

# Towards a Deeper Understanding of Hope and Leadership

Martha R. Helland, PhD  
Bruce E. Winston, PhD  
Regent University

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*Recently a cognitive based theory of hope developed within the field of positive psychology has been discussed in relation to organizational leadership. (Shorey & Snyder, 1997) Hope in this context can be described as a positive motivational state that contributes to leaders and followers expending the requisite energy necessary to pursue and attain organizational goals. In an effort to further understand hope in relation to leadership the authors identify linkages between hope and theories of motivation, goal setting and goal pursuit commonly applied in leadership studies. This is followed by a review of emerging leadership concepts and theories that explicitly include the concept of hope. Implications for theory are discussed and questions for future research are presented.*

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Few would argue that leaders are purveyors of hope, for as Luthans and Avolio (2003) acknowledge, "the force multiplier throughout history has often been attributed to the leader's ability to generate hope," (p. 253). Yet despite this acknowledgment, little attention has been paid to hope within leadership studies. This does not mean that hope has been discounted as a critical factor in effective leadership. It is simply that hope, which is often considered an emotion, has been difficult to define.

However, hope theory (Snyder, Irving & Anderson, 1991) developed within the field of positive psychology has recently provided researchers with a definition of hope that is clear and measurable. Hope theory defines hope as, "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)," (Snyder, Irving & Anderson, p. 287). In other words hope is not just an emotion, it is a dynamic, powerful, and pervasive cognitive process that is observable

across numerous contexts including that of formal organizations.

Organizational research that is either underway or completed includes: hope as a factor in human and social capital management referred to as positive psychological capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2004); the role of hope in sustaining innovation during major changes such as mergers and acquisitions (Ludema and colleagues, in progress); the impact of high hope human resources on profits, retention rates, follower satisfaction and commitment (Adams et al., 2003; Luthans & Jensen, 2003); the differences of hope levels among social workers and corresponding levels of stress, job satisfaction, commitment and performance (Kirk & Koeske, 1995); the development of positive organizational hope and its impact on organization citizenship behaviors (White-Zappa, 2001).

More recently hope theory has been applied to concepts of organizational leadership. Shorey and Snyder (2004) have presented hope as common process in leadership and hope is now included in emerging concepts and models of leadership. This pioneering work has only just begun and there are many unanswered questions regarding the "processes by which leaders influence hope in followers," (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 808).

The purpose of this paper is to build upon this nascent theoretical work by (a) identifying linkages between hope theory and theories related to motivation, goal setting and goal pursuit that have been commonly applied in leadership studies, (b) reviewing emerging concepts of leadership that explicitly include hope as a key variable, and (c) discussing implications for theory building and future research.

## Leadership

Just as hope is a universal human phenomenon (Shade, 2001) so, too, is leadership. (Bass, 1999) Traditionally scholars have approached the study of leadership from two perspectives, one that focuses on positional leadership within an organization hierarchy and one that views leadership as a social influence process that is naturally occurring in social systems. Within this tradition there are four streams or “generations” of theories: trait, behavioral, contingency and transformational. (Doyle & Smith, 2001) These streams have examined leader traits and behaviors, how leaders employ power and influence and how leaders adapt their behaviors based on situations. For the most part leadership theory is leader centric, concerned with what effective leaders do. However, since leadership is viewed as an interactive process, in more contemporary research there is a corresponding concern with followers and what followers do in response to leader traits and behaviors, as well as attempts to integrate findings from both perspectives. Yukl (1998)

This broad approach has created a vast array of concepts and theories that have not been fully integrated into a universally accepted definition of leadership. Equally illusive is a firm understanding of what constitutes effective leadership. Nevertheless, for purposes of this discussion, leadership is viewed within the context of formal organizations. We agree with Hickman (1998) that, “leadership can and does make a difference in every aspect of organizations,” (p. xiii). For a definition of leadership we draw upon Bass’s (1999) broad conceptualization.

Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leaders are agents of change—persons whose acts affect other people more than other people’s acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group . . . any member of the group can exhibit some

amount of leadership, and the members will vary in the extent to which they do so. (p. 20)

According to Hickman (1998), leaders are called upon to assess the external environment for trends and changing conditions, then to understand and integrate the organizational context and requirements with this changing milieu. Leaders initiate the generation of organization vision, values, change, shared power, engagement, conflict capital. However, these factors do not emerge in isolation. Organization participants contribute to their formulation and commit to making them a reality. Through this interactive process a mission is identified and actions taken to accomplish the mission. These actions include creating a viable structure, establishing goals and aligning individual and group goals with the vision and mission, constructing a culture and building the capacity to fulfill the organization’s purpose. One of the catalysts for the concentrated effort and vigorous activity that is needed to fulfill an organization’s purpose is the phenomenon of hope.

## Hope Theory

The reality of hope as a phenomenon has been confirmed through research conducted over the past decade resulting in a cognitive based theory of hope. (Snyder, 1994a, 1994b; Snyder, Irving & Anderson, 1991; Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991; Snyder, Sympson, et al., 1996) Hope Theory has been studied in relation to physical and psychological health (Snyder, 1996, 1998a; Snyder, Irving & Anderson, 1991; Snyder, Feldman, Taylor, Schroeder & Adams, 2000), psychotherapy (Snyder, Michael & Cheavans, 1999) academic achievement and sports performance (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby & Rehm, 1997).

Hope as conceptualized by Snyder and colleagues (1991) is a construct within the field of positive psychology. Essentially positive psychologists emphasize the strengths that people exhibit rather than the symptoms of psychological pathologies. The ultimate goal of positive psychology is to “understand and build those factors that allow individuals, communities and societies to flourish.” (Seligman, 2002, p. 8). Within positive

psychology hope is identified as an activating force that enables people, even when faced with the most overwhelming obstacles, to envision a promising future and to set and pursue goals.

The basic premise of hope theory (Snyder et al. 1991; Snyder 2002) is that hope is comprised of not only emotion, but thinking as well. Indeed, according to hope theory, thinking is at the core of hope. (Snyder, 2002) While investigating the phenomenon of excuse making by individuals when they failed to perform well, Snyder discovered that even though these individuals had reasons for not doing well they also expressed the desire to establish positive goals. This research led Snyder to explore theories of motivation and he was further encouraged by the pervasive theme within the motivation literature of the “desire to seek goals,” (p.249). Subsequent investigation led Snyder to the conclusion that hopeful thinking couples goal setting with the self-assessment of one’s ability to attain a goal. Additionally, Snyder, Irving and Anderson (1991) found that hope is both a state that is influenced by circumstances and a trait or disposition that is learned.

### **Distinction from Other Constructs**

Considerable discussion has taken place regarding the similarities and differences between hope and other positive psychological constructs such as optimism, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Snyder, 2002; Luthans, 2002a; Peterson & Luthans, 2003) While it is not the intent of this paper to review this discussion in detail, to aid the reader a brief summary of the differences between these constructs is offered.

#### **Optimism**

Optimism is related to hope but it is conceptually distinct from hope. Optimism involves the perceived ability to move toward goals with valued outcomes and to avoid those that are undesirable, (Carver & Scheier, 1999). The optimistic person has goals and strives to attain them but anticipated and actual goal pursuit outcomes, especially those that are negative are attributed to external rather than internal forces. In hope theory the focus is on setting goals to attain a positive future outcome. Agency and pathways thinking are intertwined

in an iterative process with equal weight given to both facets. (Snyder, Cheavens & Michael, 1999)

#### **Self-Esteem**

According to Snyder (2002) goal directed thinking is implicit in self-esteem in that self-esteem arises from successful pursuit of valued goals. However the main difference between hope theory and self esteem models is that self-esteem is based upon a personal appraisal of how well one conducts their life in relation to “valued activities,” (Snyder, p. 258). It is a judgment-a personal estimation of “worthiness,” (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 4).

#### **Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy thinking (Bandura, 1977) becomes activated when a person is faced with a significant situation specific goal related outcome that is valued by an individual. In order to pursue this outcome the person must believe they can attain the outcome. The same is true in hope theory but hope theory includes the person’s motivation to act-the willpower to engage in continuous goal pursuit. Additionally hope theory explicitly acknowledges the presence and impact of emotions on agency and pathways thinking whereas self-efficacy theory does not. (Snyder, 2002) For a detailed discussion of the differences between the two concepts see Magaletta and Oliver, 1999.

### **Hope and Goal Pursuit**

A central tenet of hope theory is that the catalyst for future action is goal-directed thinking. (Snyder, 2002) However, there are distinct differences in how people approach goal pursuit depending upon their hope orientation. High hope people pursue goals with “affective zest,” whereas low hope people demonstrate “affective lethargy” as they pursue goals. (Snyder, 2002, p. 252) Furthermore, high hope people not only energetically pursue goals; it appears they may also “generate more goals,” (p.253). When faced with obstacles or “surprise” events that may be positive or negative high hope people tend to experience less stress and implement more effective coping strategies than low hope people. High hope people seem more able to employ emotional feedback

diagnostically to determine more successful goal attainment strategies in the future. The low hope person does not seem to demonstrate this kind of resilience. Instead of using emotion to redirect goal pursuits, the low hope person experiences greater levels of self-doubt that represses future action. (Michael, 2000; Snyder, 1999; Snyder, 2002)

Additionally, high hope people seem to establish positive relationships with others and, when engaged in group goal attainment efforts, “high hoppers serve to make the group not only more productive but also, perhaps equally important, an interpersonally enjoyable arena,” (Snyder, Cheavens & Sympson, 1997, p. 115). High hope individuals focus their efforts on both individual and collective goal attainment. They hope not in isolation, but in relation to others frequently pursuing “common goals,” (p. 114).

Moreover, it seems that high hope individuals are better able cope with ambiguity and uncertainty and, indeed, are energized by the challenge of journeying into an undefined future without having all the answers yet knowing that in time the answers will be revealed. Ludema, Wilmot and Srivasta (1997) explain,

When people hope, their stance is not only that reality is open, but also that it is continually becoming. Rather than trying to concretize and force the realization of a preconceived future, by hoping people prepare the way for possible futures to emerge. In this sense, hoping can be seen as a deeply creative process, one that requires steadfast patience and the willingness to accept uncertainty as the open future is explored and molded into a compelling image of possibility.(p.12).

It is this enlarged capacity to remain open to possibilities, to envision a positive future in the face of uncertainty and to creatively construct pathways that can be embraced as people collectively seek to turn possibilities into reality that links hope with the enactment of leadership.

### Hope and Leadership

In their insightful review of historical interpretations of hope throughout Western intellectual tradition, Ludema et al., (1997) reveal four enduring qualities of hope. “It is (a)

born in relationship. (b) inspired by the conviction that the future is open and can be influenced. (c) sustained by dialogue about high human ideals. and (d) generative of positive action.” (p. 9). Like hope leadership arises in relationship with others. It involves a future orientation, dialogue regarding ultimate outcomes and action directed at attaining goals. All four of these qualities are embedded in Hickman’s conceptualization of effective leadership.

Correspondingly, there are parallels between Shorey and Snyder’s (2004) conceptualization of hope as a common process in leadership and Burns’s (2003) description of leadership. According to Shorey and Snyder (2004), hope is “a cognitive goal directed process composed of having clear, well-defined goals, the perceived ability to develop routes to those goals, . . . and possessing the requisite motivation to use those pathways in the goal pursuit process,” (p. 2). The components of hope; goals, pathways and agency are present in organizations as leaders and followers pursue valued personal and organization outcomes. Therefore Shorey and Snyder conclude that hope resides as a common process within leadership.

This process echoes throughout Burns’ description of leadership. Burns reminds us that in every arena of life human beings strive to fulfill needs and desires however meager or simple they might be and that leaders participate with others to fulfill these wants in such a way that the end result is greater than just satisfying these wants. A leader according to Burns (2003), addresses these wants with challenges to things as they are, with solutions and the ways and means to achieve change, and if this initiative hits powerfully and directly it will motivate the person in need to action . . . A leader not only speaks to immediate wants but elevates people by vesting in them a sense of possibility, a belief that changes can be made and that they can make them. Opportunity beckons where none had appeared before, and once seized upon opens another opportunity and another.(p. 239).

Effective leadership, it would seem, awakens hopeful thinking.

## Theoretical Linkages

While we acknowledge the breadth of leadership theories and concepts that could be explored in relation to hope theory we have chosen to begin where hope and leadership processes appear to converge by looking at theories often applied in leadership studies to (a) the process of motivation, (b) goal setting, and (c) goal pursuit.

### Motivation

Motivating followers to energetically and enthusiastically pursue organization goals is one of the benchmarks of effective leadership. (Gardner, 1993) Two theories commonly applied in leadership studies to explain motivation are Expectancy Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory.

### Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Vroom's Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), although 40 years old, combined with the newer concept of hope (Snyder, 2002) might contribute to the understanding of why people do or do not invest the requisite energy and effort into pursuing organization goals. Expectancy theory, like hope, is comprised of cognition and emotion that assumes people expend energy to pursue goals based on conscious choices in order to satisfy an important need or desire. Individuals can be motivated if they believe (have hope) that their efforts will produce positive results, which is followed by a reward or outcome that is valued, making the effort expended worthwhile. Snyder, Cheavens and Sympson (1997) posited that hope represents a person's expectation of goal attainment, which ties to Vroom's notion of expectancy. This focus on goal attainment is supported by Snyder and Shorey's (2004) belief that high-hope people have clear, well-articulated goals and can envision paths to accomplishing the goal. Hope further plays a role in Vroom's notion of instrumentality in that the person performing the task has hope that he or she will actually receive the reward and that personal satisfaction will be derived from attaining the goal (expectancy) and receiving the reward (instrumentality).

While instrumentality is similar to expectancy in that both refer to gaining the reward, the notion of instrumentality has to do with the probability of receipt. For example, if two people have the same goal of a promotion but only one can receive the promotion, both may have expectancy that achieving the assigned goals may lead to the promotion, but both also realize that while each person has to achieve the assigned goals, only one will receive the promotion. Each person has a 50 percent probability of receiving the reward (instrumentality) even if both achieve the assigned goals (expectancy). Based on hope theory (Snyder, Anderson & Irving, 1991) it might be surmised that in spite of the odds, the person with greater levels of willpower and waypower will persist longer and exert more energy while pursuing assigned goals than the other person who may possess a lesser degree of hopeful thinking, even when the potential outcomes are valued equally by each person.

### Inspirational Motivation from Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leaders use their influence to raise follower awareness of the vision and mission of the organization in such a way that followers come to personally embrace the vision and value the mission and energetically pursue organization goals, transcending their own self-interests in favor of the needs of the larger organization. (Bass & Avolio, 1994)

The level of hope that a follower may be affected by transformational leadership's inspirational motivation. Inspirational motivation differs from Vroom's expectancy theory in that with transformational leadership, the leader uses idealized influence tactics to inspirationally motivate the follower to identify with the aspirations of the leader and the desire to emulate the leader, whereas in Vroom's expectancy the follower seeks to benefit the follower (the self). As a result of inspirational motivation, followers pursue the leader's defined purposes and established goals. Thus, a follower may not have self-referential expectancy or instrumentality for personal goal attainment but acts instead to achieve the leader's vision.

The role that hope may play in this inspirational process is that in the absence of

follower self-referential agency and pathways, it is the leader and the leader's vision and goals that become the follower's perceived agency and pathways. This element requires that the transformational leader articulates a compelling vision, communicates how the vision can be realized and through symbolic acts and behaviors that are consistent with the vision engenders confidence in followers that they can indeed achieve the leader's inspirational goals for the organization.

### **Goal Setting/Goal Pursuit**

Since Snyder, Irving and Anderson (1991) include two factors of hope (a) goal-directed energy and (b) pathways to achieve the goals it is logical to examine the relationship between hope, goal setting and goal pursuit. Leaders are continually called upon to ensure that organization goals are established and that followers throughout the organization are involved in goal directed pursuits. Two theories that focus directly on goal setting and goal pursuit are Locke's Goal Setting Theory and House's Path Goal Theory.

#### **Locke's Goal Setting Theory**

Even though Locke and Latham (2002) do not specifically mention hope in their review of the 35 years of goal-setting research, it can be inferred that hope plays a role in the goal setting process. Locke and Latham imply that there is a curvilinear relationship between goal difficulty and the level of effort that a person commits to goal attainment. The curvilinear relationship may imply that after a certain level of perceived difficulty, the person no longer has hope of attaining the goal. This situation echoes Vroom's expectancy in that the person no longer expects to succeed or receive a valued outcome so why expend any more energy? At this point a leadership intervention is needed in order to recover the lost motivation. This can be accomplished by reinforcing the value of the goals and their meaning to the follower and the larger group, as in transformational leadership, but also by working with the follower to identify alternative paths to goal attainment. In other words engaging the follower in hopeful thinking.

A common situation where this is observable is in setting sales goals. New sales

professionals are often given "learning curve" goals coupled with coaching and training in sales techniques. As the professional gains experience and builds up a repertoire of sales approaches, difficult goals seem less daunting, challenging yes but not out of reach. At this point the sales professional expects that goals will be met and that in all probability their desire for a reward, such as a sales incentive or commission will be forthcoming. This suggests that hopeful thinking has the ability to redirect the curvilinear relationship between goal difficulty and expended effort.

#### **House's Path-Goal Theory**

House's path goal theory concentrates on the modifying effects leader behavior has on follower satisfaction and effort. Situational considerations that must be taken into account by the leader are task and follower characteristics that include self-perceptions and beliefs (House, 1996). House's path-goal theory incorporates elements of Snyder, Irving and Anderson's (1991) factors of agency and pathways in hope theory, specifically in House's (1996) axiom 3 of the reformulated path-goal theory:

Leader behavior will enhance subordinate motivation to the extent that such behavior (a) makes satisfaction of subordinate's needs and preferences contingent on effective performance, (b) makes subordinate's tasks intrinsically satisfying, (c) makes goal attainment intrinsically satisfying, (d) makes rewards contingent on goal accomplishment, and (e) complements the environment of subordinates by providing psychological structure, support, and rewards necessary for effective performance.

Axiom 3 is related both to Vroom's expectancy theory and Locke's goal-setting theory in that the leader has a responsibility to help the follower see that behavior focused on completing the organization's goals will result in achieving the goal and that the subsequent reward for achieving the goal will be of value to the follower. Moreover by complementing the environment with structure and support the leader offers to followers clearly identifiable pathways (waypower) that encourage agency (willpower).

For example, in a study of the development of leader member exchange relationships in newly formed dyads in a customer service call center (Helland, 2004) fear and hope emerged as recurring themes in associate descriptions of early on the job experiences. Associates hoped they would be able to learn and succeed in their new positions but were fearful that they would fail. New associates exhibited the willpower to accomplish the goal of mastering the position, but they were not certain how (waypower) they were going to get there. In dyads where leaders provided frequent positive emotional support and structured activities that rapidly built up follower confidence associates reported feeling certain of success and motivated to not only achieve acceptable performance standards, but to exceed them. In those dyads where supportive interactions were not as frequent associates described losing confidence in their ability to overcome the challenges of the position accompanied by a loss of interest in doing so.

In looking at this case study through the lens of hope it appears that those leaders who behaved in accordance with Axiom 3 helped associates overcome fear and doubt by encouraging and enhancing follower hopeful thinking. While House does not refer to hope, it may be that hopeful thinking is an *a priori* condition that must be present if followers are to believe that they will indeed achieve their goals and that it will be worthwhile to do so.

### Summary

In this discussion we have reviewed hope in relation to existing theories that explain how effective leaders are able to influence followers to pursue organization goals through processes of motivation. These processes include (a) understanding follower expectations regarding goal pursuit and the value followers place on extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, (b) inspiring followers to pursue a common vision and to work toward achieving goals that not only satisfy individual needs but also those of the larger group, (c) triggering motivation (willpower) by setting goals with followers and demonstrating through their own behaviors that they believe the goals are worthwhile as well as attainable, and (d) enhancing commitment to

goal pursuit by supporting followers and providing the functional means necessary for goal attainment (waypower). In other words, it appears that leaders through their own hopeful thinking have the capacity to generate and enhance hopeful thinking in followers. Without a sense of hope followers may not invest the requisite measure of effort and energy necessary to complete the tasks that should lead to the attainment of organizational goals.

### Emerging Concepts

Emerging leadership concepts advance the understanding of hope in leadership by explicitly acknowledging hope as a variable and recognizing the generative nature of hope within the leadership process. Three concepts are reviewed: (a) spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003); (b) positive approach to leadership, PAL (Luthans, Luthans, Hodgetts & Luthans, 2001); and (c) authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans & May, 2004) Two of the three directly apply the construct of hope as defined in hope theory, the concept of spiritual leadership proposed by Fry (2003) does not, but we feel it is important to include this in our discussion as it is one of the few recent models that explicitly calls attention to hope in the leadership process.

### Spiritual Leadership

Fry (2003) describes spiritual leadership as, “necessary for the transformation and continued success of a learning organization. Spiritual leadership taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival so they become more organizationally committed and productive,” (p. 694). In this intrinsic motivation model hope is defined as “desire with the expectation of fulfillment,” (p. 713) Fry intertwines hope with faith explaining that faith “adds certainty to hope,” (p. 713). Hope and faith in an organization’s vision intrinsically motivates followers to apply effort towards realizing the vision. This results in a sense of calling and membership that creates meaning and ultimately leads to positive organization outcomes. Leaders are therefore stewards of the environment in which power is shared with followers who are members of fully empowered

teams. The hope and faith of strategic leaders, and team members interacts and generates effort, endurance, perseverance, a 'do what it takes' attitude, a willingness to establish stretch goals and to strive for excellence. It is suggested in this model that the presence of hope and faith in leaders, in followers and between leader and followers increases organizational commitment to continuous improvement. In this model hope is both an antecedent to behavior and a socially constructed outcome.

The waypower and willpower components of hope theory echo within this model. The outcomes of hope and faith are very similar to those described in hope theory but the connection is only inferred; the link is clearly not a direct one. However the following two concepts draw directly upon hope theory with its rich history of empirical research.

### **Positive Approach to Leadership**

The post 9/11 world inspired Luthans, Luthans, Hodgetts & Luthans (2001) to "look beyond existing leadership solutions to add value and make a contribution," (p. 18). They turned to the field of positive psychology for inspiration and seemed to have found a potential antidote to the spiraling negativity and turbulence so apparent in the environment including that of organizations. However before proceeding with developing a fresh leadership solution they established strict criteria that had to be met. Any new concept had to be positive, measurable, open to development, manageable in self and other's leading to performance improvement and relatively unique. The new solution that arose from this effort was a positive approach to leadership, PAL. The components of PAL include realistic optimism, intelligence with an emphasis on emotional intelligence, confidence and hope. The acronym RICH was applied to this combination of components.

The component of hope in this concept applies Synder's (2000) construct involving agency and pathways. Additionally hope is recognized as both a trait and a state that can be strengthened through leadership development interventions. While the importance of follower hopeful thinking is acknowledged the RICH component of hope focuses primarily upon leader trait and state hope and the various means

that could be employed to increase levels of hopeful thinking among organizational leaders.

PAL with its RICH components have not been widely tested in applied settings. However in an exploratory study Peterson and Luthans (2003) identified a significant relationship between leader trait hope, unit financial performance and human resource outcomes. This finding suggests that leader hopeful thinking does indeed impact important organizational outcomes and therefore hope should be further examined as a positive motivational force in organizations. The PAL concept was also applied in a thoughtful discussion of positive leadership in the context of organizational development in South Africa. (Luthans, Van Wyk & Walumbwa 2004). This conceptual exploration of hopeful thinking within a culture that has experienced a high degree of sustained turmoil is a significant milestone in the application of hope theory to organization leadership. It poses the important question, is hopeful thinking culturally bound? If so, how and what are the implications for organizational leadership processes in different cultural settings?

The positive approach to leadership at first glance does not appear to have received much attention in recent leadership literature but this may be deceiving. It looks to us that the components of RICH, particularly hope, have been integrated and expanded within the emerging concept of authentic leadership.

### **Authentic Leadership**

Luthans and Avolio (2003) as well as Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004) identify hope as a core construct in authentic leadership. Authentic leadership goes beyond existing charismatic and transformational leadership theories by focusing on a leadership approach that fosters high levels of trust which in turn encourages people to be more positive, to build on their strengths, to expand their horizon of thinking, to act ethically and morally and to be committed to continuous improvement in organization performance. As such authentic leadership is described as a "root construct" in that it is not confined to a particular leadership style. (Avolio, et al., p. 805) Authentic leaders ideally possess a deep

sense of self-awareness that informs their actions. As a result authentic leaders, “are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths: are aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character,” (Avolio, Luthans, & Walumbwa, 2004, p. 4).

The existing conceptual model of authentic leadership applies Snyder’s (2003) construct of hope and identifies hope along with optimism and resiliency as positive psychological capital that contributes to sustained organizational performance. Authentic leaders have the ability to nurture and enhance hope in followers by modeling hopeful thinking and interacting with followers in ways that increase follower willpower and waypower. These means include communicating relevant and important information needed to make sound decisions and actions that encourage participative and supportive inquiry. Focused efforts to build a theory of authentic leadership are currently underway. An approach has been outlined and theoretical propositions developed. These propositions are not confined to leader traits and behaviors but are inclusive of the leadership process and the interplay between leaders, followers and organizational outcomes. (Avolio et al., 2004)

In a proposed model of how authentic leaders impact followers, hope along with trust and positive emotions, are identified as intervening variable between follower personal/social identification and follower attitudes and behaviors. Authentic leadership fosters positive identification with the leader and social identification with a larger group or organization. This leads to higher levels of individual and collective hope, trust and positive emotions. These in turn generate a hopeful, trusting and optimistic outlook that increases commitment, job satisfaction, engagement and a sense of meaningfulness (similar to spiritual leadership) resulting in productive job performance through extra effort and the diminished presence of withdrawal behaviors. The untested propositions in authentic leadership related to hope are that (a) personal and social identification of followers with leaders mediates the relationship between authentic leadership

and hope, and (b) hope is positively related to follower work attitudes that are manifested by follower behavior. (Avolio et al.)

In essence authentic leadership strikes us as a positive psychological leadership concept that integrates constructs from positive psychology with the process of leadership. At present the model emphasizes what leaders do in relation to followers. However Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa (2005) have recently proposed a model of authentic leader and follower development that ultimately leads to environments that are inclusive, caring, engaged and focused on developing strengths rather than concentrating on weaknesses. In such an environment a leader “positively fosters the development of associates until they become leaders themselves,” (Gardner et al., 2005, p.6). This is reminiscent of Burn’s (1978) transforming leadership but hope is implied in Burn’s concept whereas hope is explicit in the concept of authentic leadership. It is outside the scope of this paper to compare and contrast the two concepts but we are struck by the similarities between the outcomes of the two leadership concepts. It could be that authentic leaders engaged in hopeful thinking with followers as they mutually pursue goals transform their organizations into positive, ethical environments that promote individual and social well being.

### Looking Toward the Future

We have looked at old theories and new concepts and found that they all support the notion that hope is a common process in leadership. (Shorey & Snyder). Hope resides implicitly in existing leadership theories and explicitly in emerging concepts of leadership that focus on building positive environments of engaged leaders and followers. Furthermore it appears that leaders have the ability to enhance and raise the hopes of their followers and that hopeful thinking on the part of leaders generates hopeful thinking in followers. Therefore hope is both an antecedent to behavior and an outcome. Hope begets hope.

Throughout this discussion we have primarily focused on the impact leaders have on follower hopeful thinking. However the concept of authentic leadership with its explicit

component of hope provides an opportunity to explore hope from broader, less leader centric, perspectives. The questions that seem to be begging for answers include:

1. What are the hopes that people bring to the leader-follower relationship?
2. What do leaders hope for, what do followers hope for, and what if these hopes are not met in the period before personal/social identification is firmly established?
3. Do hopeful followers have the ability to raise the hopes of discouraged leaders and if so how?
4. Do hopeful followers become informal group leaders who help raise the hope of colleagues?

It is going to be interesting to discover through future research the answers to these and other questions regarding the role hope plays in leadership processes.

So where do leadership scholars go from here? We do not want to fall victim to the tendency in leadership studies to jump “from one fad to the next,” (Yukl, 1998, p. 493). However the profound reality of hope in the life of human beings, tells us that further exploration of the meaning of hope in leadership is not a fad, in fact, it is long overdue. However, this does not mean that researchers should blindly rush into launching studies of hope and leadership. We agree with Luthans (2002) and Yukl (1998) that careful attention must be paid to developing theory and integrating past research into a present understanding of the role hope plays in leadership. As we look to the future we call for research conducted in applied settings that tests theoretical assumptions and measures the impact of hope within organizations in diverse and cross-cultural settings.

In order to conduct such studies, research methods, qualitative and quantitative, need to be identified and measurement tools developed. At present there are over 13 instruments that measure individual hope (White-Zappa, 2001); however, there are no instruments that have been specifically developed for use in organizations to measure individual and/or collective organization hope. And, finally, of primary importance is to use the findings from this research to determine ways and means for developing hopeful thinking in both leaders and followers. Shorey and Snyder (2004), as well as

Peterson and Luthans (2003), have proffered promising suggestions regarding the development of hopeful thinking in organizations but these ideas have not yet been applied in practice to confirm their effectiveness.

In summary, we suggest that future research on the role of hope in leadership focus on four priorities:

1. Integrating the components of hope theory with existing theories of leadership to determine where they converge and where they diverge and the implications for theory development and application. Integrating the insights gleaned from these efforts with emerging concepts of leadership that include hope to deepen our understanding of hope in leadership processes and to advance theory development.

2. Designing research studies that are theory based and focused on understanding the significance of hopeful thinking for leaders and followers in applied settings. Research studies should concentrate on determining what behaviors hopeful leaders exhibit and the impact these behaviors have on organization members and valued organization outcomes. Likewise since leadership is an interactive process involving influence we need to know how hopeful followers impact leaders and co-workers. Do hopeful followers bolster the flagging hopes of discouraged leaders and coworkers and if so what is the impact? How can leaders help restore hopeful thinking in those people who have experienced downsizing or other threats to on going viability? What role does hope play in the leadership of entrepreneurial ventures? What role does hope play in leader commitment to pursuing a strategic plan? If hopeful thinking is so critical a variable, what is the implication for the selection and development of organizational talent?

3. Developing methods that reveal and measure hope in leadership processes. Peterson and Luthans (2003) adapted the trait hope scale (Snyder, Harris et al., 1991) for use in their exploratory study that included measuring leader hope levels. This work should be continued and broadened so that a full range of reliable and valid tools are available to field researchers. Moreover the potential of qualitative research methods need to be explored as a means to

understand the evolution and decline of hopeful thinking.

4. Determining how to further develop hopeful thinking in leaders and designing leadership development programs that enhance hopeful thinking in current leaders. Likewise designing curricula for all organization members to increase their ability to engage in hopeful thinking (Shorey & Snyder, 2004). Curricula have been developed and delivered with success in educational, (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand & Feldman, 2003) psychotherapeutic and adolescent foster care settings. (Shorey, Snyder & Heim-Bekos, 2004) These curricula should be explored and adapted for use in other organizational settings. The impact of such programs on significant organizational outcomes will need to be evaluated as well.

## Conclusion

The goal of effective leadership is to attain valued organization goals for the benefit of all of its members as well the community in which it resides and participates as a partner. (Hickman, 1998) In our quest to discover the keys to effective leadership, we have been surprised by hope. Hope as an observable and measurable phenomenon is a gift that has been given to us through our colleagues in the field of positive psychology. Their work has inspired us and as we look to the future we take our direction from Shade (2001) who writes, "our active engagement in the life of hope is needed to secure its means, enrich its horizons, and extend its boundaries," (p. 214). We believe the many facets of hope provide a rich field of discovery for leadership scholars. The results of this future research should provide immediate and lasting benefits to practitioners and consultants as they too discover the promise of hope—a world of future possibilities that could become present reality.

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