

Personal Philosophy on Leadership
Leaders 481 Foundations of Leadership

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Dan Prusinski Executive Summary Outline

Definition: Leaders inspire others to accomplish goals and influence outcomes.

Brief Description: At the heart of leadership there lies a relationship with other people. Inspiration moves others through the mind and heart to accomplish tasks, overcome obstacles, and innovate beyond one's own capacity.

Three Characteristics: Inspiring leaders-

- Recognize and study their own emotional intelligence such that they create unique, positive experiences with others.
- Audacious yet refined through integrating group think into one vision and one plan.
- Execute with excellence in the small things that become contagious with greater things.

Contrast with Management: Management is a position that only exists within the confines of an organization and is subjectively prescribed from one group of individuals onto another group.

Leadership Model: I most identify with transformational leadership based on the fact this model seeks to inspire others to accomplish things. In addition, this model identifies with my faith conviction of being a part of a process that assists others in furthering their own personal development.

Change in View: Through the different models, I've most shifted from an intrinsic view of self-actualized leadership and begun focusing on extrinsic modes of leadership like emotional intelligence and skills leadership. Beyond transformational leadership, I've begun focusing on the "doing" part of leadership to supplement the passion for inspiring others.

Why Read My Paper? Inspiring others leaves a lasting impression beyond the initial context of a specific situation. Beyond influence and attaining goals, great leaders have a desire to bring lasting positive transformation to those they interact with. Through initial inspiration paired with transformation, leaders can feel a sense of altruism doing what we love most. I approach leadership from an iconoclast's perspective and my perspective offers one a lens into leadership from a Millennial.

11 case studies were examined from leading journals providing deeper context into the leadership philosophies highlighted by Northouse. Trait, Skill, Transformational, and Servant leadership are all explored in greater depth to extract cutting edge insights into how to motivate and influence others to bring about change. Personal reflections about specific events have molded my view of leadership from an experience-based perspective. The major themes I experienced were trait leadership influence from parents, and specific personality characteristics, moral conviction and courage from my faith, and leadership positions that have developed my leadership skills.

As a youth, some of my earliest memories are of my parents telling me repeatedly, "Daniel you are a leader to your two younger brothers." Being one of six children and the oldest male, my parents automatically put me in leadership role from an influencing and responsibility point of view. I never challenged their statements and developed a mindset where I was leader to my younger siblings. Specifically, there was a defining moment that I demonstrated courage and boldness when I was seven and I climbed through a two-story window to unlock an apartment door. In addition, I spoke in front of my church on an unrelated topic and again it felt satisfying to conquer my fears and inspire others. The praise and thrill of these situations created a desire within me to grow as a leader. Adam is the name of my brother that is two years younger than me, and he always followed me as a child whether we were climbing trees, catching turtles, or playing with toys. Having him with me gave me a sense of assurance and friendship that I related to being a leader.

In the third grade, I transitioned into a new school system from a homeschool environment for the last quarter. This was a huge change for me and my social skills were still rather coarse and I became a social pariah that year. During the three months, I learned how to stand up for what I believed even when it was not the mainstream thought. This experience brought out an iconoclastic theme that has stuck with me as a leader. As a pre-teen, I had a group of friends and they followed me on adventures like snowboarding, basketball, and sports. I was a less domineering leader but I still greatly influenced what we did as a group. As a young adult, I played lead/starting roles on sports teams including football and basketball. I was responsible to conduct myself in a way that positively influenced and inspired my team members. This did not always come easy as I had emotional baggage from my parents' divorce. In addition, I also led a community program and a youth group. It was here that I developed a passion for inspiring others. I had the opportunity to see my friends overcome major life obstacles and I felt a sense of fulfillment.

After high school graduation, I wanted to alleviate suffering on an international level and I went on an international development trip for six months. After college, I worked in Afghanistan on a USAID funded project to rebuild villages destroyed by the Taliban. That project led to a three year position as a program manager for a refugee resettlement position in Minnesota. These last three experiences took courage, moral conviction, and boldness, which have developed and honed my view of leadership.

The main leadership theories I have developed through my experiences are trait, skills, transformational, servant, and authentic.

Leadership Theory and Practice by Peter Northouse was the foundational

resource for understanding the different major philosophies and subsequent studies on modern leadership. Reading through the different leadership philosophies revealed where my personal experiences resonated with specific philosophies and I also disagreed with other specific philosophies. In the subsequent paragraphs I contrast different leadership models with my own experiences and research findings.

Trait leadership states people are born with special traits that make them great leaders. From me early childhood, this strongly resonated with my belief about leadership. I researched a case study from *The Leadership Quarterly* and it validated that personality is a key indicator for success. Furthermore, it expanded on past research through utilizing other observer ratings to assess leadership. The research concluded similar results that Northouse concluded such as boldness and conviction are perceived leadership traits. In an effort to cover both sides of trait leadership, I researched cast studies that were critical of trait leadership. The counter case challenged the independent notion that trait leadership was solely the influencing factor for leadership and found that situation was also a major factor.

Skills leadership states one can develop and refine leadership competencies. In my opinion, this approach is more tactical in nature, and rather serves as a to-do for leaders. This feels more managerial than leadership in my opinion and parallels well with style leadership, which focuses on what leaders do as opposed to who they are. The *Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education* sheds helpful light on the value of teaching the Style approach of leadership to adolescents. This article, "Video assessment: a high tech approach to teaching leadership skills in recreation..." further validates my view that leadership Style is a great tool for honing and developing leadership within individuals. I utilize both Style and Skills leadership to refine my leadership abilities on a tactical level. These approaches pair well with emotional intelligence.

Situational leadership describes how to be a leader in different environments. This model is great for navigating certain landscapes, but I do not believe it reveals what a leader is. The reference, *Journal of Nursing Management*, details a case study, "Leadership and job satisfaction among Azorean hospital nurses: an application of the situational leadership model." The conclusion states that the satisfaction from subordinates has a strong correlation with leaders that adjust their styles to individuals. This article validates my belief that this model is more of a tactical model as opposed to a born-trait. Nonetheless it softens my view on how to be an effective leader. As mentioned with Skills and Style leadership, I also believe that emotional intelligence and maturity captures the core benefits of situational leadership.

Contingency pairs leadership styles with demands of a situation. This is similar to situational leadership, but takes it a step further. While the tools are helpful, I find this approach to be gilded and an extension of style leadership. The reference *The Leadership Quarterly* highlighted an article, "Facing the situation: Testing a biosocial contingency model of leadership in intergroup relations using masculine and feminine faces," and studied the preferences subordinates had in certain leadership situations through analyzing facial cues. While the article's study produced results based on preference, it did not comment on the overall effectiveness of the leaders, rather it focused simply on the preference of subordinates. The results prove inconclusive for what actually makes someone an effective leader, which validates my position that this approach is helpful but does not define a leader.

Path-Goal leadership seeks to show how leaders can motivate subordinates. I see this as a management tool and less of a leadership model. This approach also treats the symptoms at hand rather than deep fulfillment in humans. The reference, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, studied how the path-goal approach performed against employee turn-over in the article "The impact of path-goal leadership styles on work group effectiveness and turnover intention." While employee satisfaction improved, turnover was only decreased slightly. The article highlighted "support" as a path goal approach, which is more similar to Servant leadership than path-goal. This article proved Path-Goal is more of a management technique and validated my belief in Servant Leadership.

Transformational leadership seeks to inspire others to accomplish goals. This approach appeals to me greatly based on my faith and because it focuses on the person not the situation. Coaches, teachers, and supervisors inspired me through word and action to push myself and develop in maturity, faith, and deed. Looking back at my overseas experiences, transformational leadership was a major impetus in the successful completion of those activities. The reference, *Journal of Applied Psychology* below validates the efficacy of high autonomy work roles as well as low autonomy work roles in employee proactive behaviors (the positive desired output) when transformational leadership is applied in the article, "When does transformational leadership enhance employee proactive behavior? The role of autonomy and role breadth self-efficacy." This validates my belief that focusing on the person is key for positively influencing a situation and seeking a desired outcome. The reference, *Journal of Business Research*, counters my view on transformational leadership through the article, "Does CEO transformational leadership influence top executive normative commitment?" which showed a non-linear relationship was present when transformational leadership was applied with employee retention. This showed that other factors are responsible for influencing employee retention other than just transformational leadership. While I am passionate about transformational leadership, this article balances out my passion.

Servant leadership states leaders should empower those they influence. Given my strong faith background, I am passionate about this method. The reference, *American Psychological Association*, shows that Servant leadership amplified the level of commitment from subordinates to leadership in the article "Servant leadership, procedural justice climate, service climate, employee attitudes, and organizational citizenship behavior: A cross-level investigation." This supports my belief that servant leadership is an effective technique for influencing others. The reference, *Personnel Psychology*, studied different CEO leadership style and the overall outcome on employee performance in the article, "CEO SERVANT LEADERSHIP: EXPLORING EXECUTIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND FIRM PERFORMANCE." The results showed that servant leadership works well with certain employees and others it fails. I believe this approach works well with individuals that are not narcissistic, and individuals that are narcissistic take advantage of the approach and cause failure.

Authentic leadership states a leader is transparent, morally grounded, and responsive to others needs. I see this approach as fixing everything that is wrong with the world. It is focused more on doing and less on being, which I find to be symptomatic of leadership not the defining factor of leadership. The application of this method was a major factor in me serving as youth in community development

organizations and going overseas to work with victims of war. Team leadership states factors for success and how to contribute towards them as a team. This sounds similar to consensus leadership, but I am not motivated by such leadership and find that it takes too much time for me personally. There are instances when team leadership is necessary from a professional standpoint. I find this leadership style to be driven out of the Social Justice and anti-authoritative movements. Psychodynamic leadership states the defining personalities of leaders define the followers. I view personality as a huge part of leadership. I see this as being supportive and supplemental for trait theory. While I agree with this method, I am more focused on developing transformational leadership attributes in my life.

Through the systematic review of the eleven leadership theories, research, and experiences, I am motivated to further refine Trait, Skills, and Transformational leadership.

From my earliest memories, I remember my parents telling me I was a leader and I needed to be a positive influence on my two younger brothers that were very close in age to me. In addition, my three top strengths according to Clifton's *StrengthsFinder* are Command, Activator, and Ideation all of which are key leadership components for Trait leadership. My personality coupled with my parents nurturing has engrained within me a solid foundational belief that I am a leader. Furthermore, in my adolescence as well as young adulthood life events such as speaking in front of large audiences, playing important roles on sports teams/doing well in sports, leading community events, and participating on international relief projects have reinforced my belief that I am a leader. From these experiences, my leadership values are faith/moral conviction, operational excellence, and courage culminating into one word "inspire".

As I have grown into adulthood, the American work system has introduced management systems that have components of administration as well as leadership. According to the definition provided by Northouse in *Leadership Theory and Practice*, (LTaP) the definition of leadership is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." The delineation I am making between management and leadership is the internal perception of others rather than the external behaviors derived from situations. For example, management is responsible for the accountability of tasks getting done. While it is fully possible for management to influence a situation through given authority to achieve a goal, no amount of given authority can inspire others to feel a certain way to achieve goals. Through studying and reviewing the different philosophies on leadership, I drew a line from the different methodologies based on those that seek to inspire the individual verses methodologies that seek to treat or control the circumstances around the individual.

Through this review, I fully acknowledge the normative nature of developing a personal philosophy on leadership and sought to develop a plan that will truly guide my personal development on being an effective leader. Outside of my personal experiences, I researched different leadership models and reviewed case studies that supported and opposed specific methodologies. The end goal of the research is to refine and build up my PPL such that as new circumstances present themselves in my life I can utilize the PPL as resource to grow and succeed.

Trait leadership proved to validate my childhood in regard to the belief I have had about personality playing a big part of one being a leader. The journal article, "Assessing the trait theory of leadership using self and observer ratings of personality:

The mediating role of contributions to group success." conducted a case study that analyzed observer ratings for perceived leadership. The results echo what Northouse stated in LTaP that major leadership traits include self-confidence, integrity, and sociability. What I have taken away from this research is that I have the personality strengths and conviction such that I will naturally be perceived as a leader. In an antithetical article titled, "Implications of dispositional and process views of traits for individual difference research in leadership.", the findings suggest that the surrounding events are a major factor in individuals being perceived as leaders. The take-away from these articles for my PPL is the validation that individuals recognize certain personality traits as being leadership, in addition those traits must be executed correctly in situations in order for the preconceived perceived leadership view to be valid. From my perspective of inspiration, the traits listed above are traits individuals are likely to be inspired from but they need to be coupled with the correct action in order for others to in fact be inspired. Having leadership traits is a start to being a leader, but in itself does not let make one a leader to others. This is a development goal of mine: Build on my leadership traits and let others see through my actions that I am capable and have the courage to inspire.

Transformation leadership builds on inspiration to accomplish goals. This approach focuses on individuals rather than circumstances. Given my driven nature, it is easy for me to look through people to the end goal, but I also have moral conviction of which makes transformational leadership very appealing. In the article, "When does transformational leadership enhance employee proactive behavior? The role of autonomy and role breadth self-efficacy", a case study revealed that both high autonomy and low autonomy work roles have higher output when transformational leadership is applied. This study helps shape my PPL to focus on inspiring other first, and focusing on the temporary end goal second. Transformational leadership is not a fix-all for employee motivation. In fact, the article, "Does CEO transformational leadership influence top executive normative commitment?", highlighted a case study where it was discovered that transformational leadership did not have a correlative relationship with executive employees. This study helps me to be realistic about implementing transformational leadership in that it will not be effective for everyone. I find that it takes courage to have the desire to inspire others and care about their development. While in the moment, I may not be inclined to act on this methodology later in my thought life I evaluate the real impact I have on others through the lens of transformational leadership. This leadership methodology will hold my driven nature accountable to focusing on a return on investment I value beyond the life of the situation.

Skills leadership is a methodology I find to be antithetical to my personal PPL. According to Northouse, skills leadership states one can develop and refine leadership competencies. While I agree on the tactical level that one can effectively implement leadership competencies, this approach feels gilded in that it is focused on specific circumstances rather than who the leader is at the core. This approach fails to inspire one beyond the immediate task and appeals more to a management technique rather than a leadership model. In contrast to my stated view above, the article titled, "Video assessment: a high tech approach to teaching leadership skills in recreation demonstrated that teaching adolescence leadership skills helped them interact and succeed. This article softened my view on skills leadership from the standpoint that it

can be used as a starting point to gain access to the attention and passion of others to later develop the inspirational component. While in its most rudimentary form, skills leadership does not necessarily inspire others but it can lead to inspiration through the implementation. In my PPL I am inspired to lead others, which is why this approach does not necessarily inspire me, but the techniques are very helpful for executing with excellence.

In developing my PPL, I have discovered that my traits are advantageous for perceived leadership, yet without executional excellence I will not be a leader. My passion for leadership is through inspiring others and seeing positive transformation in others. I need to stay focused on developing the skills and habits of effectively leading others.

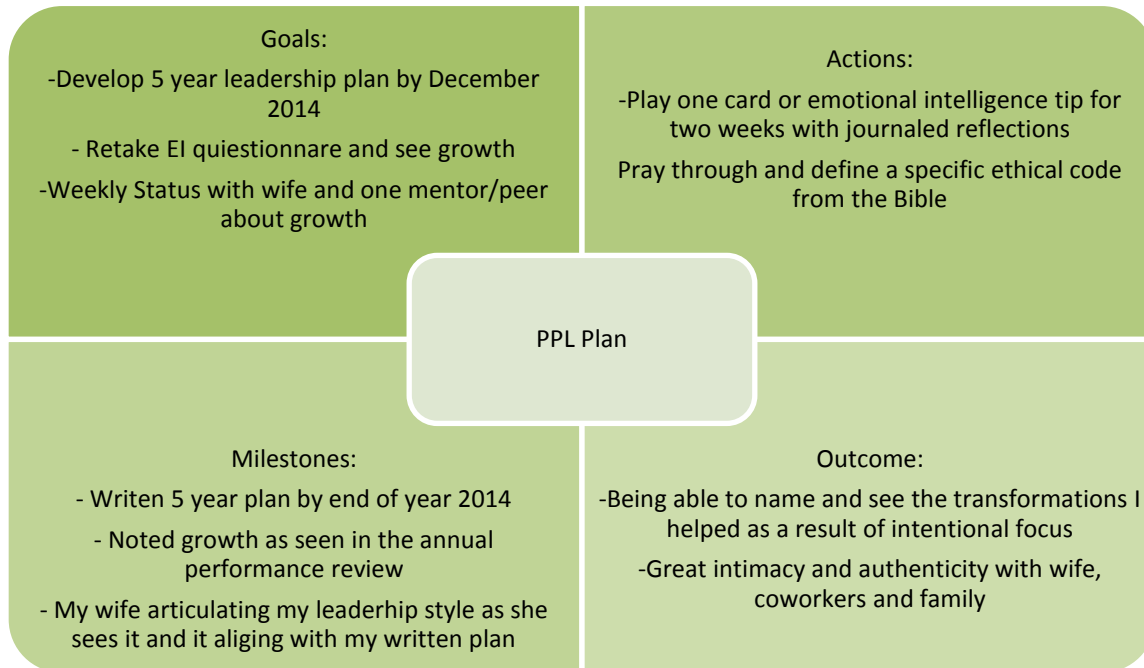
The leadership challenges I desire to develop and hone in on are inspiring others and helping them to create a personal. I will leverage my strengths of reflective listening, encouragement, and strategic thinking as the foundation for inspiring others. My weaknesses can be assuaged through better understanding and applying skill based leadership along with emotional intelligence techniques. Within emotional intelligence, I have both internal and social areas where I need to grow that will allow me better play my strengths as a leader. I naturally cater to my strengths, but I am making an effort to play Kcards and learn from our readings to boost my weaknesses as well.

Currently, I have a list of eleven people I interact with at a weekly/daily level that I want to work towards intentionally inspiring. The main three questions I will put into place are:

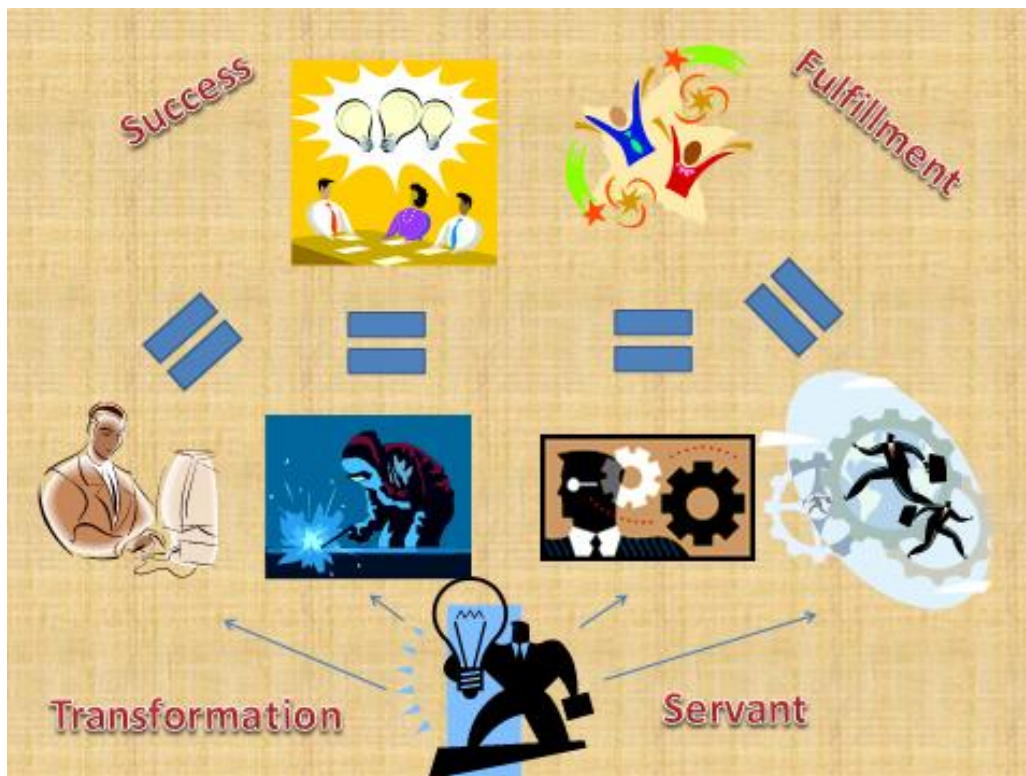
1. Where do you want to see yourself in the near future (6-12 months)
2. How can I help you get to that point
3. How can I stay out of your way

While I already inspire some of the people on my list out of omission, I will mine the answers to these questions and better understand how I can serve their visions and utilize my strengths to inspire them to reach their goals.

Leadership has come natural to me since being a young child. Learning and tactically implementing emotional intelligence as well as skill based leadership are areas where I have a long-standing professional challenge. The scores on the emotional intelligence questionnaire reflect that I need to focus on developing and maturing as an emotionally competent leader. In addition, I view implementing skill based leadership as a tactical tool for my leadership traits. As I look past graduation, the first post-graduate study I do will focus on putting together a 5 year plan for growing my emotional and skill based leadership qualities. This plan will have measureable benchmarks and specific goals along the way. Daily implementation of my PPL includes reviewing and building on my PPL, playing Kcards focused on emotional intelligence, and discussions with my accountability partners, mentors, and spouse surrounding my development. The outline below demonstrates the game plan for the next few months:



Art for my PPL: Through growing in transformational and servant leadership, those around me (regardless of social status) will come closer to realizing and acting in their gifting and areas of passion.



Appendix 1 – Feedback Explanation

Contrast to Management: How does your PPL explain the difference between leadership and management? The literature we reviewed drew a pretty sharp distinction, emphasizing how leaders make deep change and invent the future for the organization and managers work to make current practices perform as well as possible. If you agree with that distinction, how have you factored it into your PPL? If you don't, how does your PPL offer a new distinction? Your PPL might claim there is no difference. If so please explain how the same people/role can both drive fundamental change and run the currently operation effectively.

I see management as being unique to every organization, and what each organization sets forth as management rhetoric. For example, at Cargill they define management as owning a process and managing the people involved. At Target, management is founded on fifteen guiding principles encompassing communication, behavior, innovation, and administrative excellence. Two very different people would qualify as managers at either organization but not at the other organization. The summary is that the organization defines what characteristics make up management.

A leader on the other hand is not bound or defined by an organization, rather is defined by the people he/she influences and the outcomes achieved. For example, my manager looks to me to lead the social media enterprise for merchandising at Target because I am inspiring others around me to move towards a future vision of what social media analytics can do at Target. I have had no management title bestowed upon me, rather my manager recognizes the leadership potential within me and is equipping me to better administrate as a leader. In this instance, my manager is using the processes in place to help pave a new vision for Target, which is a mix of both leadership and management as defined in the question above.

From the examples, one can understand that leaders can be managers, but not all managers are leaders. This is a further development within my PPL, but continues to align with my philosophy.

Followers: How does your PPL define a follower? Do followers require special traits or skills? Are leaders ever followers? For some PPL, the notion of followership will play a central role. Is this true for your approach? If not what does it reveal?

In my PPL, I do not articulate the follower role. A follower is one that is influenced by the leader and is driven towards action or a new vision. For example, I identify myself as being a leader and there are times that I follow my wife's influence and vision. She does not view herself as a trait leader, but when her vision for a situation inspires me I get on board.

I have met many leaders that have no followers. They are often severely lacking in emotional intelligence, but they are leaders none the less. I would define a leader that does not have followers as being relatively dysfunctional or searching for individuals to inspire. When I was younger, there were instances where I was a pariah based on my strong yet undeveloped leadership in one situation and at the same time in a different setting, say sports, I was a strong leader with many others following me. At the heart of gathering followership, I see emotional and social intelligence. Lacking these two attributes does not strip one of being a leader.

Ethics: What do we mean by ethics? Do leaders have special responsibilities when it comes to ethics? For example, leaders use influence, have power and are responsible for organizational outcomes in ways that followers don't and that entangles them ethically in very distinct and deep ways.

(Please note that this response also answers Jennifer Su's question in the draft feedback)

I view ethics as being the moral code or character a group adheres to for interpersonal relationships including self-relationship. A leader in a biker gang would have very different ethical conduct than a leader in a church setting. The primary responsibility a leader has to the specific ethics he/she abides by is to uphold the ethical code. This affects my PPL by through the faith conviction I have. Given my love for a specific entity (the God of the Bible), I seek to convey this love through pleasing this entity in accordance with the ethics defined in the Bible. It is here where the ethical conviction leads me to transformational leadership. The ethical code I hold myself to is out of love rather than force, which is a key communication point for people I influence. A big distinction I make between the two is ethical adherence to the Bible out of a motivation to earn something equals religiosity, bigotry, and condemnation. Ethical adherence to the Bible based out of a motivation of love equals servant leadership, transformation leadership, and graciousness. The diagram below helps to visualize this importance point about ethical adherence with love based conviction.



The diagram above is subjective in nature, but it is how I operate on my ethical code that leads me to transformational and servant leadership. In fact, before I experienced the loving relationship with God I had a completely different ethical code, or lack of, which was greatly dysfunctional in nature.

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