

Noetic Leadership: a Conceptual Model of Leadership Integrating Spirituality with Affect, Cognition and Physiology for providing a framework for further research into Leadership and Spirituality

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Abstract

Spirituality is a key and fundamental aspect of our human existence and evolves from our natural inclinations as human beings. Thus, spirituality is inevitably connected to our emotional (affect), intellectual (cognitive) and physiological selves. Yet, ideas regarding spirituality as a function of leadership have lacked a framework that describes the relationship between spirituality, affect, cognition and the psychological dimensions of our existence. This paper fulfils that need by introducing the Noetic Leadership model which integrates affect, cognition and physiology with spirituality. The creation of the Noetic model also provides a new and innovative structure for exploring and examining leadership and leadership skills as a function of the fulfillment of fundamental human needs and drivers.

Spirituality, Leadership and the Noetic Model

Spiritual Leadership, it is contended, is the intrinsic and ephemeral filament connecting behaviour with action, a contention especially poignant in a changing and challenging world (Dehler & Welsh, 1994). Therefore, a model of leadership that integrates behaviour with meaning ought be the predominant leadership paradigm. Spiritually based leadership would also fill the vacuum in workplace spirituality which, as contended by Korac-Kakabadse et al (2002), is an inherit but overlooked aspect of the leadership contract with followers.

The 2004 GLI conference saw the proposal of a new form of leadership, the Noetic Leadership model (Kibby and Härtel 2004a) which was associated with specific interaction skills that build spirituality. At that time, the full Noetic model was not provided. This paper takes that Noetic Leadership concept one step further and proposes a theoretical model of Noetic Leadership that integrates hitherto disparate but related notions of affect and cognition (Rimé 1999, Rimé et al 1991 a & b, 1992, 1998, Rimé, B. & Zech, 2001), affect and physiology (Spiegel, 1999; Pennebaker et al 2001, 2003), meaning (Frankl 1963, 1969) to integrate these into a leadership model. This process of integration is akin to Wilber's (2000) integration of spirituality, science and business.

The integrated model named the Noetic Leadership model was developed by Dr. Leigh Kibby utilising the affect-cognition interaction concepts proposed by Kibby and Härtel (2002, 2003 a & b, 2004 a & b) which, when accompanied by an exploration of values, result in the facilitation of the discovery of meaning (Kibby and Härtel 2003 a & b, 2004 a & b) which is the enactment of spirituality as proposed by Frankl (1963, 1969). In presenting the Noetic model, this paper provides a key framework for answering questions regarding

leadership and spirituality explored by Senge (1990), Fairholm (1996), Burdett (1998), Cacioppe (2000 a & b). The model also provides a framework for the concept of transformational leadership (see also Burns, 1978; Covey, 1991; 1989; Fairholm, 1991; 1994; Greenleaf, 1977; Kibby & Hartel 2003 a & b, Kibby & Hartel 2004 a & b, Lee and Zemke, 1993; Vaill, 2000).

Affect, Cognition, Physiology and Spirituality

Human beings are a complex mixture of affect, cognition and physiology (Härtel, C.E.J., Kibby, L. & Pizer, M. 2003). To refute this is to ignore what, and who, we are as human beings (Härtel, C.E.J., Kibby, L. & Pizer, M. 2003) and also deny well researched evidence of the connection between affect and cognition (Rimé, 1999), affect and physiology (Spiegel, 1999; Pennebaker et al 2001, 2003) and affect and spirituality (Tischler et al 2002). We also know that emotions generate a search for meaning (Rimé 1999, Rimé et al 1991 a & b, 1992, 1998, Rimé, B. & Zech, 2001). The search for meaning is itself described as existential and spiritual angst (Frankl, 1963, 1969) and is experienced as much in the workplace as it is in life (Ikehara, 1999, Butts 1999). This contention is also well supported by the work of Neal et al (1999) who propose that spirituality is a major driving force in business.

Lives without meaning suffer this spiritual angst and so it is essential that experience in all aspects of life facilitate the discovery and realisation of meaning. This spiritual journey of discovery is both natural and essential for all human beings (Frankl, 1963, 1969) and therefore this paper contends, as do Burdett (1998), Cacioppe (2000 a & b), Fairholm (1996),

Neal (1999) and Senge (1990), that it must therefore also be a natural and essential element of leadership.

Hence, this paper examines the Noetic Leadership model and discusses how the Noetic model fills a gap missing in current research relating to a model of spirituality and leadership which incorporates affect, cognition, physiology and spirituality. Further, it builds on the Noetic Leadership proposition presented at the 2004 GLI conference (see Kibby and Härtel 2004b).

Noetic Leadership affect, cognition, physiology and spirituality

It was proposed that the Noetic Leadership model and associated techniques for its enactment enabled emotions management leading to the discovery of meaning (see Kibby and Härtel, 2002 and 2004 a & b). This discovery of meaning is proposed by Frankl (1963, 1969) as being a spiritual discovery. The Noetic Leadership model itself goes further than this in that it provides a framework for leadership skills and techniques that address Ikehara's (1999) concern for integration of the multiple dimensions of the self. The link to leadership techniques that enable spiritual discovery is the missing element in the discussions of Senge (1990), Fairholm (1996), Burdett (1998), Cacioppe (2000 a & b) and the formation of the Noetic concept will provide a framework for further exploration of the skills of spiritual leadership.

Noetic Leadership can also contribute to well-being which scientific evidence suggests improves through managing emotions (Spiegel, 1999) and the formation of meaning (Wong, 2000). By doing so, Noetic Leadership skills foster the type of psychological success

proposed by Mirvis and Hall (1996) and can provide the type of motivation explored by Tichy (1993). Additionally then, Noetic Leadership with its associated skills can be seen as an approach that enables the transcendent management proposed by Shelton & Darling (2001).

The techniques of Noetic Leadership (see Kibby & Härtel, 2003 a & 2004 a) which include facilitating narrative in order to discover meaning, also appear to answer questions regarding narrative currently being explored by some researchers (see, Janson et al 2006) whilst providing the connectedness between the inner self and the world as proposed by Stamp (1971). Likewise, Noetic Leadership techniques operationalise ideas proposed by researchers (Ikehara, 1999, Butts 1999). Through these achievements Noetic Leadership can fulfill the revolutionary potential proposed by Butts (1999) whilst building the positive mental states that Walsh and Vaughan (1993) propose flow from ethical behaviours.

In summary, the Noetic Leadership model, which includes a focus on skills development, provides a framework for operationalising theories of spiritual leadership hitherto unseen.

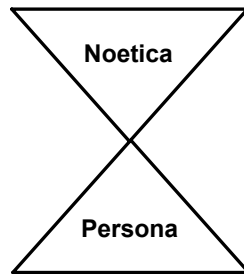
Overview of the Noetic Leadership model and associated propositions

As proposed by Kibby & Härtel (2004b), “Noetic leadership is a new kind of leadership built around principles of servant-leadership (Spears, 2003), spiritual leadership (Fairholm, 1996), transcendental leadership (Cardona, 2000) and the counseling models and therapeutic interventions designed to resolve the existential dilemma,” Kibby & Hartel (2004a, p 3). This paper now looks at the heuristically developed notions of Noetic

Leadership developed by Dr. Kibby that underpinned the Noetic proposition in Kibby & Härtel (2003a & 2004a).

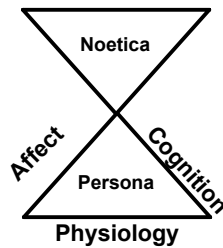
Dr. Kibby proposed two components of the self, the Persona (Ego) and Noetica (Soul) an approach consistent with Wilber's (1993) separation of differing aspects/dimensions of the self. Figure one below depicts the model.

Figure One – The Noetic Model depicting the two dimensions of the self, the Persona and Noetica



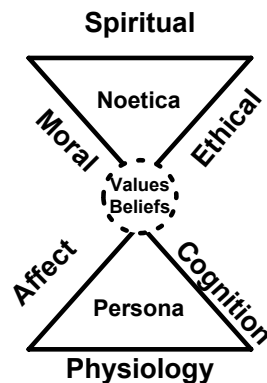
By applying the notion of a relationship between affect, cognition and behaviour (re: Kibby & Hartel 2002; Kibby & Hartel 2003 a&b; Kibby & Hartel 2004 a&b; Kibby 2006 a&b), Spiegel's (1999) assertion of the physiological connection between emotions and thinking, Pennebaker's conclusions regarding the relationship between affect and physiology (Pennebaker et al 2003; Pennebaker et al 2001; Pennebaker, 1997; Pennebaker, et al 1988; Pennebaker& Beall 1986; Pennebaker, 1989) and Fry's (2004) the contention that emotions and thinking govern attitude, the model can then be depicted showing the relationship between affect, cognition and physiology as in figure two below .

Figure Two – The Noetic Model including affect, cognition and physiology



The Noetic model further evolves further as depicted in diagram three below with the inclusions of concepts associated with values and spirituality (Fry 2003) and values, as an expression of ethics and morals, and spirituality as proposed by Frankl (1963, 1969). These inclusions also address considerations of Rimé (Rimé,1999; Rimé, et al 1998; Rimé, B, et al 1991a; Rimé, et al 1991b; Rimé, et al 1992; Rimé,& Zech, 2001) regarding the relationship between affect, existential angst and the formation of meaning.

Figure three - The Noetic Model including Ethics and Morals



The Noetic model now depicts the relationship between affect and cognition (Brown, 1976), affect and physiology (Pennebaker et al 2003; Pennebaker et al 2001; Pennebaker, 1997; Pennebaker, et al 1988; Pennebaker& Beall 1986; Pennebaker, 1989; Spiegel, 1999), affect and spirituality (Tischler 2002), values and spirituality (Frankl, 1969, Fry 2004), and emotions and meaning (Kibby & Härtel, 2002 and 2004 a & b, Tichy, 1993), plus the contention that values transform behaviour into the spiritual realm by creating meaning (Frankl 1963, 1969). In summary, the model explains the relationship between "Psychophysiologic" self (Parks, 1997) and the spiritual dimension.

How the Noetic model makes a difference in leadership research

Current research and theory regarding spirituality and leadership lacks a framework for exploring attributes, traits and behaviours of spirituality and leadership. For example, researchers have not identified behaviors that enact servant-leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002) which is a type of spiritual leadership (Kibby and Härtel 2004a) and so research would benefit from the model. The model will also help provide a framework for fulfillment at work (see Burack, 1999) and finding meaning and spirituality in work as proposed by Fairholm (1996), Page (2002) and Terez (2000). The Noetic model also offers an explanation for transcendence as proposed by Cardona (2000). Further, the model addresses issues of wants, needs and values proposed by Polleys (2002) and Ulrich, Zenger and Smallwood (1999). The Noetic model explains the overlap between emotional intelligence and spirituality (Tischler et al 2002) and can provide a framework for studying the relationship between emotional intelligence and spirituality. The Noetic model also provides a framework

for phenomenological research such as Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and questions about ways in which spiritual expression can be encompassed in workplaces (Lips-Wiersma & Colleen Mills, 2002) and in doing so provides a leadership framework for research into behaviours that can reduce fears that employees have regarding spiritual expression in the workplace (see Lewis and Geroy, 2000) which they strongly want to express (see Mitroff and Denton 1999). Finally, the model accommodates ideas regarding skills for responding to affect so that spiritual fulfillment is attained through the formation of meaning (Kibby 2006 a&b).

Conclusions: the implications of the Noetic model for Leadership research and practice

This paper offers an exploratory platform for embracing the notions of values, ethics, spirituality and leadership proposed by researchers such as Fry (2004) with which the model is highly consistent. The model also addresses both leader and follower spiritual needs (re: Fry 2003) at the same time as providing a model for delivering the psychological well-being hypothesized by Ryff and Singer (2001) and as proposed by Spiegel (1999) Pennebaker (Pennebaker et al 2003; Pennebaker et al 2001; Pennebaker, 1997; Pennebaker, et al 1988; Pennebaker& Beall 1986; Pennebaker, 1989) and Rimé, (Rimé,1999; Rimé, et al 1998; Rimé, B, et al 1991a; Rimé, et al 1991b; Rimé, et al 1992; Rimé,& Zech, 2001). As such, research can now utilise the Noetic framework for investigating the relationship between leadership and behaviours that incorporate the realm of the Persona (emotional, intellectual and physiological) and the Noetic (ethical, moral and spiritual) values, emotions, thought processes, ethics, morals and spirituality.

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