

PREFACE

No one who takes the time to read *Caring Enough to Lead* will mistake it for a textbook. Rather than a rehash of the tenets of leadership according to a host of theoreticians past and present, this book presents a highly personal perspective on what it means to care enough to be an effective leader. This book is not the least bit concerned with leadership theory and the organizational structures, processes, and rational technical skills that flow from it, but rather is concerned with an understanding of who we are as leaders and what we can become as we bond with others in meaningful ways to help transform schools. So if it's more theory that you are seeking, this is definitely not the book for you!

The discussion of leaders and leadership is thousands of years old. As far as we can tell, men, women, and even children have been leading for as long as human beings have banded together and worked cooperatively, initially in an effort to survive and later also to improve the quality of life. Countless studies have been conducted over many years in efforts to determine what causes or allows some people to lead and others to follow. Our perspectives on leadership have matured a great deal over the last century. Although much has been learned about leaders and leading, for the most part leadership remains an intriguing mystery.

Through an arduous process marked by careful study and keen observation, we have progressed all the way from the belief that leaders are born, not made, to embracing the notion that leaders must connect with others in an organization in such a way that the organization becomes a reflection of a set of powerful common core values that can serve to raise the organization to a higher moral and ethical level. That's quite a journey by any stretch of the imagination.

Some popular book titles published throughout the 1990s and beyond illustrate a growing fascination with a softer side of leadership—what some might term ethical or moral leadership. *Managing From the Heart* (Bracey, Rosenblum, Sanford, & Trueblood, 1990), *Moral Leadership: Getting to the*

Heart of School Improvement (Sergiovanni, 1992), *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-Interest* (Block, 1993), *Leading With Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* (Bolman & Deal, 1995), *The Loyalty Effect* (Reichheld, 1996), *On Becoming a Servant Leader* (Greenleaf, 1996), *Managing by Values* (Blanchard & O'Connor, 1997), *Leadership From the Inside Out* (Cashman, 1998), and *The Servant Leader* (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003) are illustrative of this trend toward moral leadership.

Caring Enough to Lead is this writer's humble attempt to expand the discussion of leadership beyond what it means to perform in a leadership role in order to get at what it really means to be a leader. As Sergiovanni (1992) has put it,

The management values now considered legitimate are biased toward rationality, logic, objectivity, the importance of self-interest, explicitness, individuality, and detachment. Emphasizing these values causes us to neglect emotions, the importance of group membership, sense and meaning, morality, self-sacrifice, duty, and obligation as additional values. Furthermore, the bases of authority for today's leadership practice rely heavily on bureaucracy, psychological knowledge or skill, and the technical rationality that emerges from theory and research. Emphasizing those three bases causes us to neglect professional and moral authority as additional bases for leadership practice. (p. xiii)

In the simplest of terms, this book is not concerned with what leaders say, know, or are able to do. All these elements of leadership have been dealt with sufficiently in the past. *Caring Enough to Lead* is about being a leader. I firmly believe that Sergiovanni (1992) is correct in his contention that we have viewed leadership from a very narrow perspective in the past. In doing so, we may have negated what could be the most important aspects of what it means to be a leader, the so-called moral dimension of leadership. *Caring Enough to Lead* is a deliberate attempt to understand and expand some of the yet unexplored and heretofore unexplained dimensions of moral leadership.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

Caring Enough to Lead has several intended audiences. This book is not exclusively for people in formal leadership roles, but for all those who feel a deeply personal responsibility to provide the most caring, compassionate, and effective leadership they can in whatever leadership roles they may find themselves serving. Therefore, the content of this book is appropriate for a broad range of

formal and informal leaders in educational institutions, business and industry, social service agencies, government service, the military, and just about any other leadership role where someone is committed to being the best leader he or she can be while serving others in a compassionate and caring way. The book is intended for both practicing leaders and those who are in the process of preparing to become leaders. My hope in writing *Caring Enough to Lead* is to help those with leadership responsibilities understand that leading is concerned much more with being than it is with doing, and that caring is at the very heart of being.

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE BOOK

The content of this book is based on my more than thirty-five years of studying leadership while serving in a variety of leadership roles. The fundamental truths that are the foundation of this discussion of leadership are based on both real-life experiences and expert opinion. The majority of the chapter titles are in the form of questions, and many additional questions are included in the narrative to help the reader focus on what I believe to be the most fundamental elements of successful leadership (e.g., What do I care about? What do I believe about people?). Scenarios, metaphors, and vignettes are used to illustrate key points and make the reading of the book an enjoyable as well as an enlightening personal experience rather than just another boring academic exercise. A special feature of *Caring Enough to Lead* is the inclusion of an expanded set of reflective exercises at the end of each chapter. These exercises encourage readers to step back and examine in a personal way who they are as leaders and human beings and who they might want to become. By completing these reflective exercises, readers can, in effect, produce personal journals documenting where they are on their individual journeys to becoming the kind of people and leaders that they ultimately want to become.

NEED FOR THE BOOK

In 1999, I wrote a book for school leaders about the importance of caring to effective school leadership. That book, *Caring Enough to Lead: Leadership and the Sacred Trust*, was well received by school leaders and was subsequently republished in a second edition. Although these first two books were written expressly for educational leaders, over the years I have received considerable feedback from leaders in other fields—from business and industry, to the military, to government service, and even to the legal profession. These

leaders have read one or the other of these first two editions suggesting that the content is appropriate and needed by leaders in all fields. It is my belief that good leaders from all fields should be interested in sharing information and ideas with each other. So although this third edition is still aimed principally at school leaders, I sincerely hope that through this book I am able to contribute something to the discussion of leadership to my colleagues from many walks of life.

I am convinced that there is a lack of caring leadership in many of our organizations today, resulting in low engagement in their work by a significant majority of American workers across all fields. Low engagement in the workplace translates into many serious problems, including an absence of commitment by employees to the mission of the organization, poor-quality work, absenteeism, high employee turnover, low morale, and eventually declining productivity and the loss of competitiveness. Unfortunately, the problems resulting from the lack of caring leadership are not problems that can be solved with the head—they are problems that must be solved with the heart. This book is written for those leaders who have the heart to care enough to lead. It is especially for those who want to solve what I am convinced is the most fundamental problem afflicting many organizations today: the lack of caring leadership.

SCOPE AND TREATMENT

Caring Enough to Lead is a collection of ideas and understandings; it is not a how-to manual. The chapters, which are relatively brief, illustrate important concepts of leadership through a series of questions, vignettes, selected quotations, and personal stories. Although the first and last chapters need to appear in that order, most of the others could easily be placed at random because they are self-contained and complete. Below are brief descriptions of the contents of several selected chapters, and of chapters that are new to this book to illustrate the uniqueness of the book.

Chapter 1, *It's Better to Know Some of the Questions Than All of the Answers*, sets the stage for the chapters that follow. The essence of this chapter is that questions are more important than answers for leaders because life's essential questions are eternal, whereas answers to questions frequently vary with the time, circumstances, and personalities. Because questions are more important than answers for leaders, the remainder of the book suggests some of the essential questions that leaders should be asking and answering for themselves if they hope to become the leaders that they ultimately would like to become.

Chapter 4, *Why Should Leaders Care About Caring?* is a new chapter in this edition that was written especially for those leaders whose chief concern is the bottom line—that is, those who feel an obligation to focus on the dollars and cents aspects of leadership. This chapter provides some solid evidence as to why it makes good business sense for leaders in all fields of endeavor to care about caring.

Chapter 5, *What Do I Care About?* illustrates that the essential things that a person cares about determine to a great extent who that person is as a human being and as a leader. The question, “What do I care about?” is critical for leaders, because the things that people value most highly dictate what they will be passionate about, fight for, sacrifice for, and in some cases, what they may even give their lives for. What leaders care about and how that caring is manifested will also ultimately determine whether or not others can and will trust them enough to allow them to lead.

Chapter 7, *Am I Taking Care of My Water Buffalo?* is concerned with the role that cooperation and mutual respect can play in successful leadership. The story of a farmer and a water buffalo plowing a rice paddy together is used to illustrate how much we need each other to accomplish any goal. The point is made that, although there are many different roles to play in any organization, every role is critical to the success or failure of the organization.

Chapter 19, *What Do Leaders Owe to Those Who Follow?* is also new to this edition and explores the nature of the debt that leaders owe followers. While most of us are very aware of the rewards of leadership, we sometimes forget that there are significant debts that go hand-in-hand with the privileges of leading.

Chapter 22, *Your Leadership Becomes You!* is the final chapter in the book and describes the personal metamorphosis that one must experience in order to ultimately become the leader that he or she wishes to become. This final chapter offers a series of suggested steps one can take to become a caring leader, and emphasizes once again that effective leadership is not about knowing, saying, or doing things in a leadership role. Rather, effective leadership is all about being something.