in the process defines and strengthens himself. His quest is not only for dominance, but also for autonomy.... Need for autonomy,

competition, and control have been built into the very structure of those organizations that have served our culture in the public realm.”⁶

Once a culture has divided its people into halves defined by gender, and defined the role of man as having an aura of danger surrounding him, it is necessary to provide a support, or servant role. When all things begin with definition by gender, the “supporting” role falls to the woman. Miller uses Pearson’s term for the woman as “The Carrier.”

So long as the Warrior values dominated the public realm, the role of women has been... to serve as ‘carriers’ for all those qualities deemed too soft for the demands of battle. Nurturing, mercy, participating in the growth of others, fostering human connection – these were all qualities that the Warrior could not afford to indulge or explore, lest they weaken his resolve to compete. Thus, the private, domestic sphere over which women reigned became the repository of humane and caring values, while the world of work and politics flourished by ruthless competition. The Warrior’s wife created an oasis to which he could repair for physical and spiritual refreshment before returning to the rigors of the fray. Assigned to different sexes and different realms, these dualistic divisions deprived each sex and realm of the full range of human possibility. Each was left impoverished, stunted, only half complete.⁷

This is, I believe, precisely to the point. Defining leadership approaches by gender, teaching the young a partial approach, stunts people and limits organizations. Ella Baker, one of the founders of the Southern National Christian Council (SNCC), emphasizes mutual loss as she describes her experience as a woman working within a culture of male leadership. For decades she quietly organized grassroots efforts to improve the condition of African-Americans in America. “I knew

⁶ Sally Helgesen, *Female Advantage* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 253-4.

⁷ Helgesen, *Female Advantage*. (Helgesen quotes from Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1976], 86.)

from the beginning that as a woman, an older woman, in a group of ministers who are accustomed to having women largely as supporters, there was no place for me to have come into a leadership role. The competition wasn't worth it."⁸

She chose to focus on the "charitable" and accomplished great change. But she quietly laments the narrower scope of her role and sees the limits it created for the men as well. Indeed, the second half of her analysis is perhaps even more powerful. She believes that for men the sought after role of the "Warrior" was ultimately destructive, both to the male leader and to the people as well:

I have always felt it was a handicap for oppressed peoples to depend so largely upon a leader, because unfortunately in our culture, the charismatic leader usually becomes a leader because he has found a spot in the public limelight. It usually means he has been touted through the public media, which means that the media made him, and the media may undo him. There is also the danger in our culture that, because a person is called upon to give public statements and is acclaimed by the establishment, such a person gets to the point of believing that he *is* the movement. Such people get so involved with playing the game of being important that they exhaust themselves and their time, and they don't do the work of actually organizing people.⁹

In a larger context, I posit that the "Carrier," apolitical, a short-term model for leadership and civic engagement, can lead to very negative behaviors, including 1) passive complicity; 2) irresponsible withdrawal; 3) sacrificing one's destiny; and 4) active complicity. Let me continue by defining and exemplifying these behaviors.

1) "*Passive complicity*" results when those practicing gentleness are so ignorant of the dark side that they cannot imagine the real harm that swirls around them. Leaders who focus exclusively on charitable acts,

⁸ Ella Baker, as interviewed by Gerda Lerner, 1970.

⁹ Ibid.

ignoring the political as they focus on short-term tasks, unwittingly support "Warriors" determined to carry forward agendas hostile to human kind. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., makes clear that in instances of gross violation of individual human rights, those who choose to remain apolitical become complicitous.

I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom, is not the White Citizen's Councilor or the Klu Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice.... Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will.¹⁰

Millions of people had earned this chastisement from King. Prevented, perhaps after having been schooled with too much optimism and hopefulness, from imagining the behavior of people filled with hate and greed, they were willing to stand back and abandon the political. This, I believe, can result from an education on leadership and citizenship that focuses exclusively on virtuous individual living within the context of assuming the benignity of the world. King excoriates this approach: "We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."¹¹

2) *"Irresponsible withdrawal"* is a second danger for the apolitical, short term leader, the "Carrier" and all those depending on her for leadership. People who assume the best of all people at all times can be so shocked by events that they seek shelter from a world they cannot comprehend. Leaders who find the fray so hateful that they step aside leave the field to "Warriors" with nefarious goals. Vaclav

¹⁰ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," 1963.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Havel speaks of this as a major problem in contemporary Eastern Europe, an unwillingness on the part of the good to remain engaged, to stay informed and to participate. In *Summer Meditations*, he laments that chaos and chicanery have characterized his nation following the demise of the Soviet Union. Political life is rife with lies, deceit, and power plays.

Thus we are witness to a bizarre state of affairs: society has freed itself, true, but in some ways it behaves worse than when it was in chains. Criminality has grown rapidly, and the familiar sewage that in times of historical reversal always wells up from the nether regions of the collective psyche has overflowed into the mass media, especially the gutter press. But there are other, more serious and dangerous symptoms: hatred among nationalities, suspicion, racism, even signs of Fascism; politicking, an unrestrained, unheeding struggle for purely particular interests, unadulterated ambition, fanaticism of every conceivable kind, new and unprecedented varieties of robbery, the rise of different mafias, and a prevailing lack of tolerance, understanding, taste, moderation, and reason.¹²

What he fears most is that virtuous citizens, male and female, in shock and dismay, will protect themselves through willful disinterest, leaving open the field so that only those consumed with self-interest will rise to power. Within the context of learning about leadership, apolitical, short-term leaders can do this by refusing to learn about centers of power – including weapons, money, deceit, violence – by defining themselves as incapable of undertaking the political, and by depending on others to form opinions for them.

3. *Sacrificing One's Destiny.* The third danger I see in allowing potential leaders, particularly women, to remain innocent is that they sacrifice the ability to shape their future, often with dire consequences. Following the Beijing Conference on Women, the American Council on Education published findings in: *A Commitment to the Future: Higher Education and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women.*

¹² Havel, *Summer Meditations*.

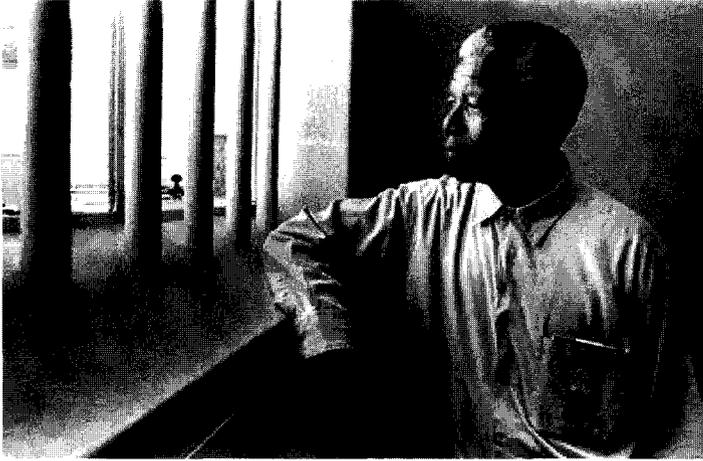
The researchers identify twelve critical areas of concern in the global community, all of which require engagement of women in decision-making. The first and most important of these critical areas is poverty: "The overwhelming majority of the 1 billion people on this planet who live in poverty are women. The number of women living in poverty and the risk of women continuing to live in poverty are both increasing faster than the corresponding figures for men. Women's poverty is related directly to lack of access to education and to barriers that prevent the participation of women in the decision-making processes that affect their lives."¹³ Women must not stand aside uninformed or uninvolved, allowing this to happen to themselves or to others. Thinking apolitically and short term, they sacrifice their future.

4. *Active Complicity.* The fourth and most dire consequence of denying the political is the actual surrender to perversity through active complicity. Convinced that they are powerless against forces they cannot comprehend, some people will capitulate, throwing up their hands in defeat. Niccolo Machiavelli noted in 1513: "There is no comparison whatever between an armed and disarmed man; it is not reasonable to suppose that one who is armed will willingly obey one who is unarmed...."¹⁴ Although here he was specifically addressing physical arms, his comment can serve as a metaphor for political life as well. When persons of good will encounter the dark side of human behavior they can experience serious dislocation. Those vying for power and control can count on alienation, shock, paralysis, and numbness and gain complicity among those who will not take the long view. Viktor Frankl¹⁵ describes his experience of this in the worst of circumstances in Auschwitz, where victims became victimizers, prisoners assisting guards in annihilating others. One does not need to turn to such extreme examples. Margaret Wheatley speaks of far more benign environments, saying active complicity happens routinely in simple daily life at the workplace; all one needs is fear:

¹³ Donna Shavlik and J.G. Touchton, *A Commitment to the Future: Higher Education and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women* (Washington D.C.: American Council on Education, 1997). This is quoted in *Taking Women Seriously: Lessons and Legacies for Educating the Majority*, edited by M. Elizabeth Tidball, et al. (Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education/Oryx Press, 1999).

¹⁴ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1531).

¹⁵ Viktor Frankl, *Man in Search of Meaning*, (1984).



Portrait of Nelson Mandela.
Public Domain

Many of the organizations I experience are impressive fortresses. The language of defense permeates them: in... memo-madness; in closely guarded personnel files; in activities defined as 'campaigns,' skirmishes,' 'wars,' 'turf battles,' and the ubiquitous phrases of sports that describe everything in terms of offense and defense. Some organizations defend themselves superbly even against their employees with regulations, guidelines, time clocks, and policies and procedures for every eventuality. One organization I worked in welcomed its new employees with a list of twenty-seven offenses for which they would be summarily fired – and the assurance that they could be fired for other reasons as well.¹⁶

Within this context, those who do not understand the nature of power, those who can be manipulated and brought to paranoia through simple threats may become a part of the indifferent machine that actively harms others.

¹⁶ Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1992).

I think that all persons are capable of these four failures of leadership: passive complicity; irresponsible withdrawal; sacrificing one's destiny, and active complicity. My point is that those aspiring to "servant leadership" can be particularly vulnerable if they do not recognize the centrality of the political in the role of leadership. On the other hand, servant leaders can be particularly effective if they have thought about the negative capabilities of human behavior and can build realistic optimism in the face of deceit and duplicity. Two examples from contemporary life are Vaclav Havel and Nelson Mandela.

Despite all the corruption and evil he saw in Eastern Europe, Havel does not despair. He believes that an effective leader can help people recover from the shock, confront the chaos, and build a meaningful society. But only if thoughtful people refuse to be shocked into flight: "Time and time again I have been persuaded that a huge potential of goodwill is slumbering within our society. It's just that it's incoherent, suppressed, confused, crippled and perplexed – as though it does not know what to rely on, where to begin, where or how to find meaningful outlets."¹⁷ This is the context in which men and women must frequently act. To stand aside, accepting incoherence, confusion, and perplexity essentially feeds evil, so it is not an option. Making life coherent and clear, on the other hand, is not something defined by gender, and those who stand aside, willfully disinterested, feed the void. As Ella Baker noted in her description of the Civil Rights movement, the most important thing for a leader to do is gather people of good will, waken in them a sense of possibility, provide a course of action, and model the courage to confront obscenity. What was never an option for her was to close her eyes and avoid the horror.

Nelson Mandela expresses this powerfully at the end of his autobiography. Having spent his youth under Apartheid, he endured 27 years of his adult life imprisoned. Always, he refused to capitulate to the inhumanity. He did so with increasing knowledge of human depravity. He studied his enemy with care. His knowledge of their will, and their systems, enabled him to triumph. Never did he allow them to dominate his faith:

I never lost hope that this great transformation would occur. Not only because of the great heroes I have

¹⁷ Havel, *Summer Meditations*.

already cited, but because of the courage of the ordinary men and women of my country. I always knew that deep down in every human heart, there is mercy and generosity. No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite. Even in the grimmest times in prison, when my comrades and I were pushed to our limits, I would see a glimmer of humanity in one of the guards, perhaps just for a second, but it was enough to reassure me and keep me going. Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.¹⁸

It is interesting to place this within the context of other thinkers, including Niccolo Machiavelli, one of the most successful leadership coaches of all time. Machiavelli, in reviewing conditions in Renaissance Italy, accurately noted that malevolence characterized the day. It was not a world for the timid or credulous. "For how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation. A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good."¹⁹ This is not very different from what we have heard from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ella Baker, Nelson Mandela, and Vaclav Havel. One cannot assume leadership, retain it and overcome major obstacles without understanding the full range of thoughts, actions and feelings of which humans are capable.

Where Machiavelli varies is in the extent of his pragmatism. Knowledge of politics, and evil uses of power, is not enough. One must be capable of evil uses of power oneself: "Therefore it is necessary for the prince, who wishes to maintain himself, to learn how not to be good, and how to use this knowledge, and not use it, according to the necessity of the case."²⁰ Though writers and thinkers who advocate

¹⁸ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1994), 622.

¹⁹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

for “servant leadership” excoriate the “Machiavellian” approach, one need only turn the pages of contemporary sports manuals or listen to those who coach sports, war, and business to hear parallel sentiments. Advisors urge neophytes to terrify the opposition, plant fear, hoard resources, malign rivals, withhold information, feign virtue, and defeat the competition at any price. To be successful, they argue, one fills a quiver with many arrows, some poisonous, and must be ready to use them. Dominating is the goal. Winning is not desirable; it is essential. Winning is everything.

These ideas create two levels of danger in society. The most obvious is that those who live by them trample patterns of civil society, focused on a goal rather than on the people and ideas around them. A less often noted danger to society exists if those for whom these ideas are repellent ignore the fact that some will live by them. Tyrants rise to power when decent citizens refuse to acknowledge the possibility of tyranny. Being apolitical is a political act, ceding leadership to those who will exploit naiveté.

How much does this really have to do with gender? Eleanor Roosevelt, responding to questions about whether she found her gender to be an obstacle to accomplishing her goals, neatly described the complexity of gender: “No, I have never wanted to be a man. I have often wanted to be more effective as a woman, but I have never felt that trousers would do the trick.”²¹ Other women came to similar conclusions after thorough study. Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim, *The Managerial Woman*,²² and Betty Lehan Harragan, *Games Mother Never Taught Me*,²³ analyzed the work environment and recognized that while sport/military vocabulary dominated the world of work, the ideas they contained were not particularly effective. On close study, they learned that the ideas expressed in the vocabulary of sports and the military did not translate very well to the world of work and that, indeed, men who tried to rely on them readily failed. However, they did realize that women, as “newcomers,” needed to learn this language and the ideas behind it. That is, the ideology of sports and the military filled daily work environments so completely

²¹ Eleanor Roosevelt, *If You Ask Me* (1940).

²² Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim, *The Managerial Woman* (New York: Pocket Books, 1976), 39.

²³ Betty Lehan Harragan, *Games Mother Never Taught You* (New York: Warner Books, 1977), 42-45.

that without understanding the predominant language women were found lacking and certainly excluded – labeled “losers” and “wimps,” to use the language I recall from those high school conversations.

(It is no wonder that women who did not want to do that split off. Margaret Posig, Miriam Ben-Yoseph and Lisa Gundry found that one approach for women has been the entrepreneurial path. Women who do not want to be “Carriers” or “Warriors” stake out their own course, retaining their own central values and building something that has meaning to them. Worldwide, it is no surprise that women greatly exceed men in building their own businesses. Within a context of cultures which fosters generosity among women at a higher rate than among men, it should also be predictable that female entrepreneurs are almost twice as likely as male entrepreneurs to engage actively in community service.²⁴)

The course of human history has shown us many models. Edward R. Udovic, C.M., has provided a description of Vincent de Paul as a person who was values-driven, “with motivation always transparent... always concerned about including those who found themselves excluded by society, ...always willing to take calculated risks to promote the greater good, innovative and pragmatic.”²⁵ This definition requires that a culture acknowledge and cultivate the wisdom, strength, kindness and skill of all people, rather than reserving half of these values for one gender and half for the other. This definition of a servant leader – wise, knowledgeable about the full spectrum of human belief and behavior, unafraid of knowing power, while caring deeply about human beings – seems ultimately attainable by those who have the courage to look into darkness as well as light.

This type of leadership is particularly necessary in the contemporary world that Sally Helgesen describes, in which the desperate state of human affairs requires the strength of the female model (which she describes as Martyr) blended with the strength of

²⁴ Miriam Ben-Yoseph, Lisa Gundry, and Margaret Posig, “The State of Women’s Entrepreneurship: Pathways to Future Entrepreneurship Development and Education,” *The New England Journal of Entrepreneurship* 45.

²⁵ Rev. Edward R. Udovic, C.M., Ph.D., *About St. Vincent de Paul and DePaul University’s Vincentian, Catholic and Urban Identity*, 3.

the male model (which she describes as Warrior) in a newly integrated leader, the Magician.²⁶

The Magician incorporates the Martyr's emphasis on care and serving others with the Warrior's ability to affect his environment by the exercise of discipline, struggle and will. Thus, the Magician knows how to sacrifice and give care without losing personal identity, and how to work hard to achieve something without getting caught up in an unceasing competitive struggle.... Dualities begin to break down. Magicians see beyond apparent dichotomies of male and female, ends and means, efficiency and humanity, mastery and nurturance, logic and intuition. Instead, they focus on the interconnections that bind all human beings and relate events to one another; they take the long view because they see the relation of the present to the future.²⁷

Not limited by gender, Magicians are capable of looking into the darkness and light of human capability, defining a clear and powerful way forward that others gladly follow.

²⁶ Helgesen, *Female Advantage*, 256. She is quoting from Carol Pearson, *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 1-3.

²⁷ Helgesen, *Female Advantage*, 256.