Introduction: Why Studying Leadership Matters

'I believe that we are more likely to secure responsible leadership in the future if we can demystify its constituent processes. In that sense, enhanced knowledge about leadership may go hand-in-hand with more morally desirable forms of leadership'.

Howard Gardner, Leading Minds (1995)

on studying leadership

The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines 'study' variously as 'a thing to be secured by pains or attention', 'devotion of time and thought to acquiring information especially from books', 'be on the watch, try constantly to manage', 'a thing that deserves to be investigated' and the definition we particularly enjoy, 'a fit of musing, reverie' – something that we hope this book might invoke for you. There are broadly five ways that one can go about studying leadership. You can actually attempt to lead, you can observe leadership in action, you can talk about leadership, you can read about it and you can write about it.

Given that we are both professors, it won't surprise anyone to learn that we find it easiest to *talk* about leadership. After all, we do this all the time in our lectures, seminars and workshops. We are greatly assisted in this regard by the fact that everyone has a fundamental interest in leaders and leadership. It's certainly true that everybody we have ever talked with has developed some kind of opinion on what constitutes good and bad leadership. Whether it's teenagers' views on the adequacy of their parents' or teachers' leadership skills or a colleague questioning the wisdom of promoting someone at work or the election of a new political leader, leadership tends to be something that is high on a lot of people's agendas – and invariably it's a powerful way of dividing people into those who support a particular leader and those who do not. The most authoritative sources regarding matters of global

as well as local leadership are, of course, taxi drivers. They should be consulted at every opportunity.

As we will see there is no shortage of opportunities to read about leadership. Leadership books continue to be a mainstay of publishers' catalogues. Amazon.com has more than 5,000 non-fiction books with the word 'leadership' in their title. Where we hope we can help rather than hinder by adding one more title to this list, is to guide you through the maze and encourage you to go beyond the conventional mainstream popular fare which dominates the shelves of high street book stores. People read leadership books for a number of reasons: to be inspired by others who have faced and overcome even greater odds than we are facing; to be reassured that we are not doing so badly after all; or simply to be entertained. We want to encourage you to select leadership books because they challenge, unearth, expand and perhaps even subvert your assumptions about leadership, and what it is to lead and to follow.

Reading about leadership should not be confined to books; the newspaper is a prime source of leadership stories. The next time you pick up your newspaper try counting how many times the term 'leader' or 'leadership' appears in it. Most students recognize that these terms will show up quite frequently in the business and politics sections but are surprised to learn how often leaders and leadership crop up in the sports and entertainment sections. Of course, the section in which these terms are most frequently mentioned is the career opportunities section – yet another reason to become interested in studying leadership.

Another great source for leadership stories can be found at the movies. While we do not want to wish to undermine any welcome relief from the worries of the world that you may derive from going to the movies, we do hope that, like us, you will never be able to watch a movie again without thinking that it is a movie about leadership. From *Alien* to *Zorro* all you will see are leadership lessons; the fun is well and truly over! To get you started, we've provided you with our list of all-time favourite leadership movies in the Appendix.

Writing about leadership is more challenging. We find that the 'publish or perish' stick used in concert with the 'fame and fortune' carrot can prove to be surprisingly strong motivators for academics. Perhaps the relief of getting assignments done and out of the way, coupled with the affirming allure of superior grades, may well do it for you. Whatever it takes it is very important to find time to write as there is something very special about the writing process. Its solitary, reflective and permanent nature requires a much stronger commitment to say what you really think, compared to everyday conversation or discourse. The off-the-cuff remark or observation that seemed so appropriate and pithy at the time reveals itself to be less so once vulnerably placed on

the written page. However, when you do finally work an argument through to its logical conclusion, you can reach a level of contentment that is hard to match.

We tend to value our leaders primarily for their abilities as orators. However, many of them use the written word through the medium of their diaries and memoirs to make sense of and to work through the dilemmas, their doubts and their frustrations associated with their leadership positions. Nelson Mandela's magnificent autobiographical bestseller, *Long Walk to Freedom*, is an exemplar of this form of leadership communication. It's not surprising, then, that these documents attract so much interest when they are made public. People are naturally curious to see what lurks behind the front-stage of the theatre of leadership. Unfortunately, they can occasionally be disappointed as demonstrated in Bill Clinton's verbose and generally unrevealing autobiography, *My Life*.

Seeing leadership, if done superficially, is not difficult at all. It's something we all do day in and day out. To quote a well-worn epithet, leadership is like beauty – it is difficult to describe, but we certainly know it when we experience it. Most of the time we rely on the media to guide us, and make it easy for us to understand and judge. Whether it's a beleaguered politician, the coach of a sports team on a losing streak or a business tycoon embroiled in a business scandal, the media can be especially persuasive about what constitutes good and bad leadership and how it needs to be addressed. Usually they recommend instant removal. However, we believe it is important to want to see leadership though our own eyes. Having the discipline to observe leadership properly requires time, patience, imagination and the willingness constantly to question what one is observing and to look for new and perhaps disconfirming evidence. Most importantly, one needs to look beyond the obvious, take a contrary view and, occasionally, be willing to become unpopular with one's views. In this book we want to develop and foster a multi-dimensional, broader and even empathetic view of leaders and leadership.

Anyone who has attempted to lead will understand that the act of leadership is considerably more challenging than talking, reading, writing or seeing leadership all put together. There's no doubt that one can learn the most about leadership from actually trying to lead. That has certainly been the case for us in our efforts to lead. It is an inconvenient irony that there is an inverse relationship between the ease and comfort in doing something and the quantity and quality of learning that is generated by it. This irony is further highlighted by the fact that we can often learn the most from situations in which we have failed to lead. Indeed another leadership book was recently published entitled *Firing*

Back: How Great Leaders Rebound After Career Disasters by Jeffrey Sonnenfeld and Andrew Ward. Everybody loves to hear about a comeback story, just don't make a habit of it.

Of course, we can all think of some leaders with whom we have worked who, in common with the infamous David Brent character from TV's *The Office*, appear to be incapable of learning anything from their efforts at leading or from their followers. Thankfully, most leaders we work with are keen to learn and improve their abilities as a leader. The experience of leading seems to sharpen their desire to learn and to change.

In light of the power and importance of experience, the idea of merely studying leadership might seem somewhat passive, evasive and even frivolous. In our roles as directors of a Centre for the Study of Leadership we were often quizzed about the desirability of having such a passive and weak term as 'study' associated with the Centre. Wouldn't it be more marketable to rename it the 'Centre for Leadership' or more simply the 'Leadership Centre'? We held firm to the word 'study' because we believe that there has perhaps been too much emphasis placed upon 'just doing' leadership and not enough, as Howard Gardner's opening quotation signals, on 'demystifying its constituent processes'. We ardently believe that, in order to create the morally responsible forms of leadership that many of us crave, it is vital not only for leaders to demystify these processes but also for followers to do so as we are the people who will guide and influence the leaders.

When we talk about 'studying' leadership we are thinking of all five of these activities: doing, seeing, talking, reading and writing. We not only need to learn to become better at doing all five of these activities but, most significantly, it is critical for us to learn how to better link and integrate these activities into a cohesive philosophical whole. So that what we read influences what we see about leadership, what we talk about helps us to write about leadership which, in turn, helps us to do better leadership. This is by no means a linear process. In fact, you could easily reverse the sequence described above or use various combinations and the process would be equally valid. Though the primary task of this book is to help you learn more about leadership by reading about it, it is our hope that the process of reading about leadership will duly impact on and shape what and how you choose to see, talk, write and do leadership.

where we are coming from

While biographies of pre-eminent leaders will often reveal a desire to lead early on in the life of the leader that has invariably been engendered by a major setback or by an inspirational figure or a general expectation placed

upon them, it's fair to admit that nobody consciously sets out to study leadership. For reasons that we have yet to grasp, society places a greater premium on actually being a leader (assuming one doesn't fail or, more significantly, appears to fail) rather than on its citizens who make their living out of studying leadership. We suggest a variation of George Bernard Shaw's well-worn maxim about those that can't do, teach might be particularly instructive here. However, we hope that you – fellow student of leadership – wouldn't have it any other way.

Most leadership scholars we are familiar with have come to leadership research in a somewhat indirect and roundabout way. This has begun to change with the advent of postgraduate and, increasingly, undergraduate programmes that are explicitly devoted to studying leadership. But this is only a recent development. Most leadership researchers tend to have backgrounds either in psychology (originally from social psychology but more recently from organizational psychology), or they have their roots in sociology, history or political science. Most also come to leadership studies having done something else beyond academe – frequently consulting, teaching, training or project management – and have been drawn into academia because of a profound curiosity they have developed about leadership processes and, almost invariably, a vague desire to help make the world a better place. Leadership scholars tend to be the token dreamers, the chronic optimists and the hopeless romantics that you will find huddled together in small clusters at most business schools. We are no exception to this pattern.

Brad developed his original interest in leadership dynamics for sound practical reasons. As a son of a soldier having to change schools and neighbourhoods on a regular basis, he developed a chameleon-like ability to fit into groups quickly and with minimal fuss. The ability to score a goal during the initial playtime was a particularly effective means of establishing credibility. The other important means for fitting in was to quickly read the prevailing leadership dynamics within the various sub-groups, cliques or gangs, and ensure that one quickly got onside with the good leaders and offside with the bad leaders. This came into sharper focus when he attended military boarding school, where he contended with a dual civilian and military hierarchy as well as the critical informal network that was constantly being negotiated, challenged and reinforced by the boys. It was only later as he moved from a background in geography into the executive and management development field in Canada that he became exposed to some first-rate leadership teachers, as well as legions of middle and senior managers craving enlightenment about the mysterious secrets of leadership. Looking to management gurus for the answer led Brad to explore through his doctoral thesis the peculiarly evangelical brand of charismatic leadership

that these gurus wielded to such impressive effect over millions of managers throughout the world, persuading them to take on the latest management fashion that they were promulgating. While he has failed to cash in on the lessons learned from studying the modus operandi of gurus, he has finally found his true cause in life as New Zealand's first professor of leadership. This role he relishes because he is paid to see, talk, read, write and do leadership everyday of the year in a country that contains so many leadership lessons.

We believe that leadership is a fundamentally important human experience that can have a very significant bearing on the conduct and the quality of our everyday lives. We say this, not because we have the scientific evidence to back this up. In fact, hard evidence about the impact of leadership is surprisingly and tantalizingly hard to find. We say this because through our own direct experience working in a range of organizations, participating in a number of community and public groups and networks, we have been constantly impressed by the influence that a leader or groups of leaders can have, when they engage with followers to create this special thing called leadership. In fact, it can be mildly addictive. When it is good, it is very good; when it is bad, it is very bad indeed. Moreover, we find ourselves being constantly amazed at the variety and the complexity of the forms that leadership can take wherever we have cared to look for it. In truth, it is this never-ending fascination that keeps us going in our pursuit of studying leadership.

We mention our backgrounds and experiences with leadership because we want to encourage you to think about where your interest in leadership has come from and to consider how your own background and experiences have served to shape your interests and beliefs about leadership. Bruce Avolio describes this as your 'life stream' which, simply defined, 'represents events you accumulate from birth to the present that shape how you choose to influence others and yourself' (2005: 11). You have already developed a fairly sophisticated philosophy of leadership, which is dubbed your 'implicit leadership theory' (Schyns and Meindl, 2005), whether you are explicitly aware of it or not. You have some clear convictions about what you think constitutes the right and the wrong way to lead someone or to be led by someone.

What we hope is that, through the formal and informal study of leadership, you will not only be exposed to other philosophies of leadership by individuals who have devoted their intellectual lives to clarifying, challenging and deepening their philosophies of leadership but, as a result, you will have cause to question and deepen your own philosophy of leadership. This will not only stand you in good stead as a leadership researcher, but also as a leader and as a follower.

why it is a good time to be studying leadership

As we said at the outset, this book is aimed at those who are either studying leadership or are considering the possibility of doing so. Being passionately committed to studying leadership, we would of course, argue that any time is a good time to be studying leadership. However, we would not be stepping out of line by suggesting that there has never been such a good time to study leadership for the following reasons.

To begin with there has never been so much interest in the field. Leadership is widely seen as both the problem and solution to all manner of contemporary issues: from ending world poverty to addressing global warming; from turning around ailing corporations to regenerating local communities; from reviving schools to creating scientific breakthroughs. The hunger and quest for leadership knowledge appears to be insatiable. Typing into the Google search engine on January 15, 2007 we noted more than 257,000,000 entries when we typed in the word 'leader' and more than 168,000,000 entries for the word 'leadership'.

The distinctive feature of leadership is that it would appear that the more we learn about leadership, the more we realize we have to and want to learn. This might go some way toward explaining the dramatic growth of the leadership development field into a multibillion-dollar global industry; an estimated $36 to $60 billion US dollars are expended annually on management and leadership development throughout the world (Burgoyne, 2004). Surprisingly, little of the money that is invested has been invested in evaluating the impact of this investment. There appears to be blind faith in the efficacy of leadership development. In accounting for this faith, John Storey (2004) has pointed to four different types of explanations which probably all have some salience. The conventional explanation points to the increased complexity and rapid pace of contemporary society which demands higher and more creative levels of leadership. The institutional explanation emphasizes the pressure that is exerted on individuals and organizations to emulate others in order to maintain one's credibility. If everyone is doing leadership development, we had better do it too. The sociological explanation highlights the role that leadership can play in legitimizing the authority, power and privilege of elites. It provides a socially acceptable means of justifying the status quo. Finally, the strategic advantage explanation argues that leadership is an intangible asset that must be cultivated in order to gain a rare and valuable source of competitive advantage.

Given the spectacular growth in interest in leadership, it is not surprising to learn that leadership is also beginning to appear on the radar screens of government funders most notably in Europe and Asia. Traditionally in North America, private and philanthropic sources have

provided the bulk of funding for leadership research. Consequently we have witnessed the mushrooming of leadership institutes and research centres throughout the world, many of which are university-affiliated. Perhaps the best known of these are the Gallup Leadership Institute based at the University of Nebraska, Harvard University's Center for Public Leadership, and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership located at Lancaster University. These and others are listed in the Appendix. Leadership centres and institutes tend to have a twofold focus. The stated purpose of Excelerator: The New Zealand Leadership Institute is typical in this regard: 'To enhance the understanding of leadership in New Zealand and take action to ensure the country has talented and skilled leaders who will develop, guide and advance our organisations and communities.'

In addition to these research institutes, universities, particularly those in North America, are beginning to invest heavily in the provision of leadership development opportunities for students in the form of extracurricular activities, such as in-service programmes while they are pursuing either undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. In some universities, for example the Jepson School of Leadership Studies based in Richmond, Virginia, degrees in leadership are offered both at Bachelor and Master levels. These programmes aim to respond directly to the demands of employees, parents and students who are looking for a competitive edge when they move into the job market.

On the subject of job markets, the more astute readers (we expect all of you to be astute, of course; that's why you have bought this book) will have already recognized that this frenzy of activity will generate – is already generating – significant demand for enthusiastic and well-trained individuals at all levels of seniority who have been well trained in leadership development and research. Perhaps this is where you come in.

the interdisciplinary and applied nature of leadership

Those who work in leadership the research field have always made a point of recognizing its applied and interdisciplinary nature. We research leadership, primarily because we want to make a difference by promoting a better understanding of leadership from which we can help to promote better leadership in practice. While this rationale hangs together in theory, in practice we have probably not been as applied in our effects as we would have liked or perhaps should have been. As John Storey has noted, 'the accumulation of weighty and extensive reports to date tends, in the main, to regurgitate a now familiar thesis – but it is a thesis which remains incomplete, insufficiently tested, inadequately

debated and not properly scrutinised' (2004: 6). The bottom line is, there is still plenty of work yet to do – you are most definitely not too late.

Moreover, we have not been as interdisciplinary as we probably should have been in terms of the approaches that we draw upon to conduct leadership research and in terms of the kinds of question that various disciplines might inspire if applied to the study of leadership. Psychology and, to a lesser extent, sociology still tend to dominate the field. There have been, however, some encouraging signs that the leadership field is increasingly branching out and becoming more receptive to a wider range of quantitative as well as qualitative methodologies. The predominant journal in the field and its ultimate arbiter, *The Leadership Quarterly*, has noticeably expanded its agenda to encompass articles with disciplinary and methodological perspectives that would have had only a slim chance of being published in earlier years.

Another bottom line for you then is, even if you feel your disciplinary training might not be directly relevant to studying leadership, it may prove to be a real asset in that it helps you see and conceptualize elements of the leadership process. A good example of this would be one of Brad's former doctoral students, Ralph Bathurst, who drew on his training and experience as a musician (a violist to be precise) to create in his thesis what he described as an 'aesthetic ethnography' aimed at comprehending the 'music of organizations' which he applied to an empirical study of a symphony orchestra to revealing effect.

Leadership is beginning to attract established researchers who may have traditionally eschewed leadership research, either because they were philosophically uneasy about the idea of privileging leaders over followers or because of the field's predominantly functional and positivistic orientation. The arrival in 2005 of a new European-based journal, *Leadership*, is providing an alternative outlet for research with its stated aims of stimulating interest in new methods and theories of leadership; encouraging interdisciplinary, diverse and critical analyses of leadership processes; and providing an international forum for leadership research.

The father of modern leadership studies, James MacGregor Burns, has noted two striking recent developments in the field of leadership studies. The first is the internationalization of the study of leadership. Noting the blossoming of leadership as a discipline in the mid- and late-twentieth century, he comments that 'theoretical work and practical application in non-American contexts will inevitably move leadership theory away from its overly American emphases and bias toward a more international perspective' (2005: 11). The second major development that Burns points to is the role of leadership research as an interdisciplinary endeavour that invigorates related disciplines. Obviously, leadership theory draws heavily

from established disciplines but it can also vitalise those disciplines. Burns notes, however,

> 'leadership, in common parlance, is a 'good'. When people call for leadership, or deplore the lack of leadership, they see it not as a needed spur to human progress but, as in itself, a moral and ethical entity and a necessary gauge of action. Leadership, in short, becomes an activity as well as an academic enterprise'. (Burns, 2005: 12)

Leadership scholars are not only growing in number but they are also starting to get better organized (something you would reasonably expect them to do well, given their subject matter). The International Leadership Association (ILA) was formed in 1999 as a means to strengthen ties and share ideas and resources among those who work in leadership studies. In February 2007 it had 628 individual members and 390 institutional members from 33 different countries. In the past two years, the Academy of Management (AOM) has created a Network of Leadership Scholars which brings together several hundred leadership academics who are primarily based in universities. It is remarkable that 200 of the 2,000 papers presented at the annual meeting had 'leadership' in their title. At the end of 2007, Wanwick Business School in the UK played host to the sixth International Conference on Studying Leadership – a conference that regularly attracts researchers not only from the UK but from throughout the world.

the problem with leadership

You've had the good news. Now here's the not-so-good news. Leadership is a phenomenon that everyone has an opinion on but few seem to agree exactly on what it really is. Bernard Bass (1990) has famously observed that 'there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define it'. From his exhaustive survey of leadership definitions through the twentieth century Joseph Rost concludes, with more than a hint of lament, that a major problem with leadership studies as an academic discipline and with the people who do leadership, is that 'neither the scholars nor the practitioners have been able to define leadership with precision, accuracy, and conciseness so that people are able to label it correctly when they see it happening or when they engage in it.' (1991: 6). We will exemplify what he means with two definitions.

At one end of the continuum of leadership definitions we have the workmanlike but eminently robust definition offered by Stogdill (1974) that conceives of leadership as 'the process of influencing the activities

of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achieve-
ment'. There are three key components of this definition that are worth
emphasizing: it is an interpersonal process between one person and a
group; you cannot have 'leaders' without 'followers'; and the criterion
for effective leadership is goal achievement. If there is no commonly
agreed upon and generally understood goal, if it is basically a group of
people doing various tasks in an independent fashion, then it is not lead-
ership. At the other end of the continuum, we have the considerably
more expansive and flamboyant view of leadership promulgated by Tom
Peters and Nancy Austin in their book, *Passion for Excellence* (1985):

> Leadership means vision, cheerleading, enthusiasm, love, trust, verve,
> passion, obsession, consistency, the use of symbols, paying attention
> as illustrated by the content of one's calendar, out-and-out drama
> (and the management thereof), creating heroes at all levels, coaching,
> effectively wandering around, and numerous other things ...
> Leadership must be present at all levels in the organisation. It depends
> on a million little things done with obsession, consistency and care,
> but all of those million little things add up to nothing if the trust,
> vision and basic belief are not there.

You couldn't find two more totally different definitions. Yet from our
experience they both point to and illuminate something significant with
respect to our own experience of leadership. One is more precise and
functional, the other is more emotive and suggestive.

Keith Grint in his book *Leadership: Limits and Possibilities* (Grint,
2005) suggests that leadership has traditionally been understood in four
quite different ways: Leadership as Person: is it WHO 'leaders' are that
makes them leaders? Leadership as Results: is it WHAT 'leaders'
achieve that makes them leaders? Leadership as Position: is it WHERE
'leaders' operate that makes them leaders? Leadership as Process: is it
HOW 'leaders' get things done that makes them leaders?

We can illustrate these four ways of thinking about leadership with a
small case study of leadership. For Brad's benefit, let's take the All
Blacks rugby team which, in 2006, completed one of its most successful
seasons in its 103-year history. We've already taken the leadership as
results perspective by virtue of the fact that we've selected a successful
team. We're implying that because the team was so successful it must
have had not only good but exceptional leadership. We might however,
as most people do when assessing leadership, choose to focus on the
leadership as person perspective by pointing to the exceptionally high
calibre of the players.

If we were to take the leadership as position perspective we would choose to focus on the role of the head coach of the team, Graham Henry, who, along with his coaching team, has been credited with injecting a culture of discipline, resilience and teamwork into the team. Alternatively, we could point to the contributions of Richie McCaw, the captain, who was named the 2006 International Rugby Board's Player of the Year.

Finally, if we were to follow the leadership as process perspective, we might have elected to focus on the new rotational policy that has been introduced by the coaches, by which All Black players have been moved in and out of the team irrespective of their form. Critics have suggested this has devalued the famous black jersey because so many players are now being given caps. Another leadership as process expla-nation might focus on the symbolic importance of the Haka, the Maori war dance performed prior to the commencement of each game that reputedly strikes fear in the hearts of opposing teams and inspires the All Black players. A controversial new Haka has been introduced by the players aimed at spurring them on for special occasions.

The fact that we look at leadership in these four different ways goes some way towards explaining why we have so much trouble explaining leadership, trying to understand it, teach it and reward it. In Grint's view, each of these ways of thinking about leadership is valid and potentially useful. He, therefore, does not advocate that leadership scholars should attempt, as Joseph Rost has argued, to develop and agree upon one universal definition of leadership. Instead he believes it should remain an 'essentially contested concept' that is constantly being discussed and debated.

The way in which we have organized this book follows this line of thinking by presenting five different perspectives on leadership which we believe bring something quite valuable to the table in response to the challenge laid down by Howard Gardner in this chapter's opening quo-tation: to demystify 'the constituent processes of leadership'. It is when we find ways to share and pool our understanding of what constitutes good and effective leadership that we have the opportunity to foster and encourage exceptional leadership within a particular context.

While the importance of the role of individual leaders tends to be overestimated, the significance of leadership itself should never be under-estimated. Grint (2005) believes we have become overly preoccupied with individuals leaders when, in fact, we should have been focusing more on leadership. As a result he urges us to 'put the *ship* back into leader*ship*'.

Joseph Rost has attempted to systematically formulate the co-production of leadership by leaders and followers with his definition of leadership which he believes is most appropriate to the 'post-industrial

world' that many of us are increasingly working within. He defines leadership as 'an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes' (Rost, 1993: 102).

Rost highlights four essential elements that must be present for genuine leadership to take place. First, the relationship should be based on influence that is multidirectional (i.e. it is exerted downwards, upwards, laterally, within and beyond a particular organization) and non-coercive in that it is not achieved through force. Second, there is typically more than one leader and always more than one follower in the relationship. The followers are active partners but, even in the most democratic groups, the relationship is inevitably, usefully and even necessarily unequal. In responding to the 'Burns Paradox' which asks why we need to differentiate between followers and leaders when they are so inter-wined, the eminent leadership scholar, James MacGregor Burns observes:

> The key distinctive role of leadership at the outset is that leaders take the initiative. They address their creative insights to potential followers, seize their attention, spark further interaction. The first act is decisive because it breaks up a static situation and establishes a relationship. It is, in every sense, a *creative* act. (2003: 172)

The third element of Rost's definition is that both leaders and followers work together to bring about substantial rather than superficial changes. These changes are driven by a mutual purpose that is forged through a non-coercive influence relationship. This asymmetrical view of leadership, therefore, does not preclude followers from being active co-producers. In fact, it emphasizes the idea that leaders and followers should share responsibility for any consequences that might arise in the execution of the leadership relationship

Think about the leadership relationships that you have been part of. How many of these do you think would pass the demanding standards set by Rost's definition? Looking back on our careers, we have rarely been part of a genuine leadership relationship within the workplace. The nearest we have come to this has been through our involvement in the wider community through volunteer work. This kind of leadership relationship is something that is quite special and memorable. The point is that this definition is probably best thought of as an aspirational rather than a descriptive definition. It's something that we should aim for if we wish to secure a sustainable future for everybody on the planet: the kind of leadership that is required if we are to confront complex and massive scale issues such as global warming, poverty and the control of virulent diseases. Leaders will continue to play an important role in this relationship. We will still need leaders, but they will be different types of leaders.

▰▰▰ the three questions that are asked most about leadership

We are regularly asked by students, friends and journalists alike, three questions about leadership that we think it would be wise to address early on in the proceedings. What we are keen to show in this book is that, while these questions are not unimportant to leadership scholars, there are many other questions that leadership researchers are actively engaged in answering.

▰▰▰ question 1: are leaders born or made?

We are frequently struck by the number of people we come across who believe that leaders are born and not made. Some defend their position by observing that they have always known – and been told by others – that they are 'natural' leaders. Certainly a strong core self-concept is an important trait for leaders to possess unless it verges on arrogance. Others may not believe that they themselves are natural leaders but they can point to a number of people whom they believe are. We are inclined to react critically to this view on two levels. First on an intellectual level, because we want to know what 'natural' means, where it comes from and how it can be distinguished from 'unnatural'. Second, on a more practical level we are concerned that this stance, by definition, is self-defeating because it rules out the possibility that leadership can and should be learned and, thereby, serves to deter people from developing their full potential.

Bruce Avolio has been tackling this question with admirable gusto. He has estimated from extensive longitudinal research conducted on identical twins born in Sweden, that the 'born' side of the leadership development equation accounts for, on average, approximately 30 per cent of leadership effectiveness. The 'made' side of the equation (i.e. what happens to you after birth) accounts for 70 per cent. He concludes that, 'leadership and wisdom are both made, even if both are built on the genetic abilities people are endowed with at birth like cognitive abilities, energy levels, and how attractive we are to others' (2005: 25). The latter quality, attractiveness, is probably more important than any of us would be willing to admit particularly in persuading others that we should be given the opportunity to lead.

With respect to the making of leadership, Bruce has observed that a combination of authoritative parenting and a proclivity towards modest (but not serious) rule breaking are strong predictors of leadership emergence. The next time you think that your parents may have been a little too strict with you, perhaps there were some benefits in

this after all, especially if they allowed you to get away with occasionally bending the rules. Similarly, Manfred Kets de Vries argues that the experience we gain in our first five years plays a most profound role in shaping our desire to lead, as well the ways in which we choose to lead. He describes how the parental disharmony between King Philip and Queen Olympias sowed the seeds of the intense ambition of their son, Alexander the Great, to become an all-conquering leader. Alexander was desperate to take over from his father as the rightful king – an ambition that his all-loving mother did little to dissuade him from harbouring (Kets de Vries, 2004).

While this question has some value in stimulating debate and discussion, and occasionally earning a free drink, it doesn't really help us move forward on the real issue: namely, how do we go about developing the next generation of leaders? We have come across plenty of leaders who were apparently 'born' to be leaders (i.e. they had the 'right' genetic mix, background, etc.) but have not assumed leadership roles or failed miserably as leaders because they were either unable or unwilling to learn. We've also come across those, who on the surface, appear to have been born to follow but choose to learn and succeed in leading instead. It ultimately comes down to aspiration, to the desire to lead.

question 2: what makes an effective leader?

We need to distinguish between two different ways of answering this question: 'the common-sense way' and the 'scientific way'. The 'common-sense way' is an inductive approach which attempts to isolate fundamental truths about leadership that are based on direct and indirect experience with successful leaders. The scientific way is a deductive approach that involves developing a theory of how leadership ought to work and then conducting rigorous analytical experiments to test that theory.

Our own common-sense response to this question is that leaders need to possess many qualities but, if we are pressed, we will concede that five are particularly vital in order to promote effective leadership: confidence, integrity, connection, resilience and aspiration. Confidence creates the essential sense of self-worth and self-efficacy that is needed to put oneself forward to lead and to sustain oneself in a leadership role. Integrity helps leaders to be consistent and allows them to be clear about what they stand for and believe in. Connection is the ability to translate those values through a genuine and authentic link with followers – it is much more than communication, which is often the first choice whenever we ask groups to name what they believe to be the most important quality for a leader to possess. To this we would add

resilience, the ability to withstand emotional and physiological stress, setbacks and conflict. Leading can be both psychologically and physiologically draining. You shouldn't be surprised to learn, given our comments above, that we place aspiration at the top of our list of qualities that we believe an effective leader must possess. If you do not aspire to change something and you don't have a good reason for changing it, you cannot and should not lead.

The scientific response to this question adds five more traits to this list. In his review of major research programmes that have attempted to identify predictors of leadership effectiveness, Yukl (2002) points to the following prerequisites. First, a high internal locus of control, which means that the leader believes that events in their own lives are determined more by their own actions than by chance or uncontrollable forces. Second, effective leaders also require a high degree of emotional maturity and stability which has been memorably labelled by Goleman (1995) as 'emotional intelligence'. This means that the leader is able to monitor her or his emotional state and be well aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Third, leaders should also have a high socialized power motivation. This means they should derive enjoyment and fulfilment from influencing people and events for the benefit of others not themselves. Fourth, leaders should also have a moderate but not excessively high achievement orientation as they need to be willing to work with others who may be less capable. Finally, effective leaders should have a low need for affiliation which means that being liked should not be a strong motivator. While leaders should not relish making tough and unpopular decisions, they should not shy away from making them.

question 3: what s the difference between leadership and management?

There is considerable debate about the relationship between leadership and management. One school of thought has stressed that management and leadership are two entirely different functions. For example, Zalenik (1977) has suggested that leaders develop visions and drive changes, while managers monitor progress and solve problems. Put even more succinctly, Bennis and Nanus (1985) argue that 'managers do things right, while leaders do the right thing'.

Kotter (1990) makes the point that not all managers are leaders and, equally, not all leaders are managers. In fact, we can distinguish between those people in organizations who are 'formal leaders', that is, those who are appointed or elected to positions of formal authority,

and those who are 'informal leaders'. Yukl (2002) makes a similar distinction between those leaders who draw on 'position power' and those who draw on 'personal power'. Position power is derived from one's legitimate authority and control over resources, rewards, punishments, information and the physical work environment (i.e. who gets the nicest office). Personal power on the other hand is derived from one's expertise and/or friendship, loyalty and general affability (otherwise known and 'referent power'). You may not be cognisant or even comfortable with the notion that one of the reasons that you may choose to attend a university is to build up a number of these power bases – referent power, of course, being the number one concern. The most powerful leaders strive, in true Machiavellian fashion, to build a 'balanced portfolio' of power bases and are constantly seeking to consolidate and increase their power through the gentle art of political manoeuvring.

Peter Drucker, the management guru's guru, believes that effective managers should strive to be both formal and informal leaders within their organizations (Drucker, 1955). Leadership is one of the key tasks of management alongside planning, controlling and organizing. We can personally attest to the wisdom of this argument having worked for individuals who considered themselves to be leaders and would not denigrate themselves by engaging in any form of management activity. They preferred instead to leave the operational details to others, so that these would not cloud their 'big picture' thinking and get in the way of their vital vision-building activities. We, and the organizations they aspired to lead, ultimately found to their cost that the devil lurks in the detail.

While we are naturally delighted that leadership is being held up in such high regard, we are concerned by what has become conventional wisdom regarding the superiority of leadership over management. If you think of the old cowboy movies, we have got to the point in the popular imagination where the lone sheriff with the white hat who courageously defends the town has come to symbolize leadership (i.e. the 'good guy'); management has come to be portrayed as the outlaw sliding into town in the customary black hat (i.e. the 'bad guy').

It is important to recognize the different emphases and values each brings, but equally they need to be blended together and intertwined to work effectively together. As Allan Lind has observed, 'both are necessary. If you just have management, it is boring. If you just have leadership, it is exciting, but it is scary. If you do both together, then people feel safe but excited at the same time'. Finally, we should resist the trap of ghettoizing leaders and managers, demarcating those who should lead and those who should manage. We agree with Lester Levy when he remarks, 'in each individual you need to have the mind of a manager and the soul of a leader'.

◖◗◖◗ how the book is organized

Given the vast scale of the leadership literature it would be impossible to distil every word that has been written about leadership in a book of even conventional length. In the Appendix we have included some excellent reference sources which can provide such a comprehensive review of leadership research. However, given the space constraints implied by the 'very short' promise in the title of this book, we've decided not to rehearse the history of the theoretical development of leadership studies.

This departs from the strong historic focus of Chris Grey's original book on studying organizations (Grey, 2005). Our reasoning is that any standard organizational behaviour textbook will do a sound job of providing a historical overview of the development of leadership theories. These accounts invariably begin with what Buchanan and Huczynski (2006) in their own OB text describe as the 'trait spotting' theories of leadership, which attempt to identify personality traits with a view to selecting leaders – much as we did in the section above on what makes an effective leader. They then move on to the 'style counselling' theories which characterize and develop appropriate leadership behaviour patterns, invariably divided into task and relationship orientations. Following this they examine 'context fitting' or contingency theories which emphasize the need to change leadership styles in order to adapt to a particular situation. The situation here invariably incorporates factors such as the state of employee morale, the complexity of the task, and the level of senior management support. Conventional accounts of leadership theories inevitably conclude with a discussion of 'new' leadership theories, which emphasize visionary and inspirational leadership in order to transform organizations (i.e. transformational versus transactional leadership theories). These will primarily be the focus of the next chapter though, technically speaking, they are no longer that new.

What we've chosen to do instead is look at some of the more interesting questions that are currently being asked by those who are studying leadership. While we are not suggesting that one should only consider studying what is currently being studied by other leadership researchers, when one pursues postgraduate studies it is generally wiser to at least begin where other scholars are currently theorizing and proceed from there.

In common with Chris Grey we have taken a very personal view on this subject that is so near and dear to our hearts. We have endeavoured to write this book in a direct, concise and opinionated way using relatively simple language. You will see that we have attempted to keep the academic terminology to a minimum. We are well aware that many students can be initially put off by the dense conceptual language that is used by academics to communicate with each other and conclude that

perhaps leadership research or academic research in general is not for them. In this book we want to provide a bridge into this literature and, in the process, show you that there may very well be a place for you. In fact, you may well be able to make a contribution to the literature sooner than you imagine.

We also want to help you develop your critical appreciation of some of the very fine work that is being done in this area but rarely receives any exposure beyond academe. By endeavouring to make this book 'short, interesting and cheap' we realize that we have made a trade-off with the precision, sophistication and depth that you will find in more conventional academic treatises on leadership. Again, for those who wish to consult with more authoritative academic sources we strongly encourage you to begin with the ones we have listed in the Appendix.

In Chapter 2 we will focus on leader-centred perspectives on leadership. The chapter begins with a discussion about the relationship between the identity of a leader and his or her behaviour, and includes a consideration of the influence of gender on leadership. It then contrasts transactional, transformational and charismatic leadership and explores both the 'light' and 'dark' sides of these forms of leadership. These three conceptions of leadership have been the central preoccupation of most leadership researchers in the past two decades. It is this work that most people outside the field identify as being leadership research; indeed the bulk of research papers and postgraduate theses still fall within this particular bailiwick.

Subsequent chapters focus on research that has been done in response to the perceived shortcomings and limitations of this work. In Chapter 3 we survey work done by those who have been curious about that other generally unheralded group of people when it comes to leadership, namely the followers. We specifically look at various theories that have conceptualized followers as moderators or constructors, or substitutes or co-producers of leadership. This work has sought to provide a much needed rebalancing of a lopsided focus on leaders. This is somewhat surprising as most of us are, and always will be, followers and yet Western society tends to take a 'second best' view of followership despite the fact that we all know it – and we all play a vital role in the leadership equation.

In Chapter 4 we bring culture into our analysis. Most of the extant leadership research has been conducted within the United States. It is research that has been done by American researchers predominantly on American subjects, working in American organizations. The growing interest in leadership research throughout the rest of the world has revealed contributions as well as limitations in the applicability and relevance of this research to other national and local contexts. In response, a subfield of leadership research, generally described as cross-cultural leadership, has emerged which has endeavoured to address this issue by

seeking explanations for cultural variation in leadership behaviour. However, others have argued that it is not just the specificity of the cultures being explored but the culturally specific way in which they have been explored that has limited our abilities to understand the full range and depth of leadership practices throughout the world.

In Chapter 5, entitled 'Critical Perspectives on Leadership', we look at attempts by various theorists to develop 'leaderful' leadership models which enable followers to take on leadership responsibilities either at the top of the organization, through co- or shared leadership models or throughout the organization through the creation of dispersed leadership models. We take this argument one stage further by considering the possibility of doing away with the idea of leadership altogether and giving it a well-deserved retirement.

In Chapter 6, 'Leadership with a Higher Purpose', we look at a series of related efforts to rehabilitate and invigorate leadership in response to widespread concerns brought into dramatic relief by a number of corporate scandals that erupted in the first part of the century, most infamously with the spectacular and very public collapse of Enron. We may have done a good job at improving leaders' abilities to influence their followers, but what kind of job have we been doing in leading them to do the right thing? Three rapidly growing areas of leadership scholarship are examined which have sought to respond to the shortcomings of mainstream leadership: ethical leadership, authentic leadership, and spiritual leadership. The chapter closes with a consideration of how a more aesthetically informed approach to leadership might improve our understanding and the practice of leadership, particularly when we look at it through the lens of the arts.

Finally in the concluding chapter, Chapter 7, we look at what is being done – in light of all the research that has been presented in the preceding chapters – to develop more and better leaders throughout the world. We look at the still nascent field of leadership development, identifying the conventional means by which leaders are developed, as well as the limitations of these methods. We also consider how you might best prepare and position yourself to become an active contributor in advancing this still young, but rapidly expanding field. To this end, we provide some guidance and advice about what you can do develop your abilities as a student of leadership, most particularly how you might begin to construct your own leadership research – be it a project, a thesis or a dissertation.

For now, content yourself with the knowledge that you are making a good start in this endeavour by reading the rest of this 'very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying leadership'.