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Rethinking Leadership: Leadership as Friendship

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...our brother who has been educated at schools and universities. Do we wish to join that procession, or don't we? On what terms shall we join that procession? Above all, where is it leading us, the procession of educated men? --Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 1938

Virginia Woolf (1938) in *Three Guineas* asked where the procession of educated men was leading us. She raised fundamental concerns about the procession of men who had been educated in colleges and universities. Answering her own question, she pointed out that the procession was leading to war. The political and social system, she believed, generated competitiveness, tyranny, possessiveness, and violence (Carroll 1978). In *Three Guineas*, when a man from a peace society asks for help in preventing war, her response is: "We can best help you to prevent war by not repeating your words and following your methods but by finding new words and creating new methods" (p. 143).

If Woolf were writing today, she would raise similar questions about leadership and would be critical not only of where leadership has taken us but also how people in general tend to view leadership. The early popularity of the so-called Afghanistan "war" and Iraq "war" would confirm for Woolf her earlier views. She would, however, be pleased to note the number of people and groups that have been leading from a different model for leadership. Their leadership could be characterized as leadership as friendship.

This paper proposes a rethinking of leadership that challenges the dominance of the military battle metaphor and proposes an alternative metaphor--friendship. The paper first discusses the nature of metaphors and critiques the military battle approach to leadership. It then focuses on friendship as a metaphor for a relational conception and practice of leadership. The paper concludes with examples of people who lead within such a framework.

The Nature of Metaphor

"Where imagery leads, policy follows."

--Elle Goodman, 1989

Metaphors are powerful illuminative tools and provide insights into taken-for-granted assumptions. McFague (1987) likens metaphors to imaginative pictures that present partial but illuminative "imaginative leaps" across a distance (pp. 34, 63). Metaphors help people make "imaginative leaps" in order to be able to see facets they may not otherwise notice and envision possibilities that may have otherwise remained unseen and unthought. Imagination is particularly called for in the discussion of leadership in terms of a "friendship" metaphor that presents a more ideal model of leadership. Constructing new possibilities requires imagination. As Emily Dickinson pointed out, "The Possible's slow fuse is lit by the imagination" (Dickinson, 1914, p. 30).

Examining metaphors is important also because metaphors have consequences for behavior. Metaphors are pervasive not only in how we think but also in how we feel and how we perceive reality. Lakoff and Johnson (1981) point out that "metaphors are pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action. . . . Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people" (p. 287). Functioning as "invisible

powers" (Clancy, 1989), metaphors not only structure our perceptions but influence the actions that flow from those perceptions (p. 295). The discussion of the metaphors of military battle and friendship is intended to provide a "partial but illuminative" (p. 295) picture of the complex phenomenon of leadership and illustrate how metaphors can structure perceptions and behaviors vis-a-vis the leader-follower relationship in radically different ways.

The Military Battle Metaphor

The military battle metaphor is a dominant metaphor in the U. S. The key to understanding the world view of this metaphor is to examine its most fundamental root, its ontology. Ontology has to do with the nature of reality, and a key distinction is whether or not one perceives a world composed of building blocks or a world that is fundamentally interconnected (see e.g., Capra, 1982, 1975; Deloria, 1979; Heisenberg, 1962; Perreault, 1983, 1980). This distinction is the difference between perceiving oneself separate from the world vs. perceiving oneself connected to/with the world.

In the military battle metaphor, the ontology and basic assumption is one of separation from the world. In battle, to be able to kill other people, one has to make them into enemies. This is done by distancing oneself from others, and conceiving of others as an object, as "the other," someone radically different and separate from oneself. It is such a stance--separation--which allows someone to define others as enemies. One can only make an enemy of someone who one has already made into an object (Perreault, 1983; Griffin, 1982; Keen, 1986).

The military battle metaphor is pervasive in most areas of society. The language is that of targets, task forces, doing battle, attack, adversaries and enemies, and covering your flanks. This use can be seen in Lakoff and Johnson's (1981) analysis of how military language is reflected in arguments. The person one disagrees with is viewed as an opponent, and arguments are won or lost. Lakoff and Johnson provide the following expressions as examples of the military battle influence (pronouns have been changed to gender-free language):

Your claims are indefensible.

They attacked every weak point in my argument.

Their criticisms were right on target.

I demolished their argument.

I've never won an argument with them.

They shot down all my arguments (pp. 288-289).

Deborah Tannem (1999) has similar views. Describing U.S. society as an "argument culture," she says that "war metaphors pervade our talk and our thinking. Nearly everything is framed as a battle or game in which winning and losing is the main concern" (p. 4).

One example where this orientation can be observed is in how election processes and presidential debates are framed. Someone once quipped, "Politics is war by other means." Bunch (1988) pointed out in the late 80s that the Presidential debates were focused on the question, "who won the debates?" and she asked "why such a focus?" Such a focus is still evident today. In the election process, the talk is framed in a context of the "military battle" metaphor. The presidential debates are viewed as part of a campaign to win a series of battles rather than as an opportunity to inform the electorate about what their choices are. The focus is on winning the battles, hence the question, "who won the debate?" Pollsters, the media, and strategists tell us who is ahead but scarcely a notion about who has a better conception of where society should be headed.

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. For example, columnist Ellen Goodman (1989) notes the importance of war imagery and language on the drug war. She points out that the use of the "war on drugs" metaphor was intended to mobilize action against drugs. But she warns that "where imagery leads, policy follows," and she explains that "the way we label things, talk and think about them, inevitably has an effect on how we behave" (Goodman, 1989, p. 14A). Goodman concludes, "What is needed is less of an assault mentality and more of a healing one." For a complex social problem like drug abuse, she would substitute a Marshall Plan in place of a war plan. Joseph McNamara (1995), a former police chief (San Jose, California and Kansas City, Missouri), expresses views similar to Goodman's. In interviews regarding the bigotry and behavior of L. A. police detective Mark Fuhrman, McNamara pointed out how a focus on a "drug war" sets the context of dealing with an enemy, and that such a mindset can lead to disregard for the law (McNamara, 1995; Sack, 1995). As McNamara explained, "Once you get that war mentality, anything goes" (1995, p. 4A).

The metaphor and language of military battle assume an enemy at the start. Although that may be how people feel at times, and it might be that at times people may have to protect themselves as if the other person was an enemy (i.e., someone who is out to destroy them), it is important to begin at a different place. Framing one's world within an "enemy" perspective impedes the cooperation needed to get things done. Equally important is the impact on ethics. Destructive means are justified, by the (presumably) noble ends sought. In a society that appears to have lost its moral compass, the "ends justifies the means" orientation keeps the moral compass buried in a magnetic vault, unable to point a direction.

In contrast, 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.

The Nature of Friendship

In proposing leadership in terms of a friendship metaphor, the concept of friendship is necessarily that of a highly developed and mature friendship (Perreault, 1996a, 1996b). It is not a "fair-weather" friendship dependent on the whims of another or an instrumental friendship based on the rewards one hopes to receive from the relationship, for example, a business owner being friends with a legislator. It is what can be called genuine friendship, a friendship in which one seeks the welfare not only of oneself but also of the other. Friends feel a connection with each other, listen and seek to understand, respect each other, and support each other but are not afraid to voice criticism of potential errors and misjudgments. Indeed, as Friedman (1993) argues, friends may promote the moral growth of each other.

A variety of views on friendship exist (e.g., Aristotle, 1925; Friedman, 1993; Hunt, 1992; Martin, 1935; McFague, 1987; Meilaender, 1985; Raymond 1986; Welty & Sharp 1991). Hunt's and McFague's views are particularly useful for my work. In her book, *A Feminist Theology of Friendship*, Hunt conceives of friendship as "an underlying stance that one takes toward the world, beginning at home and with those closest to home. Loving one's neighbor is the most logical extension of loving oneself and one's family" (p. 37). Friendship is the "true human relational norm" (p. 9) and "serves as a useful paradigm of right relation for the whole of creation" (p. 2). She sees generativity as "the hallmark of friendship" (p. 99). It is her perspective on friendship as a stance toward the world that will be highlighted later for the conception of leadership as friendship.

McFague (1987) has a similarly broad view of friendship. In *Models of God* she uses friend as a metaphor for God. Although conceptions of friendship typically view the friendship relationship as an exclusive one, McFague conceives of friendship as an inclusive relationship. She cites a Biblical quote in which Jesus is called the "friend of tax collectors and sinners" to illustrate that friendship can include outsiders (p. 158).

Another difference from the usual concept of friendship is McFague's inclusion of a common vision or interest as an important feature of friendship. This element, she says, "opens it [friendship] onto the world" (p. 162). She cites the Society of Friends (Quakers) as an example of such friendship (p. 162). Similarly, one of the communities in the Buddhist religion is called "Friends of the Western Buddhist Order" (Friends of the . . ., 2005). Members of both communities of "Friends" are bound together not by personal friendship relationships but by commitment to shared spiritual vision.

Both Hunt and McFague extend friendship beyond a personal relationship. Their perspective on friendship as a broad and inclusive relationship is central to the conception of leadership as friendship in this paper.

Leadership As Friendship

Since metaphors structure both perception and action, conceptualizing leadership as friendship provides a stance toward/with the world that can contribute to shaping new actions and ways of thinking. That friendship stance is a relational view of leadership, grounded in perceptions of connection and inter-dependence from which emerge a sense of respect and responsibility for the welfare of self and others. Such leaders seek to understand the views and needs of others, refuse to define others as enemies, and are open to the potential mutuality of the parties involved in any situation. They are inclusive in their definition of "the other." This conceptualization of leadership extends the responsibilities of leadership beyond one's own group. The friendship metaphor asks leaders to assume and affirm the best in human beings, whether as followers, potential followers, and even those who are viewed as "enemies." These qualities are described in more detail in this section.

An Ontology of Interdependence and Connection

As with the military battle metaphor, the heart of a friendship metaphor lies in its ontology, its view of the nature of reality. Within the friendship view of reality, the mode of relationship to the world is fundamentally one of connection and interdependence. The shift from an ontology based on separation to a friendship ontology based on connection is as

radical as the paradigm shift in physics from a Newtonian model of a universe composed of building blocks to a quantum physics model of a universe that is fundamentally interconnected (see, e.g., Capra, 1975, 1982; Deloria, 1979; Heisenberg, 1958; Perreault, 1980).

A Respect for Others

Grounded in a perception of interdependence and connection, the characteristic most fundamental to a friendship metaphor is that of basic respect for others. Friedman (1993) discusses two kinds of respect that friendships seem to exhibit. One is a respect based on admiration of a person because of specific worthwhile qualities. The second is a respect for persons as moral equals. According to Friedman, this second type of respect is a "principle about the inherent moral worth of persons" (p. 193). Such respect is "... owed to all persons, regardless whether or not we like them or think well of them. It has nothing to do with individual merit or moral qualities" (p. 193). It is Friedman's second notion of respect that forms the basis for the type of friendship discussed in this article.¹ This respect places a value on others that is based on a common humanity, and is not dependent on status, position, sameness of views and nationality, or potential rewards. This conception calls on leaders to recognize the humanity of everyone and treat everyone with respect, not only one's followers but even those whom a leader might traditionally define as enemies. More on this below.

A Relational and Participatory Approach

With the grounding in a perception of interdependence and a respect for others, the friendship metaphor changes the notion of leadership and of the leader-follower relationship. Leadership is viewed in relational terms; leadership is not a trait of an individual but a relationship among all involved. As such, it is inherently participatory. Leadership is not simply leaders doing leadership as in the heroic model or the John Wayne type of leadership. Leaders and followers do leadership together.² The relationship of leaders and followers is not one of general-troop, parent-child, or manager-subordinate, but of friend to friend engaged in genuine dialogue. Leaders and followers together comprise the leadership relationship. Significantly, the leader-follower role can change, depending upon the needs of the situation, with leaders becoming followers and followers becoming leaders.³

A Commitment to Listen to Understand Perspectives and Needs

Part of respecting others, especially for leaders, is being motivated to listen in order to understand the perspectives and needs of others. Noddings (1984) in her book, *Caring*, points out that "Caring involves stepping out of one's own personal frame of reference into the other's" (p. 24).⁴ Being able to comprehend the perspectives of others is necessary if leaders are to care about and for others. Decisions need to take into account the actual, not assumed, views and needs of all involved.⁵ Only by understanding reality from the frameworks, views, and needs of the people involved can leaders fully comprehend the consequences of their actions or inactions on all stakeholders in any particular situation.

In addition, listening has powerful effects on the person to whom a leader is listening. Brenda Ueland (1992) in a remarkable essay describes what happens when people feel heard: "When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life" (p. 104). She believes a creative fountain "is in us all" and that "it is this little creative fountain inside us that begins to spring and cast up new thoughts and unexpected laughter and wisdom" (p. 105). The effects of listening are powerful dynamics for leaders who seek to empower others.

Listening is related to the ability to take the perspective of others, and this ability contributes to more effective leadership even as measured by traditional measures of success such as climbing the corporate ladder. In a study of factors that lead to success and derailment of leaders in a corporation, McCall and Lombardo (1983) found that two of the primary factors were insensitivity to others and the inability to take the perspective of others.

A Process View of Vision

A related consideration is the source of the vision for the group. Even in fairly progressive books on leadership, the leader is often presented as the person who has the vision for a group. Sometimes this is true and appropriate in a particular context. Although a vision for a group may derive from a leader, it may as likely emerge from the work of leaders and followers in a joint effort. This is another reason why listening is so important for leaders.

One could think of these two differences in terms of a "product leader" and a "process leader." Presumably you may have both kinds in one person but the traditional conception of leadership is that of a leader as a product leader--the leader furnishes a vision (product) and then either influences or coerces⁶ people to become followers of that vision. In the process view, the leader helps the group develop a collective vision. The friendship approach leans towards the process view but also recognizes that the type of decision-making depends upon the goal and the group. This approach rejects

the idea that it is always the leader's role to provide the vision.⁷ Indeed, for some problems, it is dangerous to assume one leader has the answer for the rest of the group. In other cases, such a view may squelch better visions unexpressed by people in the group.

A Broad Realm of Responsibility

More radically, the friendship approach changes the leader's relationship with, for want of a better word, "non-followers," that is, people who are not in the leadership group. This point is a major one and deserves more extensive discussion. Decisions need to take into account the effects on others ("stakeholders," to use a business term). The friendship stance calls leaders to move beyond the leader-follower relationship as commonly conceived and to recognize the humanity of everyone and, as noted earlier, to treat everyone with respect. Respect and responsibility are extended beyond one's group to include not only potential followers in that world but even those who are and may remain, in traditional terms, "enemies." The capacity to apprehend the view of others is needed in all leader-follower relationships, but is needed even more, and is more difficult to do, with those who are not currently in one's leadership relationship.

Harkening back to Hunt's (1992) and McFague's (1987) views of friendship, "enemies" are to be included in the leader's realm of respect and responsibility. The word "enemy" is in quotes to show that this is a word that a friendship orientation strives to avoid. Thinking of anyone (individual or nation) as enemies closes out options for relating. As Noddings (1989) points out, "When we think of people as enemies it is easy to put them outside the moral community, to devalue their moral worth" (p. 198). Here the assumption of connection and interdependence is key, for such an assumption precludes, or at least makes more difficult, the defining of other people as enemies or other nations as evil empires. As Riddle (1982) points out, "Violence is possible only when we objectify others, i.e., distance ourselves from them. As long as we are aware of our unity with others, we are aware that in harming another, we also harm ourselves" (p. 38). If one conceives of the world as connected and not separate from self, then one is less likely to objectify others (Perreault, 1983), and one's first response to others may be more welcoming rather than hostile.

A Unilateral (Non-Reciprocal) Ethics

In terms of ethics, this approach has a unilateral ethics perspective. As is probably apparent by now, the leader's respectful and responsible actions under friendship are not predicated on positive or respectful responses from others. Noddings' (1984) view of the caring fits here also. Although her view of the caring relationship as a non-reciprocal one has been criticized as a unilateral one (Hoagland, 1991), Noddings' perspective on this point is a critical one for the ethical behavior of leaders. In her view, care is not necessarily a mutual relationship, except in its mature form. It does not demand an equal response from the other: "What the cared-for does to the caring relation is not a promise to behave as the one-caring does, nor is it a form of 'consideration'. . . . The focus of our attention will be upon how to meet the other morally" (p. 4). Similarly, the integrity and ethical behavior of leaders cannot depend upon an expectation of reciprocity of ethical behavior from followers or nonfollowers.

An Optimistic View of Human Nature

Also apparent, 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. Discussion of Noddings' carer is useful here also. Nodding proposes that the carer "always approaches the other as though the other has a respectable motive. Indeed, the motive of the other has an *a priori* respectability that may be denied only with justification--if it is to be discredited at all" (p. 123). Griffin (1982) expresses a similar view when, discussing the feminist movement, she argues for the importance of replacing hatred for an enemy with a "vision of possibility" (p. 660). To begin with an assumption of an enemy relationship leads to the assumption becoming self-fulfilling. Friendship asks the leader to have a vision of possibility, to begin with optimism and trust, and to withdraw that trust only with a compelling justification.

In summary, a friendship orientation to leadership is a stance toward the world that is grounded in a perception of connection and interdependence. The friendship stance leads leaders to approach the world with a profound respect for others and a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others, a responsibility that is broad and inclusive in its reach. Leaders assume the best about others, and have an optimistic view of people and possibilities. They recognize the importance of genuinely listening to others and understanding their perspectives and needs. They refuse to define anyone as an enemy, and are open to the potential mutuality of the parties involved in any situation. Their actions as leaders are not contingent on the probability that the response from others will be equally respectful. They are aware of and accept that fact that a respectful stance does not necessarily bring forth a respectful response. Leaders can only maintain such a respectful stance by sustaining themselves with a vision of possibilities.

Friendship and Leadership Cases: Acting on a Vision of "The Possible's"

"The Possible's slow fuse is lit by the Imagination."

--Emily Dickinson

Leaders need a vision of possibility.⁸ Conceptualizing friendship as leadership is intended, as discussed earlier, to help leaders and followers make "imaginative leaps" in order to see new possibilities. Imagination is called for because the "friendship" metaphor highlights a somewhat ideal model of leadership. As such, it is not a common model that can be observed everyday. What cannot be imagined cannot take place. As Emily Dickinson (1914) pointed out, "The Possible's slow fuse is lit by the Imagination" (p. 30). Leaders practicing from within a friendship metaphor call on their imagination to see "the Possible's," the possibilities they may not otherwise see.

Although the friendship model is an ideal one, examples can be found of leaders and followers who approximate this ideal, leaders and followers who can see beyond the norm to imagine Dickinson's "Possible's." Two examples will be discussed--an organization called Common Ground for Life and Choice and a higher education administrator, Sue Follon.

Common Ground for Life and Choice

One striking example of leadership as friendship is the Common Ground Network for Life and Choice, an organization founded by the leaders of the "pro-life" and "pro-choice" movements. Common Ground grew out of the abortion battles (literally; this is not a metaphor here) in this country. In *Let's Talk* (Koop & Johnson, 1992), a book by former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and Dr. Tim Johnson, Koop describes to Johnson the effect of what can be called a military battle approach to the abortion issue:

I do agree with you, Tim, about the futility of the shrill cries from both sides, from those who are "pro-choice" and those who are "pro-life." The rhetoric has reached unprecedented heights, and the headlines in the newspapers remind one of World War II with "battle cry," "combat," "war," "battle strategy," and so on. Crushing the enemy has become the goal, to be achieved no matter what ethical and moral principles get trampled in the process. Success amounts to who can rent the largest number of school buses to transport marchers to Washington, D.C., for a demonstration. (p. 19)

It is rejection of that approach and the projection of the vision of what might be possible that has animated the founders of Common Ground. Common Ground emerged in spite of the deeply held ideological beliefs and intense emotional feelings on both sides of the abortion debate. Some of the leaders were able to move beyond the enemy-based, battle-ground approach to an approach more consistent with a friendship model.

Common Ground leaders are able to see the best in people. Wolf (Wolf & Mathewes-Green, 1999), speaking at a Common Ground meeting, explained how Martin Luther King, Jr., was an inspiration for her. She said that he "addressed his opponents as if he were addressing the highest, most noble, most potential place in them" (p. 34). Like King, Common Ground members reach out beyond their own followers to the "other side" to seek shared solutions and work together on concerns and areas in which they have common ground (Cage, 1992; Goodman, 1992; Isaacson-Jones, 1992). Respect for each other and genuine listening have been clear components of their work together.

Interestingly, not all the followers of the "pro-life" and "pro-choice" leaders are in agreement with their leaders' involvement in Common Ground; they question how their leaders can talk to "those people" (Isaacson-Jones, 1992, p. 12). But the leaders are motivated by a larger vision. Isaacson-Jones (1992) belongs to Common Ground. Refusing to make others into an enemy, she eloquently explains that she has "never lost sight of the idea that the other side is not the enemy. We are political adversaries, not enemies. The enemy is unwanted pregnancies. The enemy is poverty. The enemy is ignorance. The enemy is racism. These enemies are common to us all" (p. 12). Similarly, Wymen's premise is that "to end abortion in America we must eliminate the root cause of abortion" (cited in Goodman, 1992). He and others assume a more humane society will result in a greater reduction of abortions.

Members of Common Ground direct their energies toward areas where problems can be solved, and they have faith that talking and listening will lead to understanding and to solutions that current divisive strategies block. Ultimately, their efforts will reduce abortion as well as improve the lives of children and mothers. Their leadership affirms the constructive potential of a friendship approach to leadership.

Sue Follon, a University Vice President

"The role of a leader is to bring forth the genius and spirit of her people."

--Sue Follon

A second example of leadership within a friendship framework is Dr. Sue Follon who was the Vice President for Educational and Student Services at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) from 1985 until her untimely death due to lung cancer in 1998. She was the first woman to be named a Vice President at UNI, and headed ten divisions in the student services area. Prior to that, she was involved in equal rights for women for the State of Iowa. She served for nine years as Executive Director of the Iowa Commission on the State of Women. She had a long-time commitment to justice for all, particularly women. Her awards include the Cristine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice and the Salute Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Progress of Women.

Although Follon left no written records of her views, they can be gleaned from observations and interviews of people who worked with her (and she would say "with," not "for"). When I was first hired at UNI, I would hear comments that her staff would die for her. I realized why this was so when Dr. Follon spoke to one of my leadership classes and stated that the role of a leader was to "bring out the genius and spirit of her people." Everyone interviewed agreed that that quote represented Sue Follon's leadership. For example, Pat Geadelmann (personal communication, March 24, 2000), Assistant to the President, responded, "That quote is reflective of Sue's views because she brought out the best in people and made people want to give their best." Sue Follon's leadership reflects many of the qualities of leadership as friendship (Geadelmann, personal communication, March 24, 2000).

She had a relational approach to leadership. For Follon, leaders and followers participated in leadership together. The current Vice President, Renee Romano (personal communication, March 3, 2000), and Pat Geadelmann (personal communication, March 24, 2000) said Follon constantly built relationships. She was a very unassuming leader with a remarkable quiet strength. Her style was collaborative and personalized. She had the ability to relate to individuals and to have them feel valued and important and recognize that they had a contribution to make. She never did anything to put herself in the spotlight. At the same time, she had tremendous skill at building a team and bringing all those individuals together (Geadelmann, personal communication, March 24, 2000).

Follon demonstrated respect for others. She "valued the worth and dignity of every human being and tried to treat everyone with respect". She treated people with respect (Romano, personal communication, March 3, 2000; Geadelmann, personal communication, March 24, 2000), even if you disagreed with her. People felt "unconditionally accepted by her". Interestingly, one result of the respect that she accorded everyone was that people who worked in groups with her respected each other as well (Geadelmann, personal communication, March 24, 2000).

An example from her years with the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women shows Follon's ability to work with everyone and treat everyone with respect, an ability to work even across so-called "enemy" lines. A new governor appointed a number of anti-ERA and anti-choice people to the Commission. Follon, however, found ways to bring the group together. People were able to listen to each other and everyone was able to make contributions to the cause of women (Geadelmann, personal communication, March 24, 2000). As in her leadership of her Student Services Division later at UNI, she respected everyone and as a result everyone learned to respect each other, and could work well together.

Follon was always interested in others, and believed it was important for all voices to be heard. In order to have all voices heard, leaders have to welcome dissent also. When asked whether or not Follon encouraged dissent, Geadelmann's response was insightful. She said that Follon encouraged dissent not by saying 'I want to hear your disagreements' but by having everyone feel comfortable and feel free to speak. People felt accepted because people felt so unconditionally accepted by her and did not have to worry about whether or not a disagreement would reflect poorly on them. She never set about trying to generate conflict or controversy but people were free to express differing views. She thought that letting people be heard was all that mattered. So she was not afraid that having someone say something negative was going to sidetrack the general goals. She felt by having all the views on the table that the result would come out better.

Follon was strong in her own beliefs and principles, but she did not see herself as the only one with ideas or a vision. Her statement reflects that perspective: "The role of a leader is to bring forth the genius and spirit of her people." As Romano (2000) said, Follon hired people who were in line with her values and then let them direct their own programs. At meetings of all the division heads for Educational and Student Services, with Follon leading as a process leader, meetings were spent having everyone's voices heard. Her approach called forth from people their "creative fountains," a phrase used by Ueland (1992) to describe what happens when someone really listens to another person. Follon's profound respect for everyone and her willingness to listen to everyone reflect her optimistic view of human nature. Her leadership was clearly that of a friend who cares for the welfare of others.

Limitations of a Friendship Metaphor

Any view of leadership has its strengths and its limitations. The most common objection about a friendship approach is, "But how can one be friendly with one's subordinates?" A related objection is that a friendship orientation will get in the way of accountability, that it would be difficult to hold one's friends accountable. In thinking about leadership in terms

of friendship, readers and listeners have remember that friendship is being discussed as a metaphor, and metaphors do not have a one-to-one correspondence with reality. Thinking about leadership as friendship does not require one to be friends or "friendly" with followers or subordinates. What it does require is respect for everyone, even for those outside the leadership relationship and even those whom one might traditionally define as "enemies."

Indeed, one could argue that a grounding in respect would make it easier to provide negative feedback, that a relationship of respect diminishes the likelihood that criticism would be taken as a personal attack. If two people respect each other, criticism by one or the other is less likely to be perceived as a message about her/his inherent unworthiness; the connection of respect is there to sustain the relationship. As noted earlier, Friedman (1993) believes friends may promote the moral growth of each other.

Another objection to a friendship approach is that it is too ideal, that people will not necessarily respond positively. No guarantee exists that one's friendship approach will result in a like response. Clearly, responding with trust and openness is a risk. As Noddings (1984) says about care, we may not know "until too late that we are dealing with evil" but this risk "is an unavoidable danger of acting under the guidance of an ethic of caring" (p. 116). However, one can also question the effectiveness of approaches that are adversarial or violent. In Noddings' (1989) view, "the adversarial/competitive model is deeply entrenched in our customs, beliefs, and institutions, and we cannot transform it easily. . . . The warrior model threatens to destroy us all" (p. 190). Certainly, the approach most opposite to a friendship/caring approach--assuming evil on the part of others and acting on that assumption--is at least as risky, as the experiences of the U. S. in Vietnam and Iraq have demonstrated.

Although more of a reality to anticipate than a limitation, one fact to note is that leaders who live from within a friendship orientation can expect to be misunderstood in a culture that (1) exalts the individual pursuit of one's own self-interest and (2) expects leaders to be the individual, heroic decision-makers and miracle workers who act decisively with strength (narrowly defined as coercive) to fix things. Former President Carter's actions in Korea generated a number of negative reactions. For example, a *National Review* article was titled "Gullible's Travels" ("Gullible's Travels," 1994). Senator Paul Wellstone faced a similar situation regarding use of the Boundary Waters wilderness area in Minnesota. When he tried to organize federal mediation over the dispute, he was accused of waffling (Bassett, 1996).

Leaders need to take into account the limitations of any approach including this one. But the limitations are not insurmountable. The most difficult one is the last one because the friendship orientation is so different from the dominant mindset. Awareness of the potential benefits can sustain the efforts toward new views and practices of leadership.

Concluding Comments

Woolf (1938) in *Three Guineas* asked where the procession of educated men was leading. Her list of concerns exists yet today, with others added. The leadership challenges are enormous--an unconscionable rich-poor gap, in this country and world-wide, ghastly wars and internecine strife, violence of all types and degrees, and environmental destruction that threatens the sustainability of all, to name only a few. Underlying these tragedies are conceptions of the self as separate from others and the world. The challenges call for new ways to think about and practice leadership, or as Woolf (1938) said, "by finding new words and creating new methods" (p. 143).

Metaphors are compelling "invisible powers." Since metaphors structure both perception and action, conceptualizing leadership as friendship provides a stance toward/with the world that can contribute to shaping new actions and ways of thinking. That friendship stance is grounded in perceptions of connection and interdependence from which emerge a sense of responsibility and care. This conceptualization of leadership as friendship extends the responsibilities of leadership beyond one's own group.

Leaders within a friendship orientation can only maintain such a stance by having a vision of Dickinson's "Possible's" that are "lit by the imagination." Such a view allows leaders to leave behind, at least temporarily,⁹ an adversarial approach for one that is more respectful and open to the potential, if not yet actualized, mutuality of the parties involved, as illustrated by the cases above. Leaders practicing within a friendship metaphor call on their imagination to see "the Possible's," the possibilities they might otherwise not see. The friendship metaphor asks leaders to affirm the best in human beings, whether as followers, potential followers, or those who are viewed as "enemies" of the leader. It promotes the making of "imaginative leaps" (McFague's phrase) across a distance. In doing so, it expands our capacities to imagine what ought to be, to act on that vision, and to respect and care for each other in an interdependent world, ultimately shaping a more humane world.

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Footnotes

1. The debate about the nature of respect is a complicated one. Although some criticize the Kantian (Kant, 1964) view of respect, its imperative to treat persons as ends in themselves is valuable. See discussions by Farley (1993) and Dillon (1992).

2. I have a positive conception of followers, and I distinguish followers from subordinates (Perreault, 1993). Followers are those who, in general, accept the goals and practices of a leader or manager. I say, "in general," because my definition of follower conceptualizes followers as active participants in the leadership process, and they are obligated to dissent when necessary. (Obligation can arise out of principles of fairness and/or an ethic of care.) Subordinates, on the other hand, are defined by position in a hierarchical organization, and may or may not be followers.

3. This conception of the fluidity of the leader-follower relationship owes much to James MacGregor Burns (2003, 1978a, 1978b).

4. The friendship view is consistent with many of the characteristics emerging out of the theories and concepts of care ethics. For example, it is consistent with Noddings' "care ethic" in its emphases on relation and interdependence, responsibility, and understanding the views of others, and in its optimistic and trusting view of human nature. But it differs in extending the realm of care beyond those in one's immediate proximity to include outsiders and strangers. It differs also in its treatment of the principles of respect and justice. For a more complete view of Noddings, see *Caring* (Noddings, 1984), the section on "War" in *Women and Evil* (Noddings, 1989), a response to critics (Noddings, 1990), and "Conversation as Moral Education" (Noddings, 1995). See also in-depth discussion of feminist care ethics in *Mapping the Moral Domain* (Gilligan, Ward, Taylor, & Bardige, 1988), *Women and Moral Theory* (Kittay & Meyers, 1987), *Explorations in Feminist Ethics* (Cole & Coultrap-McQuin, 1992), *An Ethic of Care* (Larrabee, 1993), and *Who Cares?* (Brabeck, 1989).

5. Taking people's needs into account does not require one to meet those needs if they are inappropriate or illegal or unethical. Noddings (1984) recognizes this issue: "A carer cannot always comply with the wishes of cared-for (sometimes the wish is deemed morally wrong or badly mistaken), but the expressed needs, goals, and desires are always considered" (p. 9).

6. Leadership scholars differ on whether or not someone who coerces someone to do something ought to be considered a leader. Burns (1978), for example, does not consider Hitler a leader because in Burns' view of leadership anyone who crushes dissent and blocks opposing views is a tyrant, not a leader.

7. For a similar and extended discussion, see Heifetz (1994), *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.

8. Although this article discusses vision as if it was always ethical, in fact, this is not so. To assess the ethics of any particular vision, a number of questions need to be asked. For example: Whose vision is it? Who is included? Who is excluded? Will the fulfillment of the vision result in harm to people, the nonhuman world, or the environment? Heifetz' (1994) comments on vision are relevant for ethics as well: "Conceptions of leadership that do not value reality testing encourage people to realize their vision, however faulty their sight" (p. 24).

9. The word "temporarily" is inserted to recognize that a leader will not always receive a respectful response in return and at some point may need to reassess whether or not a different approach may be required. See, for example, Noddings (1984) discussion, pp. 114-115.

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