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## OVERVIEW

# *Reflective Leadership Process*

## **Leadership with Peace of Mind**

Reflective Leadership means replacing a style of self-interest-ego striving with a human heart and spirit-based approach to leadership. *Formation Consultation Services (FCS)* assists religious and clerical leaders in reshaping and honing their approaches and styles to leadership and work.

Through our formative process, leaders decrease, tone down and transform harmful self-interest-ego-striving styles and characteristics that hinder effective and fulfilling leadership. Ego-striving characteristics like being harsh, dismissive, judgmental, intolerant, arrogant, rigid, mean-spirited, narcissistic, disrespectful, impulsive, etc., compromise and diminish a leader's capacity and effectiveness.

Self-interest-ego striving styles like smugness, sarcasm, manipulateness, ill will, defensiveness, and being over-focused on achieving, performing succeeding, that collectively proliferate within the various levels of a Congregation's, Institute's, Society's, or Diocesan's leadership can pose hazardous and unnecessary hurdles to the successful implementation of mission, work, service, charisma, and organizational values.

Heart and spirit-based dispositions foster leadership's potency. When leaders cultivate their human heart and spirit for example with courage, discipline, passion, appreciation, wonder, assertiveness, integrity, graciousness, etc., they promote healthy ego-strength and helpful ego-qualities. These helpful ego-characteristics are in the service of both the organization's mission and the wellness of the leader's human heart, which is the conduit to the spirit dimension.

*FCS's* leadership development process clarifies the leader's unique obstacles to leadership and introduces facilitating conditions that nurture the leader's human heart. Reflective Leadership results in personal and organizational success with peace of mind.

## **Introduction to Reflective Leadership**

Achieving success while maintaining peace of mind, unfolds from a leadership style that has been transformed and cultivated. The capacity to touch the heart of one's ministry, to shepherd

an organization's mission, and to influence the dynamics within ministry, work, community and family, flows from a leader's transformed self-interest-ego strivings and cultivated human heart.

Healthy and potent ego-strength is essential for leadership. However, an arrogant ego, a pride-filled ego, an inflated-ego, a mean-spirited ego hinders and confuses rather than helps and supports the people implementing the organization's mission, ministry, and charism. Reflective Leadership assists in transforming and reshaping a leader's unreflective ego, a leader's self-interest-ego strivings. An undisciplined ego can easily disrupt and sour a team's, a council's, a committee's, a ministry's – energy, creativity, productivity, and relationships. A disciplined and conscious leader's ego, like a refined archer's concentration, empowers leader and archer to relax, focus, and hit the target.

Living reflectively cultivates a leader's human heart that facilitates openness toward the flow of the human spirit. *FCS* assists leaders within administration and ministry to foster specific human heart and spirit-based approaches and dispositions like reflectiveness, appreciation, courage, receptivity, humility, firmness, etc. These and other heart and spirit-based approaches nurture a leader. Human heart and spirit-based dispositions equip and reinforce a leader to face the challenges of organizational change and innovation with openness, creativity, and peace of mind.

*FCS* approaches leadership development as a formative process. Though leaders need to upgrade their functional and practical ministerial skills, **we understand leadership primarily as a process of formation** rather than an assimilation of skills and competencies. Ministerial leadership emerges from a rigorous process of:

- reflecting on one's *Spirit Story*<sup>™</sup>, unfolding of the human heart
- disciplining and transforming one's self-interest-ego strivings
- cultivating one's human heart and openness of spirit, and
- grounding daily life, ministry, and work in the art of Reflective Living.

Reflective Leadership means replacing an ego-striving approach with a human heart and spirit-based approach to leadership. Transformed self-interest-ego striving reduces obstacles to leadership and increases success within ministry with peace of mind. Nurturing a leader's spirit with heart-based approaches and dispositions enhances leadership's potency. It enhances ego-strength but reduces the harmful ego-strivings that can cause obstacles to leadership.

Reflective Leadership results in mission and charism implementation as well as organizational success with peace of mind.

## Leadership's Dilemma

Every leader has an ego, the raw potency for success. Ego-strength, a healthy and vibrant ego, and a balanced ego enhance leadership. However, when a leader's self-interest-ego strivings become an obstruction to leading, when a leader's ego becomes distorted, when a leader is just too full of him or herself, the leader will tend to miss the target and fail the congregation, community, and/or organization.

This usually happens inadvertently and unintentionally. Seldom does leadership fail an organization and its ministries from a practical, functional, or skill based level. Most people within leadership positions have been trained rigorously in the functional application of their particular disciplines. Leadership is significantly more than rigorous practical implementation.

Ministerial leaders, who have climbed the ranks, been selected, elected, assigned or volunteered for positions of leadership, may be unaware of the possible obstructive aspects of their ego-strivings. They may be inattentive to the potential negative and toxic impact that an unreflective ego may have on their ministry and the organization's people, daily operations, and the implementation of its mission, values, and founding charism. They may be unmindful concerning how their self-interest-ego strivings can cause mistakes, resentment within the ranks and community, loss of opportunities and income, loss of mission effectiveness.

Seldom does any formal education, development, ongoing training, coaching or tutoring address and bring into the light the harmful aspects of a leader's self-interest-ego strivings, a leader's unreflective and undisciplined ego. Failure of leadership, disharmony of leadership, ego-pride-focused leadership could happen within any community or organization. It can happen within the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, within the religious and secular sectors. Potent leadership flows from the integration of the leader's transformed ego-strivings and ongoing cultivated human heart.

Disciplined and transformed ego potency, ego-strength, is essential for leadership. Unfortunately, our egos were formed many years prior to stepping into any leadership position. Understanding, disciplining, and transforming one's self-interest-ego strivings is a fundamental task for any current or potential leader. Leaders, who function primarily from an excessive ego or prideful stance, though they may achieve technical success, will often fail to see and thus miss the many opportunities to cultivate the heart of their ministries and communities. Their success will be at the cost of their personal peace of mind, the harmonious working and productivity of their organizations, and the successful implementation of their organizations' mission and charism.

Leadership that leads inadvertently and unintentionally with ego-strivings usually fails to nurture the organization's spirit. The organization's vitality, creativity, and relationships all support the honing of an organization's cutting edge abilities, services, products, and mission. They erode and become dormant when leaders' self-interest-ego strivings dominate and get in the way of their organizations' charism, visions, and missions.

This is the fundamental dilemma for leadership development, leadership formation, i.e., **to assist today's leaders to become reflective observers and to transform their self-interest-ego strivings. It is our human stuff that becomes the obstacle to leadership with peace of mind.**

## Formative Process

We offer a unique formative process for leadership development. Our research and experience suggests that leaders are formed in the art and nuance of leadership and not trained. Therefore, educating with facts and training a leader in various competencies though important and essential becomes secondary to leadership formation.

Our formative process, *Spirit Story*<sup>™</sup>, uncovers self-interest-ego striving obstacles to leadership. It fosters specific heart and spirit-based approaches and dispositions to leadership. The potent combination transforms leaders. It cultivates the synergistic spirit-core out of which leadership emerges and unfolds, the grounding for comprehensive and successful ministry.

We refer to our process as the *Spirit Story*<sup>™</sup>, or the Reflective Leadership Process

- It is the story of a leader's formation from birth to the present.
- It is the formation story of a leader's heart and spirit.
- It is the story of how a leader's heart and spirit may have been wounded and even crushed at times throughout the leader's lifetime.
- It is the story of how a leader's heart and spirit has been enlivened, sparked and energized.
- It is the story of how a leader incorporated obstacles to heart and spirit, thereby encouraging the priority of self-interest-ego striving and consequently diminishing and covering over one's spirit, one's leadership capacity.
- It is the story of how a leader may have forgotten how to use the congenial facilitating conditions of one's heart and spirit usually fostered during childhood.
- It is a process contained within a storytelling format that permits the leader to be in control of the process.

Reflective leaders start with and focus on their personal human experience. They take up their everyday life experience as their guiding text, their disclosing text, their sacred text. Through disciplined reflection on their everyday text of experience, they form new eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to feel what is around them. This process assists leaders in discovering how people, events and things speak their deeper truths to them, as well as how they influence the leader's ability to lead. Leaders become aware of how people and situations impact them, as well as how the leader impacts other people and events.

The process of Reflective Living invites the leader to be called back to the basics of his or her life minute-by-minute. In scanning their interactions with people, events, and things, leaders foster a reflective discipline and proficiency to uncover how their self-interest-ego strivings, their pride forms, can become obstacles to their ability to lead. This reflective process assists the leader to name, claim and transform the obstacles that may

be covering over the unfolding and emergence of their human heart and spirit, and thus their leadership potential.

In paying attention to their everyday life experience, they may encounter their own fragility, vulnerability, insecurity, and weakness. This process may slow them down sufficiently to experience a sense of gratitude, appreciation, humility, courage, forthrightness, and awe. As facilitating conditions of the human heart, they assist the emergence of the spirit, the synergistic core that provides leadership capacity and ministerial success.

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**Our Reflective Leadership Process is designed for**

- **the individual leader**
- **a team, council, committee**
- **and/or for larger groups.**

**The Reflective Leadership Process is adjusted and individualized for the unique needs of our participants. The process may involve**

- **a weekend workshop or**
- **several weeks**

**depending upon the needs and requirements of the participant(s).**