

**SOLUTION-FOCUSED LEADERSHIP: THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
EVALUATION OF A FAMILY THERAPY BASED  
LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM**

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## (ABSTRACT)

This research project utilized concepts and methods from the field of marriage and family therapy, to help leaders from business organizations develop greater relationship competency. A training workshop was designed and then evaluated to improve the quality of the training process, and to answer the following question: what, if any, effect did the workshop have on the participants' relationship competencies in their work and/or family roles?

The workshop participants were 12 people from small to medium sized business organizations who held leadership positions in their companies. The training model consisted of an initial three-day session, followed by a two-month interim period where the participants were given individual coaching, concluded by a two-day follow-up session. Several qualitative methods were used for obtaining data including the use of focus groups, in-depth interviews, and case notes.

Formative evaluation processes provided information critical to the program's improvement. Summative evaluation results indicate that the training was effective in helping individuals increase their relationship competency in the following four areas: 1) increased awareness, 2) greater relationship orientation, 3) new relationship-oriented behaviors, and 4) perceived outcomes. Participants reported having greater awareness of their own cognitive and emotional processes, as well as greater empathy for the experiences of others. Participants' attitudes became more relationally

oriented and were followed by new behaviors that promoted closer family relationships and collaborative work relationships. Participants credited the training with positive relational outcomes such as greater trust, more intimacy, and better communication in selected relationships. Other outcomes, specific to the experience of particular individuals, were also attributed to the training experience.

The results provide preliminary evidence that MFT processes may be effective in helping leaders develop interpersonal or relationship competencies in a workshop setting. This study adds to the collection of research where family therapy models have been successfully utilized in diverse human systems contexts.

*To my loving wife Roxanne,  
“you have always been my dream come true”*

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## CHAPTER I

## Introduction

Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) has been shown to be effective in treating many personal and interpersonal difficulties. Among these are marital discord and divorce prevention (Bray & Garrulous, 1995), affective disorders (Prince & Jacobson, 1995), adolescent conduct disorders (Chamberlain & Rosicky, 1995), childhood behavioral disorders (Estrada & Pinsof, 1995) and schizophrenia (Goldstein & Miklowitz, 1995). Problems such as these are among those that lay persons might consider responsive to MFT techniques. These traditional mental health problems, however, are only part of the domain where MFT skills may be helpful. Since theories and methods in MFT employ a relationship frame of reference, various non-traditional human system contexts can be positively affected through MFT theories and methods.

Some studies have shown that MFT methods can be used to intervene in systems beyond the family. For example, family therapists have worked with sports teams (Zimmerman & Protinsky 1993), business organizations (Boverie, 1991; Nielson & Shandler, 1985) and schools (Plas, 1986). Other researchers have considered how the role of the family therapist and family therapy supervisor are parallel with that of the role of consultant to organizations (Wynne, McDaniel, & Weber 1986). Campbell, Coldicott and Kinsella (1994) consult with business organizations using an integration of the Milan Systemic Therapy approach and Tom Andersen's

(1990) reflecting team approach. Therefore, the literature describes diverse settings in which practitioners have applied models that traditionally originated from the family therapy field to larger organizations. Studies and commentaries such as these are opening the door for marriage and family therapists to apply their skills in diverse, non-traditional settings.

In the most general sense, the goal of an MFT practitioner is to help individuals and families function at higher levels, to assist them in reaching their particular goals. People who seek professional help often consider themselves to be stuck in interactional or personal cycles that undermine their goals and their happiness. Therefore, MFT practitioners are often called change agents, or experts in bringing about change in disabling systems.

Changing these disabling cycles is often complex and difficult since the behaviors in the relational system are supported and maintained by the groups paradigm (Constantine, 1986). For example, as families confront life's problems, their belief systems, which are based on strong emotion, define the way they view their situation. These belief systems or ideologies then suggest to the individuals certain ways to solve their dilemmas and alleviate the negative emotions they are experiencing. Interestingly, when attempts to change disabling cycles fail, subsequent efforts to solve the problem will most likely be more extreme versions of earlier attempted solutions and will maintain their consistency with the original paradigm (Constantine, 1986). Therefore, when people feel "stuck",

their emotions reflect what is being experienced. They are stuck in a vicious cycle where the attempted solutions serve to perpetuate the cycle. In other words, the pathways that appear to the family as possible solutions often lead to an exacerbation of the problem rather than to its alleviation.

While some family paradigms disable members of the family and the overall system from reaching their desired goals, other paradigms offer alternative frames that enable families to overcome difficulties (Kantor & Lehr, 1975). These can be termed empowering family paradigms. While no paradigm is considered the “correct” one, it is clear that some paradigms are relatively less useful to families when confronting life’s problems than others. Successful therapy could be considered a process where new meanings, or paradigms, are co-evolved between the client and therapist. These new ways of perceiving experiences open space for solutions that were not previously available to the client.

Organizations may be compared to family systems in that both organizations and families are made up of people who are directed in their actions and emotions by paradigms. Individual paradigms contribute to the overall paradigm or culture of the family or organization. The culture of the group in turn defines how difficulties and problems are handled (Trice & Beyer, 1993). For example, organizational cultures that promote employee creativity will likely confront problems with flexibility and with an openness to unique solutions. Likewise, organizations that see their formal leaders as the only people responsible for or capable of making any

decisions will not encourage the input of those not in leadership positions. Culture also, in effect, prescribes general patterns of relating between management and employees. Understanding the connection between organizational culture and the relational climate is important since the relationship aspects have for some time been known to be critical in an organization's ability to succeed in achieving its goals (Katz & Kuhn, 1966).

One key determinant of organizational culture is its leadership (Schein, 1985). Since authority to define the organization's structure, regulations and strategic direction lies in the hands of those in administrative positions, much of the foundation of its culture can be traced to management. Merely by virtue of formal position, leaders have significant influence. Hierarchical relationships emerge naturally. Subsequently, leaders have a stronger influence over the direction and tone of work relationships and overall culture than do those with less power. Since the quality of the relationships leaders have with others profoundly affects how work gets done, it becomes essential that leaders have the ability to create healthy, productive relationships in the work environment.

Competency in relationship contexts has been identified as one of the three main skill areas required for effective leadership (Yukl, 1994). Leaders who do not possess a certain level of relationship competency will find it difficult to create a shared vision between the organization and its employees. When people do not see how their vision fits within the organizational vision, the volunteer qualities of employee involvement such

as initiative, intelligence and creativity will not be given. Relationship competence has also been referred to by others as *emotional intelligence* (Goleman, 1995).

Emotional intelligence has been defined as the ability a person has to empathize, collaborate, build relationships and communicate effectively with others. Daniel Goleman (1995) suggests that emotional intelligence, as demonstrated by these competencies or behaviors, is the key ingredient in a person's ability to succeed. These skills and traits are the same attributes possessed by couples who have happy and fulfilling family relationships (Gottman, 1994).

Improving leadership competency through ongoing training has long been a concern for organizations of all types. In fact, a survey of 611 companies of all sizes showed that 90% utilized external training sources to develop their leadership (Saari, Johnson, McLaughlin, & Zimmerle, 1988). This emphasis on leadership development is predicted to continue growing into the future (Fulmer, 1986).

Since relationship competency is a major element of leadership effectiveness, this competency should be reflected in the training that managers and leaders get. As organizations become more aware of how relationship competency affects a manager's or leader's ability to succeed, there is likely to be a growing need and demand for programs that can help promote these attributes in people and groups. Providing training that

increases the relationship competencies of leaders in organizations is a market niche that MFT is prepared to fill.

In summary, the field of MFT is well equipped to provide services to institutions and organizations outside the family. Any human resource department would confirm that well-functioning organizations are always partly indebted to a high functioning human system (see Mathis & Jackson, 1988). The interpersonal interactions required of organizations call for competency in understanding and relating to others on an emotional level to provide a fulfilling and successful experience for its members. MFT often considers how systemic cycles can be broken to free individuals and groups from vicious interpersonal cycles that undermine functioning and happiness of those involved in the system. MFT is also used as a preventative measure or skill building process to enhance interpersonal interactions. The skills of marriage and family therapists, therefore, are potentially useful for training leaders in organizations, since the most effective leaders are those who possess interpersonal competencies equal to their technical and conceptual know-how (Yukl, 1994).

### Purpose

This research project was designed to accomplish two main objectives: 1) to develop a leadership training program based on some of the theories and methods of marriage and family therapy, and, 2) to evaluate the program according to two main questions. First, how were the workshop components perceived and experienced by the participants.

Secondly, what, if any, effect did the workshop have on the participants/ relationship competency within their work and/or family role? The participants “experience” of the program was described in terms of their reflections on the program’s processes and exercises, the learning objectives and the perceived transferability of the skills into real-world settings.

### Rationale for Program Development

Theories and methods in MFT are well suited to aid in the process of leadership development since leadership is based on interactional processes that only take place in relationship with other people. Therefore, the program was designed to increase leader’s ability to develop greater relationship competency. Choosing leadership as the point of intervention to positively affect an organization’s culture was based on the assumption that leaders generally have more power to influence the larger culture (Friedman, 1986). Although organizations and families are different in function and in some of their systemic properties, both are human systems and, therefore, will respond similarly in their relational patterns.

Friedman (1986) states, “...people are people, and their bonds and binds, whether in a work system or a personal family system, materialize and dissolve in response to identical processes” (p. 421).

Developing a training program grounded in MFT theories also helps to inform other disciplines and fields of the value of MFT. The program allows populations who may not understand the versatility and applicability of the skills within the MFT discipline to have a chance to



experience those first-hand. This research combined with, and added to, other projects that demonstrate the effectiveness of MFT to add credibility to the field.

### Rationale for Program Evaluation

There were two different evaluation tasks in this study. First was the development of the program itself, which calls for formative evaluation processes. Formative evaluation encompasses any procedure that leads to modifications of the processes and content of the program (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). This process allows evaluators and program facilitators to test the interventions, as well as the evaluation procedures and instruments, to foresee and correct any problems that might arise. Rossi and Freeman (1989) recommend that evaluators join in the design process since the goal of formative evaluation is to increase the chances for having a successful outcome.

The second task was that of evaluating the quality of the program in achieving certain outcomes. This category of evaluation was referred to as summative evaluation (Worthen & Sanders, 1987). This type of evaluation provided useful information for potential customers of the program. Summative evaluation leads to decisions concerning how the program will be used in the future, whether it should be continued, and how it should be changed. Qualitative procedures were used to evaluate the program. In some cases, quantitative data was used along with the qualitative data for

each subject to give additional information in evaluating the program's effectiveness.

### Theoretical Framework

Educational and therapeutic interventions for the workshop were based on both *narrative* (White & Epsten, 1990) and *solution-Focused* (de Shazer, 1991; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989) therapies. Both have their roots in the epistemology of social constructionism and have been described as being different stylistically but very agreeable theoretically (Chang & Phillips, 1993). These theories of human change were coupled with two leadership philosophies that invite employee empowerment.

The first of the two leadership philosophies comes from the writings of Kouzes and Posner (1987), two leadership researchers, who conducted case study analyses of hundreds of managers to identify the times they were at their personal best in their leadership role. Their research revealed five practices or behaviors that are exemplified by exceptional leaders.

The second leadership model used as a theoretical base is designated as *servant leadership* (Greenleaf, 1991). Servant leadership describes what is needed from today's leaders where employee empowerment requires leaders to put their own self-interest second to the growth and development of those they lead. Servant leadership will be shown to require highly differentiated people who are intrinsically motivated to helping those around them be successful.

The theoretical discussion will begin by addressing the underlying epistemology of solution-focused and narrative therapies and then a more detailed description of the how this epistemology influences the way therapy is conducted from these two models. Kouzes and Posner's five practices of effective leadership and the servant leadership philosophy will then be described. Possibilities for applying the theories of human change (solution-focused and narrative therapies) toward developing the kind of behavior described by the leadership philosophies will then be discussed.

### Social Constructionism

Social constructionism is an epistemology that questions the assumption within the traditional or modern scientific perspective that knowledge can be gained objectively and that it mirrors reality. This type of thinking is often referred to as post-modern, that is, beyond the assumptions that place knowledge within the reach of scientific investigation. A post-modern view sees the knowledge possessed by a group or individual as telling more about the group or culture than it does about an ultimate or absolute reality (Paré, 1995). In contrast to the scientific philosophy for gaining knowledge, a social constructionist perspective views knowledge as being created rather than discovered. Current knowledge is dependent upon previous learnings and these previous learnings take place in discourse with others, within the context of history and culture. This is to say that our knowledge cannot be free from a construction process. Also, rather than viewing the construction process as taking place within the

cognitive processes of individuals (Von Glaserfeld, 1984), meaning-making happens in the interactional space between people. Meanings evolve into new meanings (Hoffman, 1990) as the social conversations that shape them move forward in time. As Gergen (1985) states, "Social Constructionism views discourse about the world not as a reflection or map of the world, but as an artifact of communal interchange" (p. 266).

### Solution-Focused and Narrative Therapy

Solution-focused and narrative therapies adopt the social constructionist perspective about how knowledge is created. As with all epistemologies, social constructionism generates particular ways of looking at the origins of knowledge. In this perspective, meanings become an intersubjective experience that evolve. This epistemology then shapes the way therapists view symptoms and the change process. They see the therapeutic system as a linguistic system in which meaning is evolved and generated through therapeutic dialogue (Anderson & Goolishian, 1989).

The interaction within a therapeutic system is different from many other conversations as the dialogue is being deliberately guided by someone who is expert in creating space for distinct, and possibly helpful, meanings to surface. All the while, therapeutic direction is dictated by the goals of the client. When therapy is conducted in this way, clients often feel empowered in the sense that their realities are honored as the reality that matters. Therapists take the position of being informed by the client. Only after they are thoroughly informed are they able join with the client in the co-creative

process of therapy. Anderson and Goolishian (1994) said, "A therapeutic system is a problem-organizing, problem-dissolving system" (p. 27). In other words, problems are defined and validated, as well as solutions evolved, in the context of therapy.

Therapists working under a solution-focused or narrative model believe clients have resources, strengths and life experiences that can be brought to light and utilized to accomplish the therapeutic goals (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989; White & Epston 1990). It is also assumed that there are always exceptions (or, in narrative therapy terms, "alternative explanations") that exist to the problem-saturated story told by the client. These alternative descriptions can be used to identify behaviors and emotional resources that can be employed more broadly in the context of the complaint. This experience offers new information that may not previously have been given a prominent place in the mind of the client. A narrative therapist would call this a "re-vision" of the client's story (Parry & Doan, 1994). With this new information now included along with the original story, the story as a whole offers the client a qualitatively different experience. There is often a sense of hope felt by the client, and this hope is magnified as future options are identified rather than dwelling in the problem-saturated stories brought in by the client or by focusing on past failures.

One of the theoretical assumptions of this program was that behavioral change can be accomplished by first bringing about a cognitive

change through solution-focused and narrative therapy methods. Although some of the processes in the leadership program required behavioral skill development (e.g., the development of interpersonal communication skills), there are other interventions that were meant to help the participants create a new perspective with the expectation that effective leadership behaviors will follow.

### Five Practices of Effective Leadership

Leadership qualities that are being asked for today have a lot to do with a person's ability to form empowering relationships with those they lead. In the Leadership Challenge (1987), Kouzes and Posner report that the most effective leaders are good at the following five different behaviors: 1) challenging the process, 2) inspiring a shared vision, 3) enabling others to act, 4) modeling the way, and 5) encouraging the heart. Each of these five practices require a certain relationship quality between the leader and the subordinate before they can effectively occur. Relationships that are based on respect, trust and empathy provide the foundation for these practices. In other words, the five practices are outcomes when the more fundamental processes, such as an effective relationship, are in place.

In the following paragraphs each of the five practices will be described. Since they are specifically from Kouzes and Posner's work, the researcher will utilize their writings to give them definition unless otherwise referenced.

Challenging the Process. Leaders today, need to continually look for ways to adapt and change to the conditions facing them. They also need to encourage those working with them to apply their creativity and innovation to these challenges. Innovation and change is synonymous with survival and profitability in many industries, requiring people to challenge the status quo. Taking risks in these ways requires people to trust themselves, their boss, the organization and the others they work with. Trusting relationships set up positive interactional cycles where people are more likely to support one another (Atwater, 1988). Without trust, people are less supported, and the fear of failing invites people to follow the already established routines in their work. Therefore, the basis of a workforce's ability to challenge the process and take risks is established through a trusting relationship.

Inspiring a Shared Vision. Effective leaders have the ability to envision where the organization needs to go and are able to connect that vision to the visions and purposes of others. They are able to help others see how they can work together to create a "win-win" situation or to meet the goals of both the organization and the individual. Inspiring a shared vision requires the leader to communicate expressively and powerfully, know the followers, and appeal to the common purpose. Creating a shared vision requires good communication skills (speaking, writing, and listening), empathy and sensitivity, and trust on the part of followers, all of which are integral to developing effective relationships.

Enabling Others to Act. Enabling others to act is closely related to one's ability to develop effective relationships of mutual trust. This practice has to do with strengthening others and fostering collaboration. Kouzes and Posner contend that to empower people, leaders need to make others feel important, strong, and influential by treating them with respect and dignity and fostering this same kind of relationship between others on the team. This practice also entails giving people ownership in projects and freeing them to make autonomous decisions around the work process.

Modeling the Way. Leaders who have clearly identified their leadership philosophy and the values that support it are prepared to begin modeling the way for their subordinates. In conjunction with communicating the philosophy to others, the leader must set the example by acting in ways that are consistent with these values. There will be times when leaders will be challenged to remain consistent with these values (i.e., during a crisis), but these are the times when it is most important to live by them. Holding to the stated values increases the level of trust subordinates feel for their leader which, again, is fundamental to building an effective work relationship.

Kouzes and Posner identify the setting of clear goals, making plans, and establishing milestones for projects as an additional aspect of modeling the way. Leaders who do model the way, and plan small wins for their team, are more likely to be successful. Intuitively, these processes



also influence the kind of relationship that exists between leader and follower.

Encouraging the Heart. When leaders give encouragement and recognition to people, they are more likely to feel valued and feel intrinsically rewarded for their work. Recognizing contributions like this also has a positive effect on the relationship. On the other hand, when people do not have a supportive relationship due to negative interactions like unresolved conflict, their reactions may undermine the goals of the group (Yukl, 1994) and would not likely be in support of the “encouraging the heart” practice.

Contributions can also be recognized formally through celebrations. Rituals of celebration often carry meaning beyond other types of rewards and usually include a community of people, all of which are involved in a common purpose. This practice can also have a unifying effect on the groups relationships (see Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992).

### Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1991) emphasizes the relationship aspects of leading and adds a moral dimension to the leader’s role that is, for the most part, missing in other models (Graham, 1991). In fact, this style of leading only takes place as leaders subordinate their desire for power, recognition, and reward to the growth and development of others. Leaders’ power is built on a foundation of mutuality or relationship with others where they are vulnerable to being changed by those they lead. For

leaders to relate to those who are traditionally called “subordinates” in this way, they must, Greenleaf states, be motivated to lead after they have the desire to serve others.

“The servant-leader *is* servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He is sharply different from the person who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature” (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 7).

Although this model of leadership has received little research attention, the paradigm of the servant leader fits well with the current needs of organizations to empower others. Leaders following this philosophy focus on the highest priority needs of those being served and check themselves by asking

...do those served grow as persons; do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will he benefit, or, at least, will he not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 1991, 7).

Servant leaders possess the powerful balance of humility and inner security that comes from insight (Graham, 1991; Greenleaf, 1991). When people feel personal security, they then can place the security and growth of those around them as a priority which leads to service-oriented interactions that build relationships of trust in both directions. Some of the key characteristics of servant leaders are that they listen receptively to what others have to say, accept others and have genuine empathy for them, persuade others without manipulation, exert a healing influence upon individuals and institutions, conceptualize and communicate ideas, and build community in the workplace (Spears, 1994).

#### Integration of Therapy Models with Theories on Leadership

The two therapy models (solution-focused and narrative) utilized in this workshop are philosophically consistent with the two leadership models (Servant-leadership and the five practices of leadership) that describe the type of leadership being sought for in today's organizations. Chapter two describes how organizational management roles have evolved over time to the present, where there is a high correlation between what a good therapist does and what an effective manager or leader does. Both roles share a primary function which is to help bring about change and growth in the way people think, relate, and do things. In essence, the leadership and the therapist roles both strive to invite people they work with to have greater feelings of empowerment and to use their internal strengths to accomplish certain goals. The assumptions people bring with

them to these roles dictate their ultimate approach. For example, both sets of models see all people as possessing internal strengths and important knowledge (Parry & Doan, 1994; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1987). This basic assumption influences the types of interactions and the resulting relationships that are developed between therapists and clients and between managers and employees.

Workshop facilitators are also in this same role. Their goal was to bring about growth in the way *participants* think, relate, and do things. By working and relating with participants in ways that are consistent with these philosophies of human change, the participants have a first-hand experience of what it is like to be led by people who see them as possessing valuable strengths and wisdom. The relationships that evolved between the facilitators and the participants in the workshop should be characterized by respect, empathy, mutuality and trust. This experience will, in effect, model the type of leadership behaviors and attitudes participants are being asked embody.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

To understand the development and evaluation of the integrated approach to leadership development, this literature review brings together research from two distinct fields, the field of management development and the field of family therapy. First, organizational leadership will be defined and then examined in terms of how it has evolved in nature over the last few decades. This presentation is followed by a description of how employee empowerment fits into the role of effective, contemporary, organizational leadership. The ability to invite employee empowerment will be shown to be linked to the interpersonal relationships between leaders and followers, thus suggesting that the most effective leaders are those who not only have technical and administrative skills, but also have high interpersonal competence.

Literature from the field of family therapy is then examined. This section identifies examples where MFT has been applied in larger systems, outside the family. Finally, it will be argued that MFT theories and methods may be usefully applied in organizational settings toward increasing leaders interpersonal competencies.

In reviewing the literature the following broad areas were addressed: 1) leadership and empowerment; 2) the interpersonal competencies of effective leaders in contemporary times; 3) marriage and family therapy theory applied in larger systems contexts.

### Leadership and Empowerment

In the following paragraphs, a general definition of leadership will be given to serve as a foundation for the literature review that follows. Next, the author will discuss how leaders in organizations are being required to modify their approach to leading due to current external (i.e., economic, global, and demographic) and internal (i.e., employee's demand for a certain quality of work life) forces. These forces are requiring leadership to move from an autocratic style of leadership, where a select few individuals do the thinking and decision making, to one that encourages the growth, well-being, and involvement of all employees.

Leadership can be defined in many different ways, but most definitions begin with the assumption that leadership involves a social influence process. Individuals with leadership abilities are able to intentionally influence other people to desire to do something. In organizations, the leadership influence modifies and defines a wide variety of phenomena such as how events are interpreted, what goals to set, what steps to follow to accomplish the goals, the motivation of those carrying out the task, and the kind of relationships that are fostered within the group (Yukl, 1994).

For the author's purposes, leadership will be defined as a type of relationship between the leader and follower that invites the intrinsic motivations of people to think, feel, and act in certain ways. This definition describes the processes of leadership as being bi-directional, meaning that

the actions and attitudes of both the leader and follower are internally motivated and have a reciprocal influence on each other. This influence is based on the quality of the relationship that has been developed. In other words, both individuals in the leadership relationship (leader and follower) have the ability to influence the other. Even though this influence process is never completely equal, both individuals are naturally influenced as they join together in an authentic leadership relationship (Rost, 1992).

The internal motivation to act, on the part of the follower, is a key part of this definition. Without internal motivation, leaders resort to external means to get work done. External motivators such as money or the threat of a poor job evaluation may seem like effective methods but there are some glaring weaknesses to these approaches. First, external means to motivate employees are often not available, and second, they are much less reliable in getting the quality of results sought for. Research has shown that external rewards such as money can decrease people's desire to do a task (Deci & Ryan, 1980). Therefore, external motivators may actually decrease people's intrinsic motivation in the long run. Enabling others to act from their own internal desires is key to this definition of leadership. Kouzes and Posner (1987), define leadership by contrasting it with management processes in terms of the quality of motivation felt by the follower. They state,

If there is a clear distinction between the process of managing and the process of leading, it is in the distinction

between getting others to do and getting others to want to do. Managers, we believe, get other people to do, but leaders get other people to want to do (p. 27).

Traditional leadership practices. Although the relationship between those in management positions and their employees has evolved and changed over time, there has always been an inherent tension between them. At the monetary level their goals appear to be incompatible. Management's job is to focus their primary energies toward the profitability of the organization (Drucker, 1984). This encourages them to strive for the highest performance possible from their employees at the at the lowest possible cost. Employees, of course, want the highest compensation and the most extensive job benefits possible. These opposing agendas set up a conflict of interest and is at the heart of the adversarial relationship which has existed between management and labor for decades (Bluestone & Bluestone, 1992).

In response to this ongoing management/employee conflict, each side has made attempts to wrest the power over resources from the other in order to reach their own agenda. On the employee side, they began to organize themselves into unions where they had collective bargaining power. Unions made up of workers from the same occupations presented a powerful incentive for management to take their requests seriously.

Before management became more enlightened in how they responded to the opposition created by workers unions, they often used overt



manipulation and force to get workers to comply with their demands (Fischer, 1984). Of course, this approach did not yield good results. Worker absenteeism, strikes, and malingering on the job all increased (Bluestone & Bluestone, 1992) having a negative effect on profitability.

Rather than risking the negative effects of the backlash from employees, industries began to use a more enlightened and scientific approach to gaining control over workers and work processes. According to some researchers, management science and organizational psychology were fields of study conceptualized and instituted as a way to assist owners in gaining control of the workplace (Bluestone & Bluestone, 1992). According to Fischer (1984), management also began to apply human relations philosophy to this same end. Rather than addressing and changing workplace policies that were hurtful to employees, human relations processes were used to manage and dilute the dissatisfaction of employees. Processes designed to reframe or shift the meaning of their work experience in more constructive directions were used to avoid militant unionization (Fischer, 1984).

Although management has traditionally tried to maintain power over information flow, work processes, and decision making, there has been a steady trend toward greater employee participation. This trend continues to gain momentum as organizations begin to see that profitability is linked to concepts like employee participation and empowerment.

Leadership that Invites Empowerment. Management and organizational researchers have described the difficult changes required of business today if they are to stay viable in a climate of growing global competition. Near the top of the list of requirements is for organizations to have empowered employees. Although the concept of empowerment has been associated with disciplines within the field of mental health for some time (Pinderhughes, 1983), applying it within the business context is equally appropriate. In fact, some organizational researchers believe that the need for businesses to apply empowerment principles has never been greater (Burdett, 1991).

Empowerment in the organizational context has been defined as the process of “recognizing and releasing into the organization the power that people already have in their wealth of useful knowledge and internal motivation” (Randolph, 1994; p.20). When people bring their skills, commitment, and creativity to work, their organization is more likely to accomplish its goals, mission, and vision. Organizations are finding out, however, that they cannot “force” empowerment or even directly bestow it upon employees. Empowerment ultimately comes from the individual. Management can only organize the structure and the circumstances that best invite feelings of empowerment, then people make their own internal judgments and decisions, then choose responses to that invitation. When people feel empowered, the voluntary outputs of creativity, innovation, and productivity begin to take place (Randolph, 1984).

Bluestone and Bluestone (1992) discuss employee empowerment in terms of employee involvement, employment security, and workplace democracy. Each of these phenomena is related to people's perception that they have some influence and control in the organization. Research has shown that the more people have a sense of control in their work situation, the greater will be the organization's effectiveness and the higher will be employee job satisfaction (Butterfield & Posner, 1979; Tannenbaum & Cooke, 1979). Greater organizational effectiveness is quantified by boosts in production, improved quality of products and services, and innovations in work processes and final products (Bluestone & Bluestone, 1992). Besides job satisfaction, empowering processes are thought to help bring about other positive emotional responses such as feelings of self-efficacy, optimism, perceived control, trust, self-esteem, loyalty, and a feelings of ownership (Kurstedt, 1996).

This research shows that the more people feel that they are in control of their situation, that they are valuable and have an influence, the more investment they feel in the success of the company. Outputs such as these put companies in competitive positions within their industries. Therefore, the implementation of processes that invite people to feel empowered in their organizations is a "win-win" experience for both employees and organizations.

Even though hierarchical, bureaucratic structures in organizations, and the traditional styles of leadership that often accompany them, are

disabling to an empowered culture (Kanter, 1984), they still tend to dominate many American businesses. Changing from a traditional leadership style to one that invites more participation is difficult for many reasons. Some of the obstacles include: the ingrained patterns or ways of doing things that have been established through years of history and through valued tradition, dealing with the psychological distress managers may feel by the threat of role loss and of needing to give up power, overcoming the constraining belief that effective decisions can only be made by those in positions of authority, and managing the fear employees may have when management does not tell them the direction they should take (Manz, Keating, & Donnellon, 1991). Tradition, lack of faith in the internal motivations of individuals, and the ego defenses of people make the journey to empowerment a long and difficult one.

Many companies have tried to move their organizations toward greater employee involvement through the implementation of self-managed work teams. The process of making this transition has been difficult due to feelings of suspicion, uncertainty, and resistance in management circles (Manz, Keating, & Donnellon, 1990). Although self-managed work teams have become a popular method of sharing the responsibility of decision making, empowerment is not gained through following a specific model. Empowerment evolves differently within different organizational cultures (Peterson, 1993). Some cultures are rigidly intolerant of empowerment processes, therefore, making the shift to employee empowerment is better

accomplished through changing the underlying culture than through merely changing the policy. Changing culture means a change of meanings held by people in the organization. When moving toward empowerment, changing culture connotes a shift toward believing more in the strengths of each individual and of the group as a collective.

Empowerment is built on the paradox that in order to gain power or influence leaders must give up their desire to control and dominate. Rather than aggrandizing positions of authority, they see leadership as a type of relationship that exists between the leader and follower (Rost & Smith, 1992) . True leading, in this sense, is only accomplished within the context of a relationship to others. Those desiring to lead must be willing to be influenced or changed by those following (Kiechel, 1992). The resulting relationship developed is a major source of the leaders power (Spears, 1994). A leader's power, in an empowered environment, manifests itself in the ability of a leader to help others lead themselves (Manz & Sims, 1989) and is legitimized through the influence of the relationship that has been developed rather than the power to command and have subordinates comply.

### Relationship Factors in Effective Leadership

Thousands of articles and books have been written on the subject of leadership, many of which attempt to describe the factors associated with leadership effectiveness. Most of these writings have focused on who the leader is (traits), and/or what he or she does (skills) that creates the

outcomes sought for. Traits refer to a variety of individual attributes such as personality, temperament, needs, motives, and values (Yukl, 1994) that produce effective leadership, and leadership skills refer to a person's ability to perform certain tasks successfully. Yukl (1994) places the leadership skills into the following three categories: 1) technical skills, 2) conceptual skills, and 3) interpersonal skills. For the purposes of this project, only the literature describing leadership traits and skills that are directly linked to the relational or interpersonal aspects of leadership are reviewed.

Leader derailment/success literature. Research on leadership has highlighted the importance of followers' perceptions of the leader/follower relationship and, ultimately, on how their perceptions of the relationship affects whether it is successful or not (Hollander & Offermann, 1990a,b). The linkage between the leader/follower relationship and the leader's effectiveness is highlighted in the "derailment" research that has been conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). These studies sought to identify the developmental needs of senior leaders in organizations through looking at the factors associated with leader derailment. Successful managers (people who have reached at least a general management level and still considered candidates for promotion) were compared with managers who were at one time considered candidates for promotion but then left the organization non-voluntarily or plateaued in their jobs due to perceived weaknesses. The findings of these studies helps

to illuminate the interpersonal competencies associated with successful leadership.

In 1983, McCall and Lombardo interviewed 40 senior executives in three different organizations, 20 of whom were considered on a successful track and 20 where the leader had been derailed. The most frequently cited reasons for derailment were: specific performance problems, insensitivity to others, failure to delegate or build a team, and over-dependence on a single advocate or mentor. Executives who were successful got along with all kinds of people, handled mistakes with poise and grace, focused on problems and solved them, had more diversity in the work they had done, and maintained composure under stress. Insensitivity to others was high on the list of factors associated with derailment.

Morrison, White, and Van Velsor (1987) later replicated and expanded on McCall and Lombardo's study by focusing on women in 25 different companies. The common reasons for derailment of women executives included an inability to adapt to a boss or culture, performance problems, being overly ambitious, an inability to lead subordinates or to be strategic, presenting a poor image, and poor relationships. Again, difficulty in interpersonal relationships was cited as one of the major factors for women who had stopped short of the higher senior levels of leadership.

In yet a later study, Lombardo and McCauley (1988) factor-analyzed the ratings of 355 bosses' ratings of managers. Again, they were trying to determine the traits that are linked with leadership success and

leadership derailment. Many of the findings of this study indicate that managers who were derailed had traits that undermined their relationships with those they worked with, both superiors and subordinates. For example, managers who lost their ability to maintain emotional composure by showing anger and moodiness undermined their relationships with all those around them. Managers who were derailed were more defensive and took less personal responsibility for difficulties and problems. Rather than shouldering the responsibility, they tended to blame others for failures. Integrity was another important variable and was coded under the category of Problems with Interpersonal Relationships. Those who betrayed trusts and broke promises were more likely to lose their position. Empathy for others was associated with a manager's success. Managers who considered the feelings of others rather than overly focusing on their own promotions were not derailed. Those who were less sensitive to the feelings of others and were less diplomatic were in danger of losing their positions. The more successful leaders were able to build networks of cooperation with a variety of people. In general, the weaker the interpersonal skills, the more likely the leader would be derailed.

The latest study on derailment was conducted by Leslie, and Van Velsor (1996). Senior executives from North American (n=20) and Europe (n=42) were interviewed. They were asked to think of two managers whom they knew well. One of which being "a manager who had made it to the top of



his or her organization” (p.4), and the other, “a manager who had been seen as having senior management potential but who had not made it to the top and thus was not successful” (p.4). For North American managers, poor working relationships was cited by 50% of those interviewed as a factor in the unsuccessful leader’s derailment. Poor working relationships was cited by 64% of the European executives as a factor in derailment. In both Europe and North America there were only two derailment factors mentioned by a majority of the senior executives interviewed: poor working relations and inability to develop or adapt. Not surprisingly, some of the opposite qualities were observed in leaders who were successful. For both the North American and European samples, an ability to establish strong collaborative relations was cited as one of the top reasons for the managers success.

Therefore, problems with interpersonal relationships, more than any other factor, has been a dominant theme in the derailment literature over time. In this research, managers who were derailed were seen as insensitive, manipulative, aloof, self-isolating, authoritarian, critical or demanding. On the other hand, an ability to establish strong relationships has been a consistent factor in a leaders success. In the earlier studies, these leaders were described as charming, outgoing, easy to be with, liked, and able to get along with all kinds of people. More recently, those interviewed have added to the list with descriptors such as honest, straightforward, trustworthy, or ethical (Van Velsor & Leslie, 1996). The

derailment studies collaborate the findings from a study by Hagberg, Conti, and Mirabile (1985) who cite the lack of interpersonal relationship competency as the most probable cause for why executives fail.

As noted earlier in this section, the ability to develop strong collaborative relationships is one of the most important keys to success as a leader. Effective interpersonal skills are necessary in developing these relationships. Yukl (1994) reports that the important interpersonal skills include, “knowledge about human behavior and group processes; ability to understand the feelings, attitudes, and motives of others; and ability to communicate clearly and persuasively” (p.273).

Highlighting the need for good interpersonal communication skills, Boyatzis (1982) studied 253 managers who were given a rating of high effectiveness, medium effectiveness and low effectiveness. Highly effective managers were very good communicators who were able to use a variety of skills including the use of verbal and nonverbal communication, the ability to give persuasive presentations, and an ability to communicate clearly to others. These managers were also able to gain the cooperation of others and to resolve conflict in an effective way. Related to, but somewhat distinct from the communication skills, highly rated managers possessed the skills and traits that encouraged a group identity and team spirit. They also encouraged collaboration among the team.

Trust and integrity. As has been shown, the interpersonal relationships that leaders develop are critical to their success. The skills

and traits of both the leader and follower contribute to the quality of leadership relationship and determine whether the critical element of trust is present. Trust has been shown to be the most critical factor affecting leader/subordinate relationships and, therefore, the leader's effectiveness (Atwater, 1988; Barnes, 1989; Cook & Wall, 1980; Diffie-Couch, 1984).

Trust is present in a relationship when there is a feeling of confidence in another person's honesty, dependability, strength, or character. Trust is an element that enables the individuals in the leadership relationship to rely on one another and to work together. Fairholm (1995) sees trust as the foundation of any cooperation that takes place between people. This includes cooperative actions between groups, businesses, communities, and nations. Trust, therefore, is descriptive of the type of relationship required for the most effective leadership. Rather than being quickly developed, trust is created over time as individuals demonstrate their integrity, sensitivity, and a certain level of vulnerability. Conversely, trust is undermined relatively quickly as people fail to live up to their commitments or overly focus on their own wants without showing sensitivity to the needs of others. Trust is the outcome when two or more people are vulnerable to each other, yet finding out that to be open with one another is both safe and rewarding.

Integrity is a primary factor in whether a person is seen as trustworthy. Yukl (1994) discusses several ways a person's integrity is undermined. For example, when leaders lie, break a promise or

commitment, gossip or share private information or blame others for failures, they undermine their credibility and people see them as lacking integrity. By keeping promises and taking the responsibility for difficulties, leaders increase the trust others have in them and the relationship is advanced. In the final analyses, perceived integrity increases when people act out the values that they have espoused.

In summary, it is clear that relationship competency is critical for a leader to be successful. Studies have shown that leaders who have poor interpersonal relationships are more likely to eventually be derailed. Leader/follower relationships that encourage collaboration, empathy, integrity, supportiveness, and trust enable individuals and organizations to be most effective. As trends continue and decision making power is decentralized, the leaders who are the most effective will continue to be those who have high interpersonal competency. These skills and traits may become even more important as leaders are asked to work more in teams and to share power with those they have stewardship over. This requires high emotional maturity and a sincere desire help others develop to their full potential.

### Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Applied to Larger Systems

MFT models are being utilized by a growing number of people to intervene in systems outside the family. This process has been referred to as consultation work and has been applied to professional, community, and business networks. In this section, the author constructs a rationale for

using MFT to address problems in institutions outside the family. Specific examples of how MFT has been used in diverse contexts will then be given. At this juncture, the research on leadership effectiveness, and the research validating the use of MFT in contexts outside the family, will be brought together to make the final point, which is: MFT can be usefully applied to leadership development in the area of increasing interpersonal competency.

MFT and consultancy. Doing consultancy work using family therapy theory has grown rapidly over the last few years (e.g. Street, 1988; Campbell et al., 1991; Wynne et al., 1986). Family systems theory has been described as having the ability to appropriately predict behavior within organizations (Boverie, 1991), which allows consultants opportunities to change human interactional cycles that are contrary to the institutions goals, and to develop and expand human resources that contribute to the organization's mission.

Family systems theory has its roots in cybernetics which, in very basic terms, is a theory that considers interconnections, patterns and feedback influences in understanding phenomena, rather than identifying cause and effect relationships (Becvar & Becvar, 1986). This systems orientation allows family therapy to be a productive framework from which to bring about change at the individual, relational, and larger system levels. Even when consultation is conducted with an individual person, a systemic approach to intervention often uses information from the larger context to institute processes that bring about desired change. Consulting

within an organization is inherently systemic as the many different systems and sub-systems need to be accounted for in both the assessment and intervention.

Current trends in the mental health field, particularly in the MFT field, are making therapy more akin to consultation. One example of this is shown by the change of terms placed on those seeking services. Rather than working with patients, which conjures up images of illness and dysfunction, MFT practitioners work with clients. Just by using this term, a more consultative frame is placed on the client/therapist relationship.

Consultation requires more of a collegial relationship than has been the case in traditional therapy. This requirement fits well with contemporary therapy assumptions like those of solution-focused therapy and narrative therapy. In these theories it is assumed that all clients have internal resources that can be drawn from to help them reach their goals. Clients are also considered the expert on their own problems and are ultimately responsible and given credit for any positive developments. Organizational consultants can also start with the same assumptions. For example, an organization is assumed to already have many resources that can be applied to overcoming the obstacles facing it, and, the organization and its members are ultimately responsible and credited for its improvement (McDaniel, Wynne, & Weber, 1986).

Another fit between organizational consulting and the approach taken in a clinical situation by a solution-focused therapist is that

consultees/clients are not seen as resistant if they decide not to take the advice of the consultant/therapist. Consultation is the process of offering alternatives and suggestions with the final say still being given to the clients, who are free to follow the consultants advice or not. This fits well with de Shazer's (1984) position on the issue of client resistance. Instead of seeing a failure to comply with therapeutic agreements as resistance, their actions are seen to offer more information as to how the therapist should work with them. Within this perspective, all clients have the desire and the resources to make changes.

Human systems, whether it be a business organization or a family, have processes and dynamics in common. This fact is at the heart of the "why" and the "how" of using MFT models in contexts outside the family. Although there are differences between families and organizations (Borwick, 1986), there are also many similarities which make MFT an excellent fit for some organizational development efforts.

Some of the reasons families seek help from a marriage and family therapist include the following: develop self and other awareness, increase motivation, conceptualize and manage group relationships, improve communication skills, resolve conflict, reduce stress, and increase general life satisfaction. These are the same issues affecting organizational life, and therefore, inevitably influencing the level of productivity and satisfaction of the work force. For these reasons, fields dealing with

management and organizational behavior could benefit from the knowledge and expertise found in MFT.

Family systems theory applied. Numerous articles applying family systems concepts to organizational settings have been written. Within the scope of the authors review of the literature, articles tying the fields of organizational and management development, and, family therapy, have been written by individuals in each field. The literature reviewed below reflects this mix.

Almost two decades ago, Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1980) conducted an organizational intervention using principles from structural family therapy. Dysfunctional coalitions and hierarchies were identified and tasks (both straight forward, and paradoxical) were given to the agencies members to help them handle their difficulties in more constructive ways. In the final analysis they reported having some successes and some failures in terms of reaching their stated goals. Based on this experience, the authors suggest that there are at least four differences between families and organizations that must be understood before a successful transfer of family therapy techniques to organizational interventions can occur. First, politics in organizations are more complex than in families. Second, organizational members can exit from the system easier than can a member of a family system. Third, timing an intervention is more difficult in an organization, and fourth, formulating developmental tasks may be more difficult in organizations than in families.



In a much more recent article, Boverie (1991) describes how several of the major family systems models can be applied to business organizations in either a consultative role, in counseling troubled employees, and in working with businesses owned and operated by families. She suggests that the family systems theories developed by Ackerman (1996), Satir (1967), Bowen (1978), Hayley (1971) and Minuchin (1974) can all be applied to improve organizational functioning using concepts such as triangulation, coalition, homeostasis and differentiation. Boverie contends that an integrated systems approach, using family systems theory and organizational theory, aids the consultant in identifying the relationships, processes, components, and feedback mechanisms keeping organizations from reaching their goals.

In addition to work done with business organizations, family therapy concepts have also been applied to issues facing sports teams. Zimmerman and Protinsky (1993) reported an experience where team consultation was provided for a university athletic team. Issues that were addressed included a player/coach coalition, excessive complaining, polarization in coaching styles, and a lack of confidence on the team. All of these issues were conceptualized through the lenses of family therapy. One intervention that the consultants facilitated was to bring to the surface a covert system dynamic. Once the issue was recognized and discussed by the team, a specific task was assigned to interrupt the negative pattern that had developed. Another intervention included the use of an even day/odd day

ritual prescription (Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, & Prata, 1978) where coaches were asked to alternate their styles of coaching every other day. For example, those who normally pointed out the mistakes players made, were asked to give positive feedback to the players one day and then return to giving constructive criticism the next. The pattern was reversed for those who normally only gave positive feedback. These, and other, interventions seemed to be successful in overcoming some of the barriers facing the team.

In addition to providing a theory from which interventions can be made, family systems theory has also been used to understand management and organizational phenomena from a theoretical perspective. For example, Neck, Connerley and Manz (1996) propose that the Beavers Systems Model (Beavers, 1977), which is a popular model describing levels of family functioning, can be used to understand how self-managed teams develop. Teams are labeled “Chaotic” at the lowest levels of effectiveness. In these teams there are no established rules or norms to govern the group. The climate is characterized by conflict, confusion, and turmoil. On the other hand, with the highest level of team development (Teamthink), the decision-making authority is completely shared, each member of the team is self-managed, openness is encouraged, and there are high levels of intrinsic motivation, quality and productivity. Neck, Connerley, and Manz believe that by applying concepts developed and studied for years in families, they can make large advancements in their

understanding of the development process of self-managed teams, which have been in existence for a much shorter time.

Efforts have been made to develop interpersonal skills and self-awareness in students going through business administration courses. Whiteside (1994) has used family therapy concepts to teach organizational behavior. He sees the family therapy field as an invaluable resource for gaining an understanding about one's self, motivation, and how to be successful in organizational life. Some textbooks, designed for use in business courses, have begun to teach some of the social skills aspects of management (see Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, & McGrath, 1990; Whetten & Cameron, 1984). Therefore, there is a growing number of people in the organizational field who are seeing the benefits of looking through the lenses of family therapy, or who are at least seeing the need to develop interpersonal competencies in those who will lead in the work force.

Besides those studies published in professional journals, numerous doctoral dissertation projects have applied family systems theory in business organizations. These dissertations included the following topics: the development of a systemic model from which to assess, intervene and then evaluate the communication and problem solving processes within an organization (Terry, 1985), developing a predictive model for organizational effectiveness (Sichlau, 1985), using family systems theory to explore how people and organizations are shaped by their interactions with one another (Weinberb, 1993), and using family systems theory to look at how early life

experiences influenced the leadership development of women executives (McGee, 1994). Each of these studies helped to further the position that family systems theory can be used to effectively predict and intervene in organizations.

Post-modern therapy theory applied. Social constructionist approaches to family therapy (i.e., narrative and solution-focused therapy) have a distinctly different epistemology from models that stem from the main branch of family systems theory, such as the structural or strategic approaches. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to detail these differences, two distinctions relevant to consultation work are: first, the therapist shifts from being the expert on what is functional and dysfunctional, to being the expert at opening space for new, enabling meanings to emerge, and second, these approaches may be perceived as less threatening since there is an emphasis on identifying individual, family or group strengths from which further change can be generated. It has been suggested (Webb, 1995) that due to their flexibility and unique perspective on how change occurs, these post-modern approaches may be particularly useful in contexts outside the family. This assumption, however, has not yet been confirmed by research, nor has there been many accounts describing cases where these theories have been applied in systems outside the family.

There are at least two notable exceptions to this lack of information. One is an article written by Susan Webb (1995). She describes how

solution-oriented therapy was used to intervene in an academic work system where the department had become fractured by what appeared to be overwhelming internal conflict. Factors external to the department, such as the allocation of new staff positions, the appointment of leaders, and the reorganization of programs, all added to the stress felt in the department, resulting in greater conflict between its members.

Rather than using a traditional approach to solving the conflict, such as “airing” out the situation through focusing on what was going wrong, Webb structured a conflict resolution workshop which followed the sequences of events that often take place in solution-focused family therapy. First, the history of the department was discussed. Each person was asked to contribute in a structured way, giving the group a very different experience in recounting the department’s issues than they had before. Unique outcomes, or exceptions to the problem story surfaced and were noted by the facilitator. These exceptions were later elaborated on by the team in a follow-up session which led to a natural evolving of interactions among the members. In the final analysis, relationships among the faculty became more positive allowing the work of the department to begin moving forward.

Another example where post-modern therapy approaches have been applied outside the family comes from Campbell, Coldicott and Kinsella (1994). They integrate constructionist therapy concepts with the Milan Systemic Therapy model (Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin & Prata, 1970) to

create a model for consulting in organizations. This book outlines some of the key concepts in systemic thinking and then discusses their application to organizations. The authors then give examples of their consultation work with boards, teams, and whole organizations. Although the language used, and a lack of clarity with how systems and constructionist theories have been integrated make the book difficult to understand, it is innovative in its approach and demonstrates further the applicability of constructionist therapy concepts to organizational development.

MFT and interpersonal relationships. Marriage and family therapists have always been concerned with relationships. A basic understanding of the power of human relationships is essentially what provided the momentum for the family therapy movement (Becvar & Becvar, 1988). In fact, it has been argued that to understand the development of the single individual, the self, consideration must be given to the individual as he or she is in relationship with others (Yalom, 1985). Social constructionist epistemology (see chapter one for a description) contends that the meanings each of us hold about ourselves and the world are generated through social interaction processes (Gergen, 1985). Therefore, the philosophies for human change stemming from MFT are based on understanding human relationships.

MFT is called upon to help couples and families solve the dilemmas that cause stress in their lives. In addition to alleviating distress in these relationship contexts, MFT is often employed to enhance already healthy

relationships. Guerney, Brock, and Coufal (1986) eloquently states the purpose of MFT in relationship enhancement:

Marital therapy does not live up to its full potential unless it empowers couples with the attitudes and skills that will enable them to interact compassionately, supportively, harmoniously, and lovingly—that is, unless it enriches couples' relationships. (p. 151)

These outcomes are those sought for by therapist working in couple and family relationships and are also the same goals that families set for themselves (Fisher, Giblin, & Hoopes, 1982). Although there are many approaches to achieve these goals, most of them focus on both attitudes and skills that foster such relationships. For example, one relationship enhancement approach (Guerney, Brock & Coufal, 1986) seeks to teach the following nine skills and attitudes: 1) expressivity, 2) empathy, 3) discussion/negotiation, 4) conflict resolution, 5) self-change, 6) helping others change, 7) generalization of skills to other contexts, 8) teaching others the skills, and 9) maintenance and problem prevention.

In essence the tools used in MFT enable individuals to gain greater self-knowledge and other-knowledge. Awareness on these levels allows people to be more deliberate in how they experience themselves and others. In providing a rationale for the processes of group therapy, Yalom (1985) states

...treatment should be directed toward the correction of interpersonal distortions, thus enabling the individual to lead a more abundant life, to participate collaboratively with others, to obtain interpersonal satisfactions in the context of realistic, mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships. (p.22)

MFT and leadership development. This section proposes that MFT methods can be applied to assess and intervene in business organizations in order to make the relationships between leaders and those around them more enabling. This point effectively ties together the two bodies of research reviewed (the interpersonal qualities of the most successful leaders, and, family therapy applied to larger systems), with an awareness of the expertise for relationship improvement found in MFT.

The literature states clearly that the most effective leaders are those who can create trusting, collaborative relationships with those they lead. Those who cannot, or do not, build such relationships are more likely to fail in their role. Leadership relationships are based in the context of organizational life, which creates both different and similar dynamics to the relationships in family life. The transference of philosophies from the family arena to other institutions is considered each time the boundaries have been crossed, but the case has been built that many human systems phenomena, whether inside the family or not, can be productively conceptualized and affected through MFT.



### Summary

A brief history of management/employee relations was given to provide a context for discussing a new kind of relationship that invites those in it to feel empowered. Employee empowerment was described as being a more likely outcome when the leader/follower relationship is built on a foundation of collaboration and trust. Since those in positions of authority have a greater responsibility and power to affect change in culture and work environment, it falls upon management to organize the circumstances that led to empowerment. It also falls upon them to take the responsibility in developing effective relationships with those they led. This requires contemporary leaders to possess high interpersonal competence. The processes involved in teaching the skills and facilitating changes in awareness has been a significant part of what MFT does.

Family therapy theories have been utilized successfully in systems outside the family. The family systems perspective has provided a frame from which to understand relationships, processes, and interactions inside these contexts, giving MFT practitioners the ability to bring about human systems changes. The argument was also made that the relationship competencies and emotional intelligence necessary to make the transition from traditional manager to one who works collaboratively may be accomplished by tapping into the interventive methods in MFT.

## CHAPTER III

### Evaluation Methodology

#### Overview of Evaluation Design

To understand the effects of the Solution-Focused Leadership workshop on the participant's interpersonal competencies, and to perform a process analysis of the internal elements of the program, a qualitative evaluation was conducted. This evaluation provided information on the following two inquiries: 1) how were the workshop components perceived and experienced by the participants? and, 2) what, if any effect did the program have on the participants' relationship competencies in their work and/or family roles?

#### Description of the Solution-Focused Leadership Workshop

##### Origin of the Workshop

Literature and expertise from the fields of Marriage and Family Therapy and Management Systems Engineering were utilized to develop this leadership workshop. Professors from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in both of these disciplines, along with people working in the Department of Continuing Education, were consulted on an on-going basis during its development. This integrated approach was conceptualized as a way to bridge between didactic approaches to management development, and the more experiential, interactive processes commonly employed in family therapy. Workshop facilitators believed that by integrating concepts from the two fields, and using language familiar to

people in business organizations, participants would feel more comfortable and open to the training processes which are based on theories in family therapy.

Funding for this project was made available through the Center for Organizational and Technological Advancement (COTA) at Virginia Tech. This fund has been established to provide financial resources for the development of training programs that are designed to be offered to business organizations and delivered at the Hotel Roanoke Conference Center in Roanoke, Virginia.

#### Changes in Project Scope

This evaluation study began with an original training group made up of 12 people who commenced the first session (2 and one-half days) of their training in April 1996 and completed their second session of two days in June. Participants included leaders from different companies around the area. These individuals were originally going to be used as the sample for the evaluation until two individuals in the group shared the workshop information with their Human Resource Department. This contact eventually led to an agreement with the company (a health maintenance organization) that they would send approximately 50 mid-level managers through the training. It was proposed, and verbally agreed, that the training was to commence in July, 1996 and finish in November, 1996 with ten to fifteen participants training each month. The researcher intended to include these 50 managers in the sample for the program evaluation and

with a sample of this size he planned to rely heavily on quantitative data and methodologies to evaluate the workshop and its outcome on participants.

As the July training approached, the organization asked that the first training session be postponed until August. Although a contract was later signed, no penalties were outlined in the proposal. This proved to be a costly mistake as the same scenario happened in August and September. Finally, in October six people from the organization attended the workshop, but the November training was canceled again. At that point in the process, the researcher requested that the workshop evaluation be modified in both its sample and methodology. For the sample it was determined that the original group, made up of twelve individuals from different companies, be combined with the six individuals who attended the workshop in October. Methodologically, it was determined that qualitative methods and data would be used as the main source of information for the evaluation.

After considering this modified design, it was determined that the combining of these two very different groups presented challenges that would be difficult to overcome. First, the two groups were different in the sense that the first group was made up of individuals from a variety of different organizations and industries, and the second group was an intact group who all worked for the same company and consistently interacted with one another in their leadership roles. Secondly, the program had been modified to facilitate an intact team; therefore, the content of the workshop

itself was different. And, thirdly the HMO was going through an internal crisis during the time of the workshop (conflict between the administration and workers union). This last issue also happened to be a major factor in the cancellation of previous trainings. For these reasons, it was determined that the scope of the project would be modified to include only those individuals who participated in the April/June workshop. This was possible since the original evaluation design included a variety of qualitative methodologies which allowed the researcher to answer the original questions posed. Qualitative data then became the primary information source in the evaluation with quantitative data playing a limited role.

#### Workshop Goals

The goal of the workshop was to help participants more fully develop their relationship competencies. Facilitators hoped to provide an experience that would help leaders to develop effective, trusting work relationships, and positively affect their family relationships as well. Although the focus on family relationships was secondary, workshop processes were flexible, allowing participants to apply the concepts to both work and/or family settings.

Another goal, although not a significant part of the design of the workshop, was to positively affect the culture of the organizations the participants were part of. This hope was based, in part, on the belief that when people are in relationship with one another, and one of the members

of the system changes, others in the system must also change in some way (Becvar & Becvar, 1988).

### Workshop Design

During the development phase of the program, it was determined that the workshop would be designed to meet the specific needs of participants. A highly individualized training process was conceptualized as a way to fill a niche that is often left unmet by other training programs where concepts and processes are universally applied to all participants. In other words, the program would need to take into account the individual differences and developmental needs of each person which required facilitators to conduct in-depth, pre-workshop assessments for each individual, and to limit the number of people invited so that there would be a high ratio of facilitators to participants.

Another goal of the design was to provide an experience where participants would be supported over a period of two or three months in accomplishing their goals. This relatively long-term approach was a response to a sentiment carried by many of the authors acquaintances who have taken part in “one-shot” training experiences. Although they had been motivated to make changes during different training experiences, there was little or no follow-up support to transfer the learning from the training into actual work setting results.

In accordance with the goal to provide individual attention and long-term support for the participants, the program started with a phone

interview assessment by the researcher. Participants were also asked to complete the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self (LPI-Self) and have five co-workers complete the LPI-Observer (LPI-Observer) (Kouzes & Posner, 1993) (see Appendix A). The pre-workshop assessment was followed by three distinct phases of the training: 1) a two-and-one-half day initial training session, 2) a two-month interim period during which participants received one-on-one coaching, and 3) a two-day follow-up or second session. The first session provided an intensive initial training experience where each participant crafted his or her own leadership action plan. This plan focused on utilizing their strengths to develop more effective and trusting relationships within their roles at work and at home. This session was followed by a break of two months, during which the researcher provided one-on-one coaching (most often over the phone) in support of participants' action plans, to help them accomplish their goals. Finally, a follow-up training session was held which lasted approximately two days. The goal for the second session was to add momentum and support to the positive changes that individuals had begun to implement.

### Workshop Facilitators

Program processes utilized a team facilitation approach. Those who helped facilitate the training included a professor whose specialty is culture change and empowerment in organizations, a leadership development consultant from a private company, and the researcher, who was a Ph.D. candidate in Marriage and Family Therapy. The consultant's

formal training is also in the counseling field where he is licensed as a marriage and family therapist.

Others who helped facilitate segments of the first session include a faculty member in the department of Marriage and Family Therapy and some of the researcher's peers from Virginia Tech. These graduate students acted as a "reflecting team" (Andersen, 1991) during two of the exercises.

#### Philosophical Foundations of the Workshop

Servant Leadership. The content and goals of this workshop were based in part on writings and concepts related to the notion of "Servant Leadership" (Greenleaf, 1991). Using a Servant Leadership philosophy the concepts of true listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, stewardship and community building were highlighted as effective leadership qualities. These qualities and skills were related to work and family settings throughout the workshop.

Five Leadership Practices. The five leadership practices identified by Kouzes and Posner (1987) are the behaviors that leaders engage in when they are at their best. These practices were discussed with participants before they received the feedback from co-workers who had filled out the LPI-Observer form. Other discussions, throughout the workshop, centered around the quality of relationships that participants needed to foster in order to be effective as a leader. Therefore, subsequent discussion of the five practices was done more indirectly.



Solution-focused/narrative approach. Processes and exercises in the seminar are based on the theory of solution-focused and narrative therapy models. This framework was used to inform the questions used in the pre-workshop interviews and the small group discussions and to reinforce the overall tone of the seminar. Didactic training emphasized the assumptions of these therapy models as found in O'Hanlon and Weiner-Davis's (1989) book In Search of Solutions and White and Epstin's (1990) book entitled, Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends. One exercise, for example, involved participants being asked to pair up and take turns identifying an issue that had troubled them and then to question each other to find the exceptions to that pattern. In this process participants helped identify some of the person's strengths and internal resources that could be applied to difficult situations. These and other processes highlighted the social constructionist epistemology, that meaning is evolutionary rather than static, and that individuals have a significant amount of control in terms of how they experience different situations.

The concept that there are multiple realities for any given event was introduced. Participants were shown how they exert some control over the meanings they choose to attach to events. These concepts were taught to begin to create more awareness of the fluidity of meaning and to increase the participants' freedom to choose interpretations that promote the accomplishment of their goals rather than those that constrain their development.

### Pre-workshop Activities

Assessment. Pre-conference assessment entailed a phone interview that lasted approximately one-half hour, and a quantitative instrument that measured each participant's effectiveness in five leadership practices (LPI-Self and LPI-Observer). The interview was composed of questions that were based on the solution-focused theory (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989). These questions were meant to both provide information, and, to act as an intervention. As an assessment tool, the interview helped identify some of the strengths each participant had around the five practices of leadership. As an intervention, it helped to create an expectation for change that would be facilitated through the workshop.

Recruitment of significant peers. Along with the 360° feedback forms (LPI-Observer) that were filled out by peers of the participant, a "letter of recruitment" (see Appendix B) was also provided. This letter contained a brief explanation of the seminar goals and an invitation for the selected peers to observe the participant's behavior over the course of the workshop. This letter was designed to heighten the expectation co-workers had about the participant improving in some way. This invitation for work-peers to look for any changes in the participant was conceptualized as a way to increase the chances that the participant would be noticed and rewarded for any movement toward their goals.

### Session One

Introduction/explanation. To build a foundation for the integrated training approach, facilitators led a discussion about the core competencies possessed by effective leaders. The relational aspects of leadership as required in the context of modern organizational life and culture were discussed. Over the course of the workshop, discussions and lessons on leadership evolved around concepts taught in the literature on Servant-Leadership (Greenleaf, 1991) and the five practices of leadership discussed in Kouzes and Posner's (1987) book, "The Leadership Challenge".

LPI scores and feedback. Participants received the scores to their LPI-Self and LPI-Observer instruments. The observer scores (360° feedback) from their co-workers were discussed, and it was recommended to the participants that they use the information from the feedback to begin writing their plan of action.

Communication and collaborative skills training. This training module helped identify the distinct components of effective speaking and listening (Miller, Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1992). Experiential learning exercises were used to explain, practice, and evaluate the communication skills. These skills were discussed in relation to the participants' roles at work and in the family. These processes were used to increase the participants' self understanding and gain a fuller awareness around the issues they wanted to communicate about. This exercise enabled participants to slow the communication process down which facilitated the sending and receiving of clear messages.

Within this module, effective communication was described as the foundation for developing highly effective interpersonal relationships and as the means whereby conflicts are best resolved in a win-win manner. These communication skills were addressed as critical to the ability to lead others effectively. For example, participants were taught how active listening skills are essential for them to empathize and have sensitivity to the needs of those they lead. Facilitators also discussed how this relationship skill increases a person's ability to work in teams, collaboratively, and to evolve an emotional atmosphere where interpersonal difficulties can be resolved in a healthy way. In couples, and it can be assumed to be similar in other relationships, the level of relationship satisfaction, and frequently, the stability of the relationship itself, depend on the quality of communication and on the individual's ability to resolve conflict (Gottman, 1979).

Life history exercise. Facilitators presented the philosophy underlying practices in narrative therapy. Some of the ideas presented included the notion that lived experience is storied and therefore, a great deal of lived experience inevitably falls outside the dominant stories people tell of themselves. However, within the lived experiences of a person, there are always meanings that run contrary to any dominant, "problem-saturated" stories that are more enabling of a person's goals.

This presentation was followed by an exercise where participants were asked to write their life history in twenty minutes. They were then

guided by the facilitators in finding alternative, more helpful meanings based on real events that were left out of their life story. This process was meant to demonstrate the concept that reality is constructed and that through mental construction processes, new, more enabling realities can evolve.

Genogram work. Participants were guided through an exercise where they constructed their own family genogram. These schematic depictions of their family relationships included symbols that described the structure of their family along with the dynamics found in their family system such as coalitions, triangles, conflict, closeness, etc. Individual characteristics, relational patterns and family cultural values were discussed and charted as they were identified across the generations. This exercise continued to emphasize the theme that the “story” being generated through the telling and drawing of the family story, is only one of many possible narratives that could be uncovered.

Ritual development exercise. As part of the effort to help participants move their organizations/teams toward community, where relationships are healthy and there is a shared vision, the power of rituals was discussed. The facilitators used both family and business examples to highlight the effects and benefits of meaningful rituals. Participants were asked to identify possible rituals that could be used in their work and family settings that would promote intimacy between the system’s members. Some of the purposes mentioned to the participants for creating

rituals included creating team spirit and family unity through the planning and implementation of the ritual, creating a shared vision between group members, and creating positive emotional connections within the group.

Reflecting team experience. Reflecting team processes were used in the workshop to help participants begin to see alternative perspectives in some of the difficult situations they mentioned that they were confronted with. Student peers of the researcher acted in this role. Reflecting team members observed some of the exercises and listened in on the participant's conversations around the issues being discussed. The process was intended to open up space for alternative meanings to emerge for the participants, thus allowing them to have a different cognitive, emotional, and behavioral experience.

Vicious and virtuous cycles. After constructing the genogram, participants were taken through an exercise that helped them focus more exclusively on themselves in relationship to others. Human systems principles were taught to the group; then, the interpersonal patterns that they were involved in were examined. Patterns or interactional cycles that ran contrary to their leadership and family goals were identified. Patterns supportive of their work and family goals were also identified. This exercise included a discussion on how these cycles generated "self-fulfilling prophecies" in either positive or negative directions.

Leadership maze. This experiential activity required the group to work together as a team to accomplish an overall goal. Participants were

required to work collaboratively, quickly, and with precision. The exercise provided a rich source of information concerning each individual's approach to the problem and how the group worked collectively toward the goal. Some of the interactional styles used by the participants included varying levels of helping and supporting behaviors, leading and following, and taking part in group planning processes.

Surprise task. As part of their action plan, participants were asked to identify behaviors that they could do that would "surprise" their co-workers. Participants were encouraged to define behaviors that would enhance their relationships. By following this assignment, they were more likely to select specific behaviors that co-workers would experience as "different" than their usual behaviors. This assignment was meant to tie into, and follow-through on, the letter that participants sent to some of their work-peers before the workshop (see Appendix B). They were asked to do at least one or two things each week that would surprise their co-workers, spouse or "significant other".

Action plan/relationship vision statement. At the end of the first session of the workshop the participants created an action plan based on a vision statement that they had created. The vision statement was relationship-focused and identified the type of interactions and meanings the individual would like to have in his or her work and family roles.

The action plan was written after they had experienced most of the workshop processes, thus enabling participants to incorporate into their

plan any personal and interpersonal insights, skills, and techniques that they had learned up to that point. As part of the action plan, each participant was asked to predict the changes that would take place at home and at work over the following two months. Other aspects of the action plan included the following: specific goals for communicating better with others, ideas for implementing rituals to create more intimacy, and specific behaviors that would be consistent with their relationship vision statement.

#### Between Sessions

Personal coaching. Phone calls were the primary method used for follow-up coaching between sessions. The coaching sessions were conducted by one of the workshop facilitators. Each session was conceptualized and carried out with the intention of using therapeutic skills and following the solution-focused and narrative therapy models in the sessions. The content of these coaching sessions came from several sources including the participants' experiences in trying to accomplish their plan of action, the pre-workshop interviews, and the information gathered during the workshop. Trust between the participants and the coach was seen as an essential element for working effectively with each individual.

Therapeutic letters. Therapists have been successful in helping clients progress between sessions through the writing of therapeutic letters (White & Epston, 1990). As a way of reflecting on the workshop experience and to comment on their progress toward the goals they had identified in



their action plans, the coach wrote each participant a letter (see Appendix J). The language used in the letters was aimed toward promoting the positive changes that were, in most cases, already beginning to take place. The letter also contained recommendations/suggestions for dealing with the issues that were addressed in the letter. Each letter was written with the particular needs of the participant in mind and required an integration of information from a variety of sources.

### Session Two

Workgram. Using the same concepts and methods for constructing a genogram, participants constructed a pictorial display of their work relationships. Some of the same relationship dynamics that are commonly identified in family systems (i.e., conflictual relationships, coalitions, and triangulated relationships) were also identified in the different work systems being represented. Other variables that are more specific to organizational systems, such as the dynamics between departments, hierarchical power structures, and office politics were also identified. Solution-focused processes were utilized to help participants identify ways they could begin to change some of the negative dynamics at work.

Communication skills training. In response to the request for more practice with speaking and listening skills, participants were asked to identify and discuss a real issue to use as a topic while they practiced the skills. Small groups were formed for skill practice. Each of the participants was given the opportunity to be a listener, speaker, and a coach for others

who were practicing the skills. Workshop facilitators acted as overall coaches of the process.

Revised action plan. On the final day of the second session, participants shared their revised action-plan. Each participant's plan outlined the individual's goals for the next six months in regards to specific relationships that she/he wanted to work on. Participants were asked to utilize the skills and training that they had received in the workshop and were encouraged to identify specific behaviors that they would like to change (either decrease or increase). These modifications in behavior were intended to invite those around them to feel somewhat "surprised" since the behavior would be different from the participant's behavioral patterns before the workshop.

### Methodology

#### Sample

Participants for the study were people from small to medium-sized business organizations, most of whom held leadership positions in their companies. The following titles are representative of those held by the participants: Training Manager, Staff Development Coordinator, Vice President for Human Resources, Assistant Town Manager, and President/Owner. Both men (n=7) and women (n=5) participated in the workshop and ranged in age from 27 to 54 years (see Table 1).

As mentioned earlier, a decision had been made to limit the number of participants to between 10 and 15 to provide a personalized experience,

in which they would have a significant amount of one-on-one contact with the facilitators. This relatively small group of participants is, however, considered an adequate number in qualitative research where the validity of the results depend more on the quality of the data collection and analysis than on having a large sample size. McCracken (1988), a respected qualitative researcher said:

It is more important to work longer, and with greater care, with a few people, than more superficially with many of them. For many research projects, 8 respondents will be perfectly sufficient. (p. 17)

Participants for the workshop came from several sources. First, names of people in leadership positions around the area were generated by the facilitators. These individuals were then contacted by phone and invited to attend. Four of the twelve workshop participants were recruited using this approach. Other participants were recruited by calling the human resource departments of businesses in the area. When companies indicated an interest in sending someone, workshop literature that explained the objectives and intended outcomes of the workshop was sent to them. Once a name had been recommended as a potential participant, the person was contacted by phone for registration.

**Table 1**  
**Participant Demographics**

<b>Subject #</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Position</b>
1	49	Male	Senior Vice President
2	49	Male	President/Owner
3	27	Female	Training Manager
4	34	Male	President/Owner
5	31	Male	Assistant Town Mngr.
6	54	Female	Vice Pres. over HR
7	44	Female	Staff Dvlpmnt Coord.
8	40	Female	Senior Vice President
9	42	Female	Snr. Cnslt Engrn.
10	27	Male	Manager
11	32	Male	Pastor
12	38	Male	Branch Manager

To fill the workshop and gather information to refine it, the facilitators decided to offer the program at no charge. This offer gave the participants further incentive to spend a portion of their limited time in a program that was newly developed.

The sample used for this evaluation does not allow the researcher to generalize the findings beyond the particular workshop group to the larger population. However, it is suited for preliminary evaluations where the researcher is able to study the effects of the workshop on particular people and to provides information that is useful in making further refinements to the program before it is offered on a larger scale.

#### Procedures

The program was managed by both the researcher and the Continuing Education Department of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Before the workshop commenced, a letter was sent to the participants giving them logistical information, such as the date, time and place for the workshop, as well as a description of the tasks they needed to perform before the workshop (see Appendix C). The tasks included completing the LPI-Self, retyping on their letterhead a letter to five co-workers who were going to give them feedback through the LPI-Observer, and scheduling an appointment when they would have a phone interview with one of the facilitators. The letter also explained that the data would be used as both feedback for them in terms of their leadership effectiveness and as data for the evaluation of the program. Participants were asked to

read the informed consent form (see Appendix D) and sign it if they wanted to volunteer to be a part of the evaluation study.

Before the workshop, but after they had completed the written leadership assessment (LPI-self), a phone interview was conducted for each participant. The semi-structured interview (see Appendix E) had two general purposes. First, to identify the strengths and skills of the participant and, second, to start the therapeutic process of change. In other words, the questions were designed to elicit information that could be used to evaluate their leadership strengths, and at the same time reflexively offer information back to the participants that would help them begin to see new solutions to their leadership dilemmas. Questions generally focused on finding times when the five different leadership practices were most exemplified in their roles and a solution-focused approach to the phrasing was used to give them greater therapeutic value (de Shazer, 1990). Through circular questioning processes (Tomm, 1988) and through the deliberate use of language and words, the researcher intended to get the participants to see their strengths, their leadership dilemmas, and their relationships with others in a new, more expansive light. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

The first session of the workshop was held in the Donaldson Brown Conference Center on the campus of Virginia Tech. This session ran from April 12 through April 14, 1996. The second session was held two months later from June 5 to June 7, at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

The program began at 8:30 a.m. in the morning on the first day and went until 6 p.m. in the evening, with a break for lunch and dinner. The same schedule was followed for the second day. On the third day of training, the workshop finished at approximately 12:00 noon participants were then asked to participate in a focus group for another hour and a half. The follow-up session followed the same schedule, with the last day ending at noon followed by another focus group.

Experienced group moderators broke the group in half and conducted two focus groups after each workshop session. These discussions lasted between one and one-and-one-half hours. The questions came from both semi-structured and unstructured focus group scripts (see appendices E and F) and requested the participants to share their thoughts, feelings, and insights concerning each component of the workshop. In general, participants commented on the workshop methods, content and facilitation.

At the end of the first session, each participant gave the author a copy of his or her action plan which was to be used in subsequent coaching sessions. The author called each participant at least twice over the course of the next two months. Sessions lasted between 15 and 60 minutes and included discussions about their progress toward the goals that they had outlined in their action-plan. Case notes were kept for each session to provide a detailed record of the developments that took place in each of the participant's lives. These records were used to write a personal letter of

encouragement and reflection to each participant prior to the second session (see White & Epston, 1990).

After approximately seven months had passed since the last training session, participants were given the LPI-Delta instrument. This form measures change in frequency of behaviors. They were instructed to fill one out for themselves and to have the people who had completed the original LPI-Observer to complete the instrument as well. Inventories were sent directly to the researcher for scoring.

### Instrumentation

Focus groups. Krueger (1994) proposes using focus groups as a way to provide good qualitative information for evaluating programs. Focus groups provide a way to gather information about the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of people in a group environment where inhibitions are often let down. This socially-oriented data gathering process enables participants to stimulate each others thinking which often helps them share their own views and form their own opinions (Krueger, 1994). In other words, some participants find it helpful to hear others express themselves in order to better conceptualize and communicate their own viewpoints.

Focus groups were held to gather information for the program evaluation after both the first and second sessions of the training. For the first session, a focus group script was used to help facilitators collect data on each of the workshop components (see Appendix F). Since there were two focus group facilitators, the script enabled them to keep the language of the



questioning consistent between the two groups (Krueger, 1994). This approach also ensured that each of the component areas would be discussed in detail, without missing key areas.

The second session focus group script was organized as a topic guide rather than having the facilitator ask specific questions (see Appendix G). This approach allowed for more spontaneity and creativity in the questioning process. The researcher believed that this flexible approach was more appropriate given that the respondents had become comfortable with one another and the process. It was believed that this approach to the questioning would provide more rich information as the participants were given more freedom to elaborate on each other's comments and to have a greater influence over the direction of the discussion (Krueger, 1994). All of the facilitators had had experience facilitating group discussion around various topics and understood the philosophy of focus group facilitation. The researcher also spent time with each facilitator going over the interview guide and explaining the processes used in the workshop. Therefore, the author believed that the focus group facilitators had the experience and knowledge needed to ensure that the important topic areas would be discussed in detail and to ensure that an atmosphere of openness would be fostered.

Individual interviews. Interviewing is seen as a valuable way to gathering qualitative information for evaluation (Patton, 1987). Through careful questioning, the evaluator is able to enter the perspective of other

people and to be informed about how people have experienced certain things such as the learnings and effects of a training program itself. Patton (1987) has stated that qualitative methods, and specifically depth interviewing, are particularly useful for evaluating programs that emphasize individualized client outcomes. This was a key factor for the evaluation of the current workshop since the assessment and interventions were highly specific to each participant. Interviews for the current evaluation were also important as they provided information about the participants' experiences in their work and family environments, neither of which could have been directly observed by the evaluator.

As stated above, each participant was interviewed before the actual workshop began. For this interview, a semi-structured guide was developed to gather solution-focused information from the participants on the five areas of leadership measured by the LPI(see Appendix E). While crafting the questions, professors whose expertise was in solution-focused therapy and in circular questioning were consulted. The "miracle question" was also used as an interventive question (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989) to have the participants begin looking for what situations will be like when their problems have been solved.

Participants were also interviewed after the training was finished. These interviews were unstructured in nature and aimed to gather data on the participants' perceptions of their leadership effectiveness as it related to relationship issues. An interviewer asked them to discuss the seminar

processes and their perceptions of its usefulness in developing their leadership competencies. The interview guide was established to provide a list of questions and issues to discuss during the course of the interview (see Appendix H). These questions provided a beginning point for the discussion and were followed up by probing questions to get more depth.

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). (Appendix A) This instrument assesses leadership competencies which are based on five constructs that are considered attributes of exceptional leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). The LPI is a 30-item instrument that measures five different leadership behaviors. These behaviors are: 1) challenging the process, 2) inspiring a shared vision, 3) enabling others to act, 4) modeling the way, and 5) encouraging the heart. Respondents are asked to rate the extent to which they engage in each behavior. Responses are on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = rarely to 5 = very frequently. An example of an item is, "I praise people for a job well done."

Although not all five of the dimensions have a clear connection to the relationship competencies required of leaders who want to invite employee empowerment, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart, all are conceptually related to these preferred ways of relating with others. The instrument has high internal reliability with alpha coefficients ranging from .80 to .91 (Posner & Kouzes, 1993), and the scales are all generally orthogonal, meaning that the scales measure different dimensions of leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1990).

The LPI is also used as a 360° feedback instrument where superiors, peers, and subordinates of the participant can provide their perceptions of the individual. These scores can then be compared with the participant's own self rating.

Leadership Practices Inventory-Delta (LPI-Delta). (Appendix I) With only a 5 point scale, the original LPI was not intended to be used to measure change in leadership effectiveness. In order to help validate the results from the qualitative analysis, the LPI-Delta was used as a way to measure the amount of *change* a respondent made after they have already been assessed using the LPI. This instrument asks respondents to rate themselves in terms of whether they have changed the frequency with which they engage in the leadership practices. They are asked to identify whether they have *somewhat decreased, remained the same, slightly increased, somewhat increased, or substantially increased*, the behavior being described in the question. Respondents are also asked to evaluate the extent to which they feel that their *current* use of the behavior is appropriate. They are given three choices regarding the frequency, ranging from just about right to needing to engage in the behavior much more.

As with the LPI instrument, the LPI-Delta can be given both to leaders who have filled out the LPI-Self, and to co-workers who have given the leader feedback earlier using the LPI-Observer. Responses will be given to the extent of change that has occurred over a specified period of months.

## Data Analysis

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The interviews and focus groups were recorded on audiocassettes and then transcribed in their entirety. A personal computer was used to manage the data. Hardcopies were made of all of the interviews and case notes. These data sources were manually sorted into emerging themes and variously colored highlighter pens were used to code the data.

The data were analyzed using the grounded theory approach of Strauss and Corbin (1990). Transcriptions were read several times through as a way to begin to notice the different themes in the data. The data were then organized and broken down into conceptual categories in a process known as open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was done by manually sorting the data into themes (i.e., seeing the importance of relationships at work, re-prioritizing the family and getting to know the person behind the worker). Highlighter pens were used as a way to color-code the data for easy recognition. Also, notes that identified the themes were written down directly on the transcript margins. The common themes were then gathered into files or groups by physically cutting the transcript into parts according to theme. These excerpts were then pasted together to make the data easier to work with.

Axial coding procedures were then used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This is the process of taking data that has been separated, and putting them back together through inductive processes, making broader

connections between the categories. For example, the themes of importance of relationships, re-prioritizing the family and valuing workers were brought together under a broad category which was called “increased relationship orientation.” By the end of the coding process the researcher was able to conceptualize and integrate the themes so that they fit together. These same procedures were used in answering both evaluation questions and in working with all of the different pieces of qualitative data.

#### Quantitative Component

Leadership Practices Inventory-Delta (LPI-Delta). The LPI-Delta instrument was used to measure any change that the participants precipitated since they last filled out the LPI. This instrument was re-administered the participants eight months later. This was done using the LPI-Delta which measures the amount of change, whether it be an increase or decrease, in the participants’ effective leadership behaviors.

Since there were not enough subjects in the study to conduct meaningful quantitative analyses on the data, the scores from the LPI-Delta were used simply as a source of additional information. As mentioned in the literature review, four of the five practices measured by the LPI have strong conceptual connections to the interpersonal competencies required for successful leadership (see Leslie & Van Velsor, 1996). Since the LPI does not assess interpersonal competencies directly, these scores could only be used to collaborate or question the results gained through the qualitative processes indirectly



## CHAPTER IV

### Presentation of Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the study which addresses the two evaluation questions that were posed: 1) how were the workshop components perceived and experienced by the participants?, and 2) what, if any, effect did the program have on the participants' relationship competencies in their work and/or family roles? In answering these questions, the themes that came from the data analysis are first identified. These themes are then elaborated on by using actual participant quotes, as much as possible, to preserve the richness of the meanings originally offered.

#### Participant Experience with the Workshop Components (Question #1)

This section presents the findings of the evaluation study for the workshop components. First, the reasons why participants took part in the workshop will be outlined followed by a discussion of how well the workshop met their expectations. Secondly, the participants' perceptions of each of the workshop components will be summarized. A summarization of what the participants liked, disliked, and recommended for the main components of the workshop are listed in Table 2 on pages 103, 104, 105.

#### Reasons for Participation



Many participants stated that they were first interested in attending the workshop for leadership development reasons. One participant with training and development responsibilities said:

I was looking for management training for my company, looking for something for managers that was more behavior related, soft skills kind of things, and I thought [the workshop] seemed like a possibility.

Other participants were interested in the prospect of developing more self awareness and interpersonal relationship skills.

I think for me, I just wanted to gain some new leadership skills and to gain some insights into improving myself.

I had an awareness that interpersonal relationships were critical in the workplace. What I was able to get from [the workshop] was a much deeper understanding of how to do that and how to improve it.

I saw [this workshop] as an opportunity. I have taken other seminars before and I just thought it was a great opportunity for self development and also to make some changes that I want to make, but maybe I just didn't know the answers.

Overall, the participants cited personal awareness, interpersonal skill development, and improved leadership skills as the driving reasons for attending the workshop.

### Workshop Components

Pre-workshop interview. Many of the participants believed that the pre-workshop phone interviews created anticipation and excitement for the upcoming workshop. They also mentioned that they thought that the interviewer was able to create a trusting relationship through this process.

A sampling of the comments were:

I felt the phone interview set the tone for the rest of the training. Because, immediately the questions were different, and I made that comment in the interview that I expected, sort of like my expectations for the whole seminar, a set of pat questions. The fact that he kind of followed the flow of my answers really sent me spinning, because it was clear to me that he was asking some of the next questions based on my answers and using some of my words back to me. I was really thrown off guard, but it really turned out to be a real indicator to me of what was to come...in the seminar.

[The interviewer] really set the tone.

It felt like you were his best friend after talking to him one on one. And, that you were really important and that what you had to say was just essential.

I think [the phone interview] created a real interest because on a lot of those questions I found that I had neglected these beliefs that I have...You just kind of get in a rut and it kind of opened up some doors for me to say “Hey, I need to re-focus, and maybe some of this is my problem.” It sort of made me excited about coming to the seminar. I think it probably created some interest on the part of employees, saying, “I wonder if he’s going to change when he comes back?!”

That’s when I got excited about the seminar actually, right after the interview, because it was so different from the normal process you usually go through. You could tell the workshop was going to be different.

Very good listener. [The interviewer] is a very good listener.

Some found the questions difficult to understand, where others believed that the language was used intentionally to cause the participant to think from a different perspective.

I thought some of the questions were confusing. It was hard for me to think through them and focus, because I had to sort out what the words meant. If it could have been rewritten with clearer wording, more simple wording, so I could understand more quickly what he was getting at, it would help.

I kind of wonder if it was worded like that to get you to think differently? To get you thinking about things you normally don't think about. Maybe to get us out of our paradigm.

Most of the participants reported that the pre-workshop interviews helped set the stage for the upcoming workshop. They also reported that the unique phrasing and content of the questions used caused them to look forward to the training. Many of the participants reported that the interview enabled them to begin developing a trusting relationship with the facilitator.

Leadership Practices Inventory (Self and Observer). Participants believed the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was helpful in getting feedback from people they work with, and in some cases they were surprised by the feedback. One participant said:

I thought they were really helpful. I learned a lot from the way other people scored me. Some places I thought I was lacking in, others thought were strengths. Some areas I thought were strengths, other people thought were more of a weakness.

Many of the participants were somewhat frustrated that the LPI was not discussed in more depth. Most found that there was not enough time spent graphing and discussing the results of the questionnaire.

Making this point:

Maybe something that they could do in the future is spend more time analyzing this and finding out what the results are and mean. You know, to help us draw some conclusions too, because we really haven't spent much time.

No, we didn't really touch on those much, so I'd like to hear more about that. I would like to spend more time...I would assume that perhaps [the LPI] is the most important point of view...that of people you have chosen, because they are the people you work with.

In general, the participants were interested in seeing how they were perceived by their co-workers. This caused them to anticipate the feedback experience. Most of the participants found that not enough time was spent discussing the feedback and integrating the results into the training.

Communication skills training. Most of the participants commented that in the first session the communication skills training was very pertinent and the processes used to teach these skills were effective, but they reported needing much more time practicing the skills. One participant made the following representative comment:

I think we could have expanded that, because not everyone got an opportunity to be a listener. I got to be a speaker, and I would like to have been coached some on my listening skills; so if there was a place to expand that exercise, I guess, it would have been helpful.

This perceived need for more practice was fostered in part by the mode of teaching which required participants to think about the communication process while at the same time conversing with another person on a topic. Learning the skills while communicating about an issue was a challenge for some. One person stated:

What I had difficulty doing was trying to be the active listener and really listening to the person. I found myself trying to do that, but I was thinking at the same time, “What box am I supposed to be on?” and “What is it that I’m supposed to be doing?” I had two things running through my mind at once, and it wasn’t that natural reflex, which is what you want.

As a result of the feedback on the communication component, the facilitators decided to include more practice time and individual coaching during the second session of the workshop. This extra time spent seemed to be valuable and was appreciated by most of the participants.

I appreciated the opportunity for more practice. We had done it before, and we hadn’t had a lot of time to do it; so I thought it was good to try it again. To get more practice basically.

I think I have a better understanding of how to do listening without getting involved, just listening.

Life history exercise. The participants gave mixed reviews on this exercise. The majority were intrigued by the lecture and examples that illustrated the concept that there are multiple ways to see the world.

However, most thought that the connection between the life history assignment, the lecture, and the overall purpose for the workshop was unclear.

I wasn't sure what the point was and what I was trying to accomplish. I did it, but I don't think I got anything out of that part of it.

The life history was a little confusing to me in writing the story and then going back and altering it somewhat, I didn't get much out of that.

He could have talked about it in the way that the stories are done in a more brief time, and then add some discussion about it.

Even though the majority of the participants thought that the purpose of the life history exercise did not relate clearly to the purposes of the workshop, some reported that the lecture leading up the exercise was very helpful. One participant stated:

I thought that the examples [in the lecture] just kind of opened up some doors for me....

Genogram/workgram exercise. In general, the workshop participants believed that more time was needed with this exercise. This was particularly true for the workgram as most of the time for this segment was spent crafting the genogram. The workgram was not developed to the same

extent. The participants were also frustrated that they did not have the chance to look for and identify any recurring patterns between the two.

I think maybe too much time was spent on the [genograms] and not enough on the [workgrams] and then being able to tie them together.

We also didn't have enough time to actually do the workgram while we were in the seminar itself.

I really would like to do the workgram because I was really interested and we didn't get time to do that.

Some felt like it was useful in identifying their patterns and developed their self awareness, where others did not feel it added much insight. Two people said:

I guess I always knew that my need for security came from my family [background], and that shows up in me having a traditional workplace job, rather than being entrepreneurial; but I didn't really connect to the fact that I didn't take risks at work and that I was in conflict at work, because of that. I didn't connect that back to the security theme until I did the combination of the [genogram] exercise and working on my action plan.

...there was nothing there that turned a light on for me.



In the second session of the workshop more emphasis was placed on constructing the workgram. In general the participants reported that the exercise created new awareness of the patterns that exist in the workplace.

I think...the workgram exercise achieved a higher level this time.  
More of an in-depth approach to the use of that.

I thought that was helpful to me in actually visualizing what was going on in the office and thinking through what kind of two-way communication there is and what areas I needed to work at. I didn't have any major conflicts at work, but it did help me think through those little areas where communication is never 100% and pinpoint. It's easier to pinpoint. Like with the collage idea. It's just so much easier once you map something out and you can really see it. That was helpful.

I had a pretty good idea of who my friends and foes are in the workplace. It just really helps you figure out which directions it's coming from. The workgram indicated the relationships I needed to work on.

Some of the participants commented that sharing their workgram with others in the group was an important and helpful part of the exercise.

The interesting thing for me was to talk about the workgram. [A participant] and I shared ours, and it really helped me a lot to see

hers and see things or hear her talk about things that came to mind.  
...the sharing was real important.

Ritual development exercise. All of the participants agreed that the lecture and discussion on rituals in the workplace was eye opening and something that they would like to discuss in more detail within the workshop and implement in the workplace.

Well, it was kind of a shock to me. Rituals are a big part of my life at home. We have a lot of rituals we have established at home that create a lot of intimacy. And, it never really occurred to me that there was a need to establish the same kind of rituals at work to establish intimacy there. And it really isn't hard to do when you create those opportunities. But, I hadn't really done that before. I'm surprised I've been that obtuse.

I think that to actually create or use rituals to change your organization's culture or modify the culture to a new culture in a certain way and establish a new ritual to make that occur, I think, I walk away thinking that is one of the most powerful things that I've learned in how to use that. I never thought about using a ritual to change culture. It makes a lot of sense.

Three of the participants mentioned that they would have liked more examples of good rituals for the workplace.

We divided into pairs to talk about it, but I think if we could have heard from more people it may have been even more helpful. Maybe

divided into two groups or maybe heard from the whole group. Or had reporting back from our peers.

I'm not sure there is anything I could recommend to change, other than maybe spending a little bit more time getting examples and discussion about rituals we had in our workplaces.

Giving and receiving feedback. Most of the participants found that this was a difficult exercise to work through because they were apprehensive about giving each other feedback. However, most were intrigued with the idea of finding out how they come across to one another after being in the workshop together for just one day. The exercise also gave them more awareness on whether it was easier to give or receive feedback.

It was interesting to see that we all found it harder to give the feedback than to receive it. And to see some of our nervousness.

I found something that was kind of disheartening. I found that it was easier for me to give criticism than to give praise. I had no problem telling those three people a reason why I might not want to work for them.

And, just learning how people perceive you...people who don't work with you or know you as a person or a manager. I think it was interesting how we all perceived each other.

Reflecting team experience. The concept of having a group of trained observers to listen and then reflect back the information they heard from the participants was considered to be a fascinating and powerful tool. However, participants reported feeling uncomfortable having graduate students, who did not know them, taking the role of the reflecting team.

That's a heck of a tool to use, or could be.

I thought it was helpful. I thought when we had two people each at the front of the room....the grad students. They were a little bit too technical to some extent.

I must say, I was fascinated by the concept. But, the object was to be viewed by a completely different reference point whether you accept it or reject it. And, I like the concept, but I agree with the comments that they were very clinical, very suited up, using a certain kind of language and maybe those are some of the first barriers to break down.

Some suggested having the reflecting team be a part of the workshop from the beginning, taking notes throughout the program, rather than having them come in for this component only. They also mentioned that they would have felt more comfortable receiving feedback or observations from the facilitators themselves, who knew them better. As one person said:

I would trust getting feedback from [the facilitators] more than I would from the graduate students. I would really welcome feedback from them.

Vicious and virtuous cycles. Most of the participants reported that the vicious and virtuous cycles activity helped them gain greater self and other awareness. They also felt more able to change the negative patterns happening in their lives.

I liked it. I learned that you can draw that red line and stop [the negative cycle] and change it around by what happens in here [head] and in here [heart].

It was a powerful exercise. It showed we are all in cycles whether you admit it or not. And, how much better your life can be by just making small, simple changes. The ripple effect was a perfect example.

Some of the participants recognized that vicious cycles are often perpetuated by the belief that they are “right” and the other person in the interaction is “wrong.” Representative of other comments, one person said:

Through all of this, it’s made me realize that I am probably a lot more [self] righteous than I thought I was. I mean there are certain situations where you can be in a cycle where you really think you are right. And, you really think, “I’m not giving in. I’m really not wrong.” But, I do know that that is totally not the attitude to have. But, I do realize with some of these situations that I really am facilitating the cycle and you are really not helping yourself or anyone else. But, that

is going to be the hardest for me. There are not a lot of times where my ego is really out there, but there are those few [times] when I really think that I am right and that is going to be hard for me.

Relationship vision statement. Some of the participants believed that the relationship vision statements needed to be followed up on in the workshop. After the assignment was given, there was little or no discussion or reference made to it thereafter. Two people said:

We didn't go over it. We went and did the exercise. I was a little disappointed in that frankly. We actually did the exercise at home, and then we never discussed it in class.

I found the exercise helpful, but a little follow up would be good if we knew we would be discussing it later, maybe we could have given it the credence it deserved.

Action plan. In the first session, some participants thought that the wording in the action plan was a little unclear. One person's response was:

I think maybe some of the questions were worded in a way that was difficult to understand.

A greater number reported benefiting from the incremental approach to the action plan. They liked being able to identify specific goals and the steps to achieving greater competency in their relationships.

I liked looking at [my goals] incrementally. We got down to behavior...so to think more incrementally rather than thinking "I just gotta get there."

Generally, I think in just recording that thing down it was helpful to me. We all have ideas from time to time on what to improve on, the act of writing it down and putting a date that you wanted to do something by is great.

I learned that I felt more comfortable doing something, thinking of something incrementally, rather than all at once. That's what helped me the most.

During the follow-up session the facilitators focused on giving much more time and detail to the action plans. Some appreciated revising the action plan. However, some participants thought that it took too much time and that there was too much of a technical focus on the wording, and yet not enough emphasis was given to the actual content. Two illustrative comments are:

I thought it was a great exercise. I really got inspired about it. It was really good. We went around the room and related our experiences. I got a lot out of it.

We spent a lot of time saying here's what this means and here's what that means. Here's where you put it and here's where you list it and here's what you think about it, but we didn't spend a lot of time doing it and talking about it.

Personal coaching. All of the participants felt that the ongoing support between the sessions was very helpful. Some mentioned that it was beneficial to get a call after returning to their work environments, where it was a challenge to follow through on their resolves.

I think it is helpful cause it is really easy to go back to work and get bogged down and forget all about it and I think just knowing that I was getting a call kind of kept it in my mind. Cause when I got it, I still wasn't ready for it, but I was still thinking about it.

I think [the coaching] was the best part of the whole thing.

Many commented that this positive experience with personal coaching was facilitated by having a support person who was an intuitive, trained counselor, and solution-focused in his approach. The quality of the relationship between the participants and the coach was also an important factor.

Yes, that's the power. You feel like you've got a personal guidance counselor, and that is helpful.



With mine he uses something like “Jane, I would encourage you to do this.” And I never did anything at the time, but I let that sentence run through my head, I mean, “I encourage you...,” and I took action. I knew he wouldn’t have sent me off, I trust him in that he wasn’t sending me off on something. He heard something I said, I trusted him. He heard something I expressed, or desired, or wanted, and he encouraged me to be more active on that. He gave me the courage I needed to be more active.

He’s a good listener. He’s intuitive. He has really good skills at picking those things out and then also to then process them back to us.

The letters written between the sessions were seen as important and were valued by the participants. Some of the participants commented that the letters were valuable because they were “customized” rather than form letters.

I think it works because of the way he uses the words, and the way he phrases it in the letter, and the way he projects a vision when he writes it.

It’s got to be a custom letter.

Some of the participants emphasized their belief that effective coaching, through one-on-one contact and by letter, could only be done by someone who has a certain skill set. One person said:

[The person coaching] has to be skilled and understanding and a counselor who is solution-focused. It's just not something anybody could do.

Facilitators. All participants seemed to think that the three facilitators worked well as a team in modeling team interaction, support, and caring for each other and the group.

We talked a lot about intimacy, and I felt that from all three facilitators.

They all had a lot of respect for each other which really meant a lot, because that is what they were teaching you to do throughout this whole thing. So, they lived up to what they were teaching.

They drew on each other's strengths. They deferred to each other at different times. They did that really well. It was almost hard to believe that it went so smooth for the first time. You expected some personality or some ego to stand up as "the person." I waited the whole time, and they all resisted that urge or whatever. Or they've overcome their own egos for the good of the program.

I thought they practiced what they preached. They talked about getting others in your organization involved and really listening to them and communicating with them. They were up there preaching this, and then they actually did that themselves; and they drew us all out and made sure everyone was heard and listened very well.

The participants also seemed to agree on the benefits of having facilitators who used personal stories to illustrate the points made.

I liked the fact that they shared from their own personal life. I just loved the video that [the facilitator] showed of his son.

I liked the personal stories, because a lot of times, you'll go to seminars and never know the person behind the speak. It elevated my respect for them to see their human side.

Table 2

Summary of Evaluation Findings for Question 1

(How were the workshop components perceived and experienced by the participants?)

<i>Component</i>	<i>Liked</i>	<i>Disliked</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
A) pre-workshop phone interview	1) created anticipation for workshop  2) began a trusting relationship with facilitators	1) wording for some questions difficult to understand	1) re-word some of the questions
B) LPI (self & observer)	1) feedback was interesting & helpful	1) not discussed or integrated enough	1) spend more time explaining feedback  2) relate workshop processes back to feedback
C) communication skills training (first session)	1) very pertinent to their needs as leaders	1) not enough time was given to practice skills  2) difficult to monitor comm. process and at same time communicate effectively	1) spend more time, allowing for more practice
(second session)	2) additional practice time		
D) life history exercise	1) lecture was eye-opening for some	1) did not seem to fit with rest of workshop	1) make better connection between lecture and exercise

Table 2 Continued

Summary of Evaluation Findings for Question 1

(How were the workshop components perceived and experienced by the participants?)

<i>Component</i>	<i>Liked</i>	<i>Disliked</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
E) genogram/workgram (first session)	1) helped some with self-awareness	1) not enough time spent	1) teach process in smaller steps
(second session)	2) emphasis on workgram created new awareness, more depth	2) genogram / workgram not integrated	2) share grams in small groups 3) have facilitators review each personally
F) ritual development exercise	1) discussing home and work rituals 2) something they could easily apply	1) needed time to devise own ritual and share with group	1) give more examples of good workplace rituals 2) brain-storm with group
G) giving and receiving feedback	1) hearing how others perceived them without much contact 2) new awareness about themselves when giving feedback	1) created apprehension	
H) reflecting team experience	1) the concept, in general, seemed powerful	1) uncomfortable having "outsiders" do the reflecting	1) have facilitators take this role several times throughout workshop

Table 2 Continued

Summary of Evaluation Findings for Question 1

(How were the workshop components perceived and experienced by the participants?)

<i>Component</i>	<i>Liked</i>	<i>Disliked</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>
I) vicious and virtuous cycles exercise	1) gained greater self and other awareness  2) useful tool to actually change behaviors	1) not enough time spent	1) help each person identify a vicious cycle
J) relationship vision statement		1) was not discussed or was not shared with group	1) be sure home work is followed-up on
K) action plan (first session)	1) incremental approach to goals  2) writing goals	1) wording of questions unclear	1) spend more time talking about goals with group
(second session)	3) liked sharing with group	2) too much time talking about details instead of content	
L) personal coaching	1) being reminded of goals  2) having an intuitive, trained counselor as coach  3) customized letters		1) scheduling of sessions could be more systematic

### Meeting Participants' Expectations

Nearly all of the participants were pleasantly surprised by the high level of interaction that was facilitated between both group members and between the facilitators and participants. The experientially based workshop processes helped keep their interest and maintain their energy.

I would say it did not meet my expectations, but that is good. I expected someone to give me a lot of lecturing, and a lot of business speak, and a lot from the latest in managerial books, and there was some of that. But, it was filtered with a lot of experiences. And there wasn't a lot of slides run, or a lot of overheads, or a lot of glossy handouts. And so I expected to endure and through that come away with some pieces of information. But, I think what it was is that I didn't have to endure. I had a lot of fun, and I will go away with a lot of pearls.

I guess I was expecting something like leadership, day-long conferences that I've been through...where I was talked to all day long and just became dulled into complete boredom. I had that edge of fear that this might be something like that, but it was just the opposite. I was very pleased with the whole process.

I have never left a lecture-type seminar that I wasn't dead tired when I got home. And, the last two nights, I've been full of energy, so whatever they're doing is a good thing.

It exceeded my expectations. I thoroughly enjoyed the change, the different tools that were used in keeping one's interest, the different speakers, the involvement, the ability of the speakers to relate to their personal experiences, as well as business experiences. They really were professionals at getting people involved.

Many of the participants commented on how comfortably and effectively real life issues were discussed and brought out.

The workshop cut down the barriers I think. We as humans have a tendency to not open up because we think we are vulnerable. I thought they were wonderful exercises.

I think it exceeded my expectations, because there have been new areas of my mind opened that haven't been opened before. Whenever that happens, I feel I have had a good experience. It really did open up some new avenues for me from a leadership standpoint and from a relationship standpoint.

In general, the participants found that their experience with the workshop exceeded their expectations. They commented that the processes



and content maintained their interest and energy and facilitated new awareness.

### Summary

Most of the participants reported that the pre-workshop interviews heightened their interest in the workshop and set the tone for the training experience. They believed that the non-traditional experiential methods used in the workshop kept them engaged and actively learning.

Generally the components were seen as useful, however, the common complaint was that not enough time was given to each to reach the depth or give the practice time the participants desired.

### Workshop Effects on Participant's Relationship Competencies

#### (Question #2)

This section addresses the question of whether or not the participants' relationship competencies (awareness, attitudes, and skills) were developed as a result of their experience in the workshop. The general themes that came from the data are identified and then direct quotes from the participants are given to illustrate the predominant themes. The information used to answer this second evaluation question was gathered through both interviews and case notes which were taken by the therapist/facilitator during the coaching phase of the training. The returned LPI-Delta (both self and observer forms) instruments were used to provide another source of data which served to validate or call into question the qualitative findings.

Four general categories emerged from the data. The first three have to do with relationship competency and are broken down into three broad categories which correspond to the areas of awareness, attitudes, and behaviors. The three titles are: *Increased Awareness Stronger Relationship Orientation*, and *New Relationship-Oriented Behaviors* The fourth category describes what the participants perceived as the outcomes of the changes they made as a result of the workshop. This category is simply labeled, *Perceived Outcomes* The results for this evaluation question are summarized in Table 3 at the end of the chapter.

#### Increased Awareness

From the data it was evident that nearly all of the participants had a stronger awareness of themselves and of themselves in relationship with others. This category is therefore broken into the separate themes of self-awareness and other-awareness.

##### Self-awareness.

Several of the participants reported being able to step back from a problem and their traditional reactions and consciously make a better, more helpful judgment in difficult situations. They were now more aware of their own internal thought processes and could deliberately steer them in a more helpful direction.

It goes back to the vicious [cycle] thing that we talked about the other day. If sometimes [my wife] would be upset about something and she might be agitated. Before the seminar I might shoot right

back and get in that vicious cycle....but now I really can feel myself saying, 'Step back from the situation, not emotionally, but take a step back and recognize she's obviously upset and what's the problem and let's talk about the problem instead of sitting here and baiting one another.'

I've been conscious about working on, and just thinking about the moments when I get into some of the same old [patterns] that weren't working so well.

I'm more sensitive to, of course being an owner of a company, that what I say or do makes big waves.

Another basic area of self-awareness that was enhanced for many of the participants was the understanding that the responsibility and power to change how something is experienced lies in changing one's self. One comment representative of this fundamental awareness is:

Yeah, and to recognize that I could change, and probably more significant than any other thing, I concluded that no one was going to change me, that I had to change me.

Other-awareness.

Nearly all participants reported having a greater awareness of the feelings and perspectives of others.

More evolved and more in tune of how people feel around me and more aware of their needs. Again, I think I've made a lot of progress since the initial plan. I mean a lot. But, I really worked hard at it too. I really have consciously worked on it.

You're an active participant in the conversation, but I try to step outside, it goes back to what was said in the seminar. It said that everybody's perceptions are valid and her perceptions about what we were talking about...were real to her. Instead of trying to convince her that I was right and she was wrong, I tried to say, 'Okay, let's talk about [your feelings] and try to understand what's got you upset and then we'll talk about my side of the story.'

Probably being more patient about waiting for things to happen the way I need them to happen, or be more understanding of people's differences from me and how they work. Being able to incorporate that into a good thing, instead of having it be a source of irritation.

I think the judgmental part I've really tried to work on and I think that made a big impact on me. I think trying to look outside my box and be more understanding of others. I've realized you can't really judge until you walk in their shoes.

I think it really gave me an awareness that focusing on the relationship part was every bit as important, if not more important than focusing on the technical end of it. It really helped me focus and make sure I was paying enough attention on that end. It's an awareness more than anything else.

### Stronger Relationship Orientation

Workshop participants unanimously reported having a stronger relationship orientation. In essence, the participants began to see the importance of building trusting relationships. They began focusing more on the quality of their relationships and had a greater desire to enhance them both at home and in the workplace.

### Increased focus on family relationships.

Some of the participants found that their priorities were in need of re-focusing, making family relationships a top priority. Prioritizing the family was accompanied with a greater desire to have their behaviors demonstrate that their family was most important of all the competing demands on their time. Participants also realized the need to express appreciation to their families more frequently. Several participants commented:

Well I think the workshop helped me realize that you can have multiple things going on in your life, but you still have to have your priorities, and there still has to be something that's at the top of that list. It sort of forced me to realize what was at the top of my list.

And that's my family over my work, but my behavior wasn't really showing that.

Then at home it has just helped me realize the importance of appreciating people and letting them know more frequently how important they are to you. And spending time with them and finding that balance.

It's a paradox, but so the workshop sort of helped with realizing that I needed my behavior to support what I was saying about priorities. And I learned there that it's important to do things with your mate that you may not want to do, but if it's important to them sometimes it's good to just do it. That whole exercise that we went through about, you know, I forget it now, the lesson I didn't forget, and that was if your husband likes to go to car races, then go to car races. And have fun together. Do anything to have fun together and be together and grow together.

Instead of looking at the issue, I focused on the relationship vision with my wife and broke some of the negative cycles. I let go of more things that used to make me angry. I've always had marriage as a priority, but the behaviors weren't there. My behaviors weren't in line with that. I knew that all along I had been committed, but now I

realized I had been focusing on some of the negatives in my marriage, but now I needed to focus on the fact that I was very committed. The workshop increased my awareness of myself in relationship with others and helped me see that I had some power in shaping those relationships.

Increased focus on workplace relationships.

Nearly all of the participants commented that they had increased attention to the relationships they had at work. Their statements reflect the belief that effective relationships are fundamental to effective leadership.

Well, the workshop really gave me an understanding that building relationships were important actually. Before that time I thought the business world was more of working together with objective data to get things done, and I really didn't understand that relationship building was an important part of it.

I think maybe it gave me the willingness to talk to her [employee] about the interpersonal side of it. It's easy for managers to get caught up in the trap of focusing on the technical and everybody is a little computer. You put data in and you get data out, that's part of what they do; but the more important part is the emotional side and the emotional problems that people have at work and at home. You bring all those to the table and that's all part of the person.

I am considering the relationship. It's kind of like I'm aware of it and before I just wasn't as aware of them as I am now. So, it's kind of like now I'm thinking of the bigger picture in dealing with folks, rather than just that particular transaction. More of a warmer, fuzzier feeling, if that makes sense.

Several of the participants reported that they have shifted their emphasis from productivity to a focus on people and relationships. Some participants suggested that the increase in productivity takes place much more easily when they foster effective relationships first.

I came to the realization that as a leader you don't have to be as productive as an individual, but if you spend the time and make the investment in the personal relationships, and working with the people, the department will be much, much, much more productive. I've sort of come to realize that I don't have to be as productive; as long as I'm spending productive time with my staff, they're going to be productive as a whole, and they'll be a lot more productive than I'm going to be sitting in here ten hours a day just cranking out the stuff.

My thought process before was productivity, because there is so much work to be done. You've known that now from working with a lot of different [employees here]. People are just frenzied almost with responsibilities and tasks, and so the priority had really become



getting stuff done. And I hadn't realized how much that had become a priority at the expense of how people are doing. How are people really doing? How are they really feeling? Do they value their work? Do they like being here? You know, those kinds of things. Do they feel appreciated? And I think that I've just tried to start thinking in those terms, consciously.

### New Relationship-Oriented Behaviors

This section describes new relationship-oriented behaviors that the participants exhibited and linked to attending the workshop. These behaviors were relationship-based and occurred in both the family and work domains. They were also behaviors stemming directly from the solution-focused philosophy used, and the communication skills taught in the workshop.

Increasing Family Closeness. Several of the participants reported trying new behaviors to create more family closeness. These behaviors ranged from doing things aimed at creating more intimacy, to resolving conflict. For example one person related how he had avoided a regularly occurring conflict with his wife by being aware of her feelings and then truly listening.

[One day] tensions were pretty high and emotions were real high because we were excited and nervous at the same time. I just started giving her a back rub and said, "Okay, let's take a deep breath and let's talk about what it is that's got you upset." And it worked.

Another person talked about instituting a relationship ritual to increase the intimacy in her marriage.

Well, one thing that was interesting was that Henry my husband, and I, I had told you at the last workshop that we had gone on a trip around our anniversary, that we had started our own ritual. We are already talking about what we are going to do this year. That was when we went to Hawaii.

A few of the participants reported using the vision statement to help them focus on their marriage relationship and increase their marital intimacy.

On the drive to Kentucky we worked on our vision statement, our relationship and our own statement. We have it typed up, we did that in September. We need to follow up on that. It challenged us. We talked about some things that I don't know if we would have talked about if we hadn't have been in that exercise. I think it will be good if I get it back out and we go ahead.

Several of the participants mentioned that the workshop had encouraged them to behaviorally re-prioritize their family. In other words, participants realized that they needed to actually do things that demonstrated this priority. For example, one person said:

So that's when I made a conscious effort to really put my foot down about not being at work later than six o'clock and not taking on more things for work at the expense of time with my family. Like Mr.

Smith, this week, asked me to be on a board, community service board. Well, I'm already on boards and it was a sports board and he wanted representation from [the company], and I just told him, I said 'You know, this is going to require time that I'm not willing to take from my family to do this.'

In general, most of the participants reported engaging in behaviors that were intended to increase their closeness with family members. These behaviors included solving conflict through listening, creating intimacy through relationship rituals and writing vision statements, and re-prioritizing the family by setting aside time to spend with them.

Building collaborative work relationships. Most of the participants reported trying new behaviors that would break down the hierarchical barriers between themselves and those they lead. In some cases the participants actively involved others in decision-making processes which had traditionally been the domain of management.

We had a morale problem...so we had a brainstorm session and came up with various means and methods of taking care of a problem. We evaluated them, we broke into four groups of three. I can't remember what the name of the term you guys use is, but we did that, then we broke into small groups again and it was moderated this time. That solved our problem.

[I've got]more insight on how inner workings work. How you work together. How you can throw ideas out to other people and get them

involved in making decisions, which if they're involved, the final outcome has a higher percent of being accomplished than not.

I think it's just more working with people, and doing less on a stand alone basis. Really accomplishing more by being able to work with other people.

Efforts to build collaborative work relationships also took the form of resolving disputes that interfered with people's ability to work effectively together. In some cases participants attempted to resolve negative feelings between themselves and their co-workers, or between two or more members of their team. For example,

I think before, I might have been reluctant to talk about [the emotional well being] because that was personal, and I was kind of drawing a wall between the work person and the rest of the person. I think it gave me a willingness to say, "Okay, we'll talk about the work flow and technical part of what's causing some of the conflict in the office. We'll talk about that for a minute, but I want to spend time talking about what it is that's caused this friction between you and the other employee." I don't know if it is a technique, but it was the ability to go into that area that I never really went into before. I am willing to address conflict much sooner. By talking about it much sooner, like right when it happens, in a very open and honest

way, personally I think it has helped me a lot at work and at home as well.

Others broke down the hierarchy by increasing their efforts to become more familiar with people by sharing information about themselves and by generally being less formal in their work relationships.

Yesterday, when I went into this office and I was talking to this administrative assistant that I've worked with since 1977, but never really talked to her, you know? She had a picture of a dog on her desk, and we got into this discussion about dogs that lasted probably twenty minutes. I think before this workshop I would have considered that a waste of time, you know? I was so business like, get in there, state your business, leave. That's truly different. It's like it's kind of a different mind-set.

I spent three days in the mailroom in the receiving area, just to get a feel for what was happening with the new equipment and so forth. I think I was there to help, and I don't think anyone was up tight because of that, you know? We just sort of did the work and worked and talked and so forth. They didn't see it as threatening, you know, here comes the big boss, with us for three days, P's and Q's, but I think it was just a much more relaxed atmosphere.

...since that time I have taken a lot more time to get to know staff better, spend more time with staff, be a better listener. I think I've improved my listening skills. We've started doing some celebrating of successes with certain activities.

A couple of the participants mentioned creating rituals to increase camaraderie at work. One person said:

Instead of just going from project to project, to stop and appreciate what people have done and to celebrate success. So now we do that. We had a Christmas party for a whole afternoon in December, and we are getting ready to go bowling or doing something like that on February 3rd. So every other month we are doing something where the whole department takes off part of the afternoon and goes out and just has fun.

Being solution-focused. Some of the participants mentioned how they had utilized the solution-focused philosophy in the way they approached problems. In some cases, the solution-focused philosophy was taught to co-workers.

So, [the workshop helped] the personal development side, maybe it goes back to the solution focused concept. Focusing more on solutions and the positives and not dwelling in going over and over again the victim language or the angry language.

I talk about the seminar, and I talk about the changes I made because of it, and I tell others about the concept of solutions. We had an impasse at the plant here, everyone has focused on the problem, and I've talked to one of the vice presidents about the concept of focusing too much on the problem, that that's negative energy, kind of like negative talk. [I told] him that it was kind of a stretch concept, but to think about, and how solution-focused thinking counters against all that he's now thinking.

I think it's maybe strengthened my basic philosophy that man is good, but I think maybe let that show in the way I interact with people and always looking for the solutions, looking for the outcomes, not dwelling on the mistakes. So it's kind of like although that's always been my basic belief, I'm not sure that I really let that show? I think that just kind of relaxing or loosening up a little bit, being a little less structured, a little less formal.

Using better communication skills. Many of the participants talked about how they had used better communication skills. Listening and asking questions of others before rushing to a judgment were skills frequently cited.

One of the techniques that I've found more useful, that I picked up with my family and at work, is the art of asking questions. Rather

than making judgments or statements, I've found that it is very effective to ask questions.

I think the biggest change I've made would be that I'm always making a gallant effort to asking more questions before reacting to or jumping into a quick reaction. So always seeking to understand more first, before making a quick decision.

The communication mats were real beneficial and interesting and something that I try to do or keep in mind. That's one of the main things that stands out.

Besides using communication skills, designing rituals, being solution-focused, and creating the vision statement, the participants also utilized other skills that had been taught in the workshop. For example, some participants reported times when they were aware of negative interpersonal patterns and applied skills to intervene and change the cycle.

#### Perceived Outcomes

This section discussed the outcomes that the participants believe came from changes they made in their awareness, attitudes, and behaviors as a result of their experience in the workshop. Themes around the outcomes perceived by the participants fell under two general categories: 1) larger themes that were shared by several of the participants, and 2) individual outcomes experienced by single participants.



Larger themes. The general outcome themes that emerged were increased trust, greater intimacy, and better communication. Concerning increased trust between themselves and others, some comments were:

I know with one employee in particular, having some very honest discussions about what was going on, both operationally and then interpersonally with this other staff member has really increased the connection and the understanding and the trust. That's been very rewarding.

I think that it's been easier to build trust and that sort of thing when I focus on [relationships]. If I get to know somebody and their motives and what's important to them, I can trust that they're going to get the job done and the understanding of what their thinking process is going to be and all those sorts of issues that are involved. It gives me a better understanding of who they are and thus the work that they produce.

Concerning the increased feelings of intimacy, two representative comments were:

Well, I think she would probably see me as more of a person, rather than just a title. As you get to know people, and as you get to know them better, then you have a bigger context in which to interact, and I think that having broader relationships with people, on a more informal level, could ultimately make me a better leader. I've

established broader relationships, and I think just by knowing me better there's going to be more of a trust factor there.

Speaking of a person she supervises, one leader said:

I think she's more open on how the department's operating, what the problems are, the things that are going well, just much more open.

Friendlier. I think just more relaxed in general.

Several of the participants reported being more effective in their communication, especially in terms of their ability to ask questions and sincerely listen to the responses. One comment representative of this theme is:

Like when I listen to people talk, instead of just saying okay get them right back to the task, I listen more to what they're really saying. Allowing time to get away from work and have fun. And when they ask for a meeting, making sure I give them a meeting like real soon, and then when I give them the time I make it good time, versus being occupied with the phones and the e-mails and thinking about all the other stuff I'm supposed to be doing. I really think about what this person is saying. Just little things like that make a big difference.

Another participant spoke of how he took the opportunity to stop a conflict by using empathic listening.

It kind of allowed her to vent out whatever was bothering her, and the emotions didn't escalate to the point where we weren't making sense. It stayed a lot more calm, and it got resolved a lot more quickly.

### Individual Outcomes

These outcomes were some that the participants themselves found as a result of attending the workshop. One participant felt that she had experienced a significant change in terms of her job satisfaction. She entered the workshop wondering if she should change jobs due to her dissatisfaction with her company, but suggested that the workshop had helped her feel much happier in her job experience.

At that time I was seeking, I think, more of an understanding of what I should do in the future, and now I feel good about what I'm doing.

Another participant commented that her staff felt more involved due to changes she had made since the workshop.

People have a better sense of involvement, that I will listen to them and I have their thoughts prior to making a decision. I think they probably have a little more respect for the answer I give because, you know, they had a chance to be involved in it.

One participant remarked on the new confidence that he had in facing and resolving conflict.

I think it's given me more confidence or increased my sense of responsibility in trying to resolve [conflict] sooner. At home and at work as well. I feel better about that because I would bury some things instead of talking about them and now I feel a lot more free to talk about it.

Another participant found that rather than being so worried about tasks and time pressures, when she focused on relationships she was more relaxed.

Because I think I could very easily have been thinking about what I could be doing in the next ten minutes and so forth. I guess you might say I'm just a little bit more relaxed.

One participant said that the workshop gave her the courage to make a change in jobs within her company. The new job was something she had been wanting to try, but did not have the courage to take the risk that comes with working in an area that was unfamiliar to her.

I've taken a different job and mainly I've taken it with the ability to look at what it could develop in me, and going on faith that it will come to me where to go from here. So right now I'm working on a project and in a job that the outcome will change the environment of our workplace, which fits my action plan, and it will change it in a way that I have a strong feeling about, but what the end result is for me is kind of still unknown. But I have faith that it will be okay, or this will in the long term be good for me, whatever comes out of it.

Yet another participant found that by having more courage in defending her priorities, she received greater respect from her boss.

Yeah, but you know it's funny because since I have been doing that with him, which I started really in the fall, the union stuff I talked a little bit about yesterday, we seem to have a better relationship and he seems to respect me more. It's funny the way that works.

All participants believed that they had progressed in one way or another and many reported that family members and/or co-workers had noticed changes as well.

I've made improvements [in relationships]. I think I've made pretty significant improvements, really. But, I still have more to do. Like we talked about yesterday, I still have more work to do. I don't think I'm a different person, I think I have improved the person that I am though.

I've gotten several comments that things have improved.

I would think [change has been noticed], that's what I'm reading back. That something is different. I'm not consciously being different, you know what I mean? It's not like I'm waking up and saying, "Well, today I'm going to do one, two, three, four, five." So I think it's a different mind-set, so I think therefore you just operate differently.

In summary, the changes that were identified by the participants themselves fell into three large themes, namely: increased trust, greater intimacy, and better communication. Several of the individual outcomes noted were: greater job satisfaction for the participant, more confidence in resolving conflict, being less stressed and more relaxed, and being more available to and having friendlier interactions with their staff.

Table 3

**Summary of Evaluation Findings for Question 2**  
 (What, if any, effect did the workshop have on the participants' relationships?)

<i>Increased Awareness</i>	<i>Greater Relationship Orientation</i>	<i>New Behaviors</i>	<i>Perceived Outcomes</i>
<p><b>Self-Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) of internal thought processes</li> <li>2) judgments are a matter of choice</li> <li>3) the power to change resides with self</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increased Focus on Family Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) re-prioritizing the family</li> <li>2) desire to show more appreciation</li> <li>3) desire to have behaviors match stated priorities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increasing Family Closeness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) listening and slower to judgment</li> <li>2) use of rituals to increase intimacy</li> <li>3) writing vision statement to increase intimacy</li> <li>4) set aside time for the family</li> </ul>	<p><b>Larger Themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) improved trust</li> <li>2) greater intimacy</li> <li>3) better communication</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other-Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) noticed negative interactional patterns</li> <li>2) aware of power to influence relationship</li> <li>3) more empathy for other people's needs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increased Focus on Work Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) see importance of building workplace relationships</li> <li>2) see need to understand emotional side of co-workers</li> <li>3) shift focus from productivity to people and relationships</li> <li>4) desire to form broader workplace relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Building Collaborative Work Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) involving others in decision-making processes</li> <li>2) Resolving conflict self/others and between team members</li> <li>3) sharing info. of self not related to just work role</li> <li>4) celebrating success</li> <li>5) listening/slower to judgment</li> <li>6) showing interest in lives of others</li> </ul> <p><b>Being Solution-focused</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) approach problems through solution lens</li> <li>2) teach concepts to others</li> </ul> <p><b>Better communication skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) listening and asking questions</li> <li>2) sharing more info.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Individual Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) greater job satisfaction</li> <li>2) staff feel more involved</li> <li>3) confidence in resolving conflict</li> <li>4) less stress, more relaxed</li> <li>5) change in job</li> <li>6) more available to staff</li> <li>7) greater respect from boss</li> </ul>

### Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Delta

Eight months following the workshop, the participants filled out the LPI-Delta. This instrument measures the extent of behavior change in five leadership practices (see chapter 3), two of which (*Enabling Others to Act* and *Encouraging the Heart*) contain items that match the themes found in the qualitative analysis. For example, under *Enabling Others to Act*, items measure the extent to which the leader fosters collaboration through promoting cooperative goals and building trust, and the extent to which the leader strengthens others through sharing information and power. Both of these areas were themes found in the qualitative analysis. *Encouraging the Heart* is a category containing items that measure the extent to which the leader engages in behaviors such as celebrating individual and team successes. Celebrating success was also a theme found in the qualitative analysis.

Due to the overlap between what is measured by the LPI-Delta (a quantitative instrument) and themes found in the qualitative procedures for this study, the LPI-Delta is used as a form of triangulation (see Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Combining these methods will not help generalize the results of this evaluation to the larger population, but doing so will add more validity to results found for this particular group.

Of the 12 participants who went through the training, only seven completed the delta instrument. Four of the five who did not complete the



instrument either changed jobs or quit their job to stay home with a child. Therefore, the seven participants' responses are examined.

Sharing decision making. In regards to the category termed sharing decision making, three of the respondents reported that they had slightly increased this behavior since the workshop (see Table 4). Three other participants reported that they had somewhat increased these behaviors, where one person said he/she had substantially increased sharing decision-making responsibilities.

Celebrating accomplishments. Of the seven respondents, four reported that they had celebrated accomplishments slightly more since the workshop (see table 4). One said she/he had celebrated accomplishments somewhat more, and another reported increasing this behavior substantially since the workshop. Only one respondent said he/she had remained about the same in terms of this behavior. This person also indicated a need to engage in celebration behaviors much more.

Treating others with dignity and respect. Five of the respondents indicated that they had either slightly increased or somewhat increased behaviors of treating others with dignity and respect since the workshop (see table 4). The other two reported that these behaviors had stayed about the same. They also believed that their current level of behavior in this regard, was "just about right."

Creating mutual trust. The same trend is followed with the behaviors that create mutual trust (see table 4). Six of the respondents saw

themselves as either slightly increasing, or somewhat increasing this behavior since the workshop. One person stayed about the same, but also saw their current level of behavior in regards to creating mutual trust as being about right.

Developing cooperative relations. With the exception of one person who believed they were engaging in cooperative relationship building at about the right amount, all of the respondents said they had either slightly increased, somewhat increased, or substantially increased these behaviors since the workshop (see table 4).

In summary, the results from the LPI serve to partially confirm those found in the qualitative data analysis. The participants' self-perceptions of progress made in their work relationships was reflected in both the interviews and the LPI instrument.

**Table 4**  
**Leadership Practices Inventory-Delta**

Leaders' self ratings of the extent to which they changed the frequency of five different leadership behaviors since the Solution-Focused Leadership workshop.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Somewhat Decreased	Remained the Same	Slightly Increased	Somewhat Increased	Substantially Increased

Leaders' self ratings concerning the appropriateness of their current level of the behavior.

<b>OK</b>	<b>SM</b>	<b>MM</b>
Just About Right	Should Do Somewhat More Frequently	Should Do Much More Frequently

Partici- pant	Sharing decision making		Celebrating accomplish- ments		Treating others with dignity and respect		Creating mutual trust		Developing cooperative relations	
A	3	ok	5	ok	3	ok	3	ok	4	ok
B	4	sm	3	ok	3	sm	3	sm	3	mm
C	4	sm	3	sm	4	sm	3	mm	4	sm
D	3	sm	3	sm	2	ok	3	sm	5	ok
E	5	sm	2	mm	2	ok	2	ok	2	ok
F	3	sm	3	sm	3	sm	3	sm	3	sm
G	4	sm	4	sm	3	ok	4	sm	4	ok

## CHAPTER V

### Conclusions and Discussion

#### Purpose

A leadership development program that was designed to increase the interpersonal competencies of the participants was evaluated. Focus and direction for the training came from an understanding of the interpersonal skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are associated with effective leadership and employee empowerment. To facilitate development of these attitudes and skills, methods and theories from the field of marriage and family therapy (MFT) were utilized. More specifically, the workshop processes were based on a solution-focused/narrative therapy approach.

This chapter summarizes the results of the evaluation and discusses their implications for improving and verifying the effectiveness of this MFT-based approach. Implications for assisting leaders in developing their interpersonal competencies will also be presented. Finally, suggestions for future research and the limitations of this study are discussed.

#### Discussion of Findings on Workshop Components

This section summarizes the general themes that emerged from the data concerning how the participants experienced different components of the workshop. These findings are then discussed in terms of how the program can be improved for future trainings.

### Pre-workshop interview/intervention

Workshop interventions officially began before the first day of training during the pre-workshop phone interview. Although the interviews were conducted primarily to identify some of the participants' strengths, it also served as an intervention. This is consistent with several theorists who believe that positive change can begin to occur during the initial interviewing process (Lipchik & de Shazer, 1988; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989; Tomm, 1987).

Some of the participants commented that the questioning used in the interview was difficult to understand (see Appendix B for interview questions). One person suggested that the questions be modified, where others thought the wording was used intentionally to cause them to consider the issues from a new perspective. In future workshops, the interview may be modified by placing the more difficult questions near the end, after the respondent has had the opportunity to become accustomed to the style of the questioning. The interviewer may also take more time preparing the respondents for the unique solution-focused approach to the questions. In general, however, questions need to continue to be posed in language distinct enough to cause a shift in the person's usual frame of reference.

Nearly all of the participants reported that the interview heightened their desire to attend the workshop and "set the stage" for the training that would take place. The researcher believes that there are at least two

possible reasons for this. First, the interview may have heightened their expectations that the workshop would be a valuable use of time in terms of its potential for helping them see themselves and relationships from a different perspective. This hypothesis comes from statements made by the participants regarding how they began to see themselves and some of their dilemmas in a more positive light. Having the expectation that change will happen is consistent with some clinicians' philosophies who believe that, through solution-focused dialogue, clients begin to believe that change is inevitable (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989).

Second, the interview helped the participants see that the workshop would be custom fit to their particular needs. Some of the participants were impressed that the interview shifted according to the responses they gave. Some of the other comments indicated that the interview also allowed the researcher/facilitator to begin building trusting relationships with the participants. This kind of relationship was considered an essential foundation in helping the participants make important changes. This assumption is based on the clinical literature which cites the therapist/client relationship as critical to therapeutic outcome (Kokotovic & Tracey, 1990).

360° feedback

The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) allowed the participants to rate themselves on different dimensions of leadership, as well as get feedback from people in supervisory, supportive, and peer positions concerning their leadership behaviors (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). Although the participants reported that the 360° feedback was interesting, they agreed that it was not given the attention in the workshop that it deserved. In other words, the assessment was not well integrated into the workshop training or the coaching. Positioning the feedback as a more central part of the workshop and as the basis for participants to construct their action plan, will increase the workshop's effectiveness (Yukl, 1994). Some studies have shown that feedback workshops, where managers are given information of this sort and then develop goals to develop in areas where they are weak, can result in changes in managerial behavior (e.g., Wilson, O'Hare, & Shipper, 1990).

#### Communication skills training

As with some of the other workshop components, the participants thought that more time was needed practicing the communication skills. These skills were seen as essential to their ability to create effective relationships with others. The methods used to teach the skills, which included using a combination of kinesthetic, visual, and auditory processes (Miller, Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1992) were seen as helpful in the learning process, but were also considered “unnatural” and difficult. Most of the time spent in this exercise focused on learning the concepts related to

good interpersonal communication rather than understanding how the learning was to take place. This information suggests the need to take more time explaining to the participants the actual learning processes.

#### Life history exercise

According to the participants' comments, this exercise did not seem to blend in with the rest of the workshop. Some did, however, receive a significant amount of benefit from the lecture preceding the exercise, which taught the idea that there are multiple ways to see the world. Although the exercise is conceptually and philosophically consistent with the workshop, more attention needs to be given to linking the concepts of narrative therapy (which formed the essence of the lecture) with any subsequent exercises. These concepts are counter to many of the traditionally held beliefs about the nature of reality. Therefore, teaching these concepts may be better facilitated by helping participants make many small shifts in their thinking, rather than trying to see their whole life in a different light through one exercise.

#### Genogram/workgram

Genograms have long been used as a tool within different models of MFT. Although intergenerational therapists, such as those following a Bowenian approach to therapy, have been the primary developers of the genogram, therapists from a variety of orientations, including solution-focused therapists, have used them (Kuehl, 1995). The workgram, on the other hand, was only recently conceptualized by the researcher as a tool



similar to the genogram but applied to the work systems rather than the family system.

As for how the genogram/workgram was experienced in the workshop, participants reported needing much more time to get the depth of understanding that would have been most helpful. Because of time constraints, the participants were not given much assistance from the facilitators in mapping out their family and work systems. One participant pointed out that the genogram/workgram exercise appeared to him to be more problem-focused than solution-focused. This valuable feedback caused the researcher/facilitator to consider how the exercise had been conducted. The researcher believes that by rushing through the exercise, the final processes, which were designed to move the discussion towards re-storying their experience, were cut short.

In the second session, more time and individual attention was given to participants in constructing the workgram which resulted in new awareness and a greater appreciation of the interpersonal issues affecting work processes. Some of the participants mentioned that being able to share their workgrams with others in the group facilitated a greater depth of learning. Future training that utilizes the genogram should provide ample time for its development and should be framed in ways consistent with solution-focused philosophies.

#### Ritual development

This section of the training was thought to be one of the most helpful and unique of the workshop. Discussion on the use of rituals both in the home and at work was interesting to the participants. Even though they had some understanding of how rituals are often used in family life (see Imber-Black & Roberts, 1987), they had not considered their utility in the work place. This new awareness seemed to spark excitement as different managers thought of ways rituals could be used to create more unity and collaboration inside their team. For example, one participant determined to facilitate regular informal gatherings where his group could talk about things unrelated to work. The participant believed that by meeting together informally, they would begin to form broader relationships with one another. One criticism of this segment of the training was that the participants wanted even more sharing time to brain-storm with the group about possible workplace rituals. This seems like a helpful suggestion for future trainings.

#### Giving and receiving feedback

Participants were asked to give general feedback to other people in the group based on very little interaction with one another. This exercise was seen as interesting but anxiety provoking. The exercise enabled some of the participants to confront their personal anxiety around giving any feedback that could be considered critical. Positioning this exercise on the second day, rather than on day one, may be beneficial as they were able to

provide feedback to one another based on a certain amount of shared experience.

### Reflecting team experience

Reflecting team processes have been used in therapeutic settings as a way to break down the hierarchical barriers between clients and therapists and to provide a structure where clients feel more free to accept or reject an idea or thought given to them (Andersen, 1991). These processes were also used in the workshop. Peers of the researcher, who had been trained in reflecting team processes, observed parts of the workshop and then reflected on what they had seen. Although the participants considered the reflecting team concept a powerful one, they did not like having people who had not spent a significant amount of time with them, act in the reflecting team role. They also had a negative reaction to the language used by the reflecting team members, saying that they used technical jargon that was difficult to relate to. Rather than using people not present during the full workshop, they suggested that the main facilitators could perform the reflecting team role several times throughout the training.

These comments suggest the need for a relationship of trust to be built between the participants and those who offer their observations. Even though the implied contract between facilitators and participants is different from the therapeutic contract, participants still may feel somewhat vulnerable since workshop processes require them to share

information about themselves and their relationships. Therefore, there is still a need to build a certain level of trust before workshop processes are successful. This suggests that the reflecting team be limited to facilitators who have been present during a significant proportion of the workshop.

#### Vicious and virtuous cycles

This exercise draws upon systems theory as well as solution-focused therapy theory. In essence, it identifies the enduring interactional cycles present in relationships (Becvar & Becvar, 1988). These patterns are labeled as either vicious (against the goals of the relationship) or virtuous (facilitates the quality of relationship wanted). Participants were instructed to identify a negative cycle that they wanted to interrupt and change for the better.

The participants commented that the vicious/virtuous cycles exercise was one of the most helpful in the workshop. Participants developed greater awareness of their own internal dialogue processes as well as an enhanced ability to see things from the perspectives of others. The participants' experience with the exercise may be similar to what clients feel when the problem that they have come to therapy for has been externalized and separated from their personal identity (White, 1988-1989). For example, instead of viewing the problem as residing either in themselves or in the other person, they may begin to objectify the cycle as the problem which enables them to turn their energy toward overpowering the cycle instead of the person who is in the cycle with them. Even though

the exercise was somewhat successful, the participants commented that the cycles could have been developed further by giving each participant help in mapping out the cycle. Suggestions for future workshops include individually coaching participants in identifying the cycles, physically mapping the cycles out, and using solution-focused questioning to help them find alternative ways of approaching the problem.

### Action plan

The action plan was a participant driven statement concerning both their family and work relationship oriented goals. Facilitators intended that the participant's goals would reflect any new awareness that they had gained from the workshop including the pre-workshop interview (which identified strengths to utilize in reaching goals), as well as information that they had gained through the LPI-Self and Observer instruments. The researcher was challenged to create an action plan form that was consistent with the goal setting philosophies of solution-focused therapy. For example, goals should be incremental (i.e., what would be the first sign that things were getting better?), and they must be concrete (O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989).

Participants reported that more time needed to be spent on developing the goals in the first session. They also mentioned that the form contained wording that was not always clear but they did, however, appreciate how they were led along in an incremental fashion which made it easier to define concrete goals. More time was spent on this activity in

the second session. Feedback from the participants stated that there was too much time spent on the technical aspects of the plan and not enough time on actual content. They were, however, pleased that they had the opportunity to revise and update it from the first session.

### Coaching

Coaching participants during the interim period between sessions was mostly conducted over the phone. These conversations were directed to some extent by the participants' action plan but also entailed coaching around current issues that they were struggling with. The coach was one of the facilitators in the workshop and was a clinically trained Marriage and Family Therapist who used a solution-focused/narrative approach throughout the sessions.

The participants all reported that the support provided through the coaching helped them make progress in their goals. They stated that having someone follow-up while they were between sessions helped remind them of what they were trying to accomplish. The participants believed that the facilitator's/coach's professional skills and personal traits were instrumental in the success of this experience.

As part of the coaching and support between sessions, each participant received a letter from the facilitator/coach. This letter was intended as another intervention to help move the participants toward their goals. Narrative approaches to therapy have used letter writing as a way to use language more deliberately and to invite the reader to attend to

meanings that have been ignored or have been left unsaid (Penn & Frankfurt, 1994). The letters were personalized for each participant (see Appendix C for an example). The facilitator/coach utilized his clinical knowledge in writing the letters so as to invite the participants to consider new approaches to their dilemmas.

Participants reported benefiting from the letter. Some said that it gave them a written text that could be reflected upon more than once. As with many of the other interventions in the workshop, the letter provided a customized training experience for the participants. When asked if the letter would have been effective if it would have been a “form” letter, the participants responded, “it has to be customized!”

It is the researcher’s belief that future workshops should continue to provide the support to the participants through individual coaching. The person doing the coaching should be trained in solution-focused practices and have the ability to develop trusting relationships with the participants. Although the letter was considered to be helpful by the participants, such an endeavor takes a significant amount of time. Therefore, as the workshop is offered in the future, a cost-analysis should be performed to determine whether different components of the training should be modified.

In summary, the most often cited criticism of different workshop components was that not enough time was spent to create the level of understanding that would make the exercises most useful. This was said in

regards to the following components: communication skills training, the LPI feedback, the genogram/workgram, the ritual development exercise, and the vicious and virtuous cycles exercise. Feedback such as this suggests that participants would be better served by expanding and elaborating on a smaller number of components in order to reach a greater depth, rather than keeping all of the components and having to stay at more of a superficial and unprocessed level.

On the other hand, participants were enthusiastic about the individually tailored processes involved in the pre-workshop interview, individual assessments, and between-session coaching. They also felt the focus on the “soft” skills of relationship building in the context of both work and family life was very pertinent to their ability to be effective in these roles. Many of the workshop components gave them greater understanding of themselves and of relationship dynamics as well as tools to begin affecting their relationships in positive directions. Listening to other members of the group, and sharing their ideas together, gave them new insight and appreciation. Overall, there was a sense that the information provided through the workshop was very helpful, but that the information had a much more significant effect on the participants due to the relationships that were cultivated between the facilitators and the participants, and between the participants themselves. In fact, some of the participants reported that one of the greatest experiences of the workshop was the friendships that they took away from it.



### Discussion of Findings on Workshop Outcomes

In this section, each of the four major domain categories that were found in the data are considered in light of previous research on social competency. These categories are then shown to correspond to different dimensions of social competence. Following this more general discussion of competence, the specific outcome themes themselves are summarized and tied into previous research on the interpersonal competencies of effective leaders. Finally, based on the evaluation of the program, the efficacy of using MFT in leadership development efforts is discussed.

#### The Multi-Dimensionality of Social Intelligence

In analyzing the qualitative data to determine whether or not the workshop participants had increased their relationship competency due to the training, four general categories of themes emerged. Although the themes overlapped to some extent, they were different enough to warrant being conceptualized within distinct domains or categories. The four categories are: 1) increased awareness, 2) greater relationship orientation, 3) new relationship-oriented behaviors, and 4) perceived outcomes. The categories fit into the domains of awareness, attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes which correspond to models posited by theorists who see general competency as existing in multiple domains. Competence has been given several different definitions by various researchers which, when combined, account for each of the categories found in the evaluation study. For example, one definition sees competence as being based on a person's

skills (Cartledge & Milburn, 1980). These skills include cognitive and behavioral abilities. People with high social competency draw upon their cognitive abilities, which relates to the awareness domain, to decipher and understand different social situations. They then have the behavioral skills necessary to take the appropriate actions. Other definitions of competence are based more on the attitudes and beliefs of a person. For example, Bandura (1982) would say that competence is determined by a person's self-efficacy (Self-efficacy refers to a person's expectation for success in a given situation). Therefore, in social encounters, a person with self-efficacy would expect to have a successful, positive interaction. Therefore, self-efficacy refers to the attitudes and feelings that enable people to expect to succeed. Rathjen (1980) believes that social competency can best be determined by considering the effectiveness of a person's interactions. In other words, the outcomes of social encounters is the best measure for social competency. Therefore, the general domains of awareness, attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes, all found in the current evaluation, are represented by various definitions and models posited by social competency theorists who suggest that social competency is multi-dimensional in nature.

#### Increased Awareness

One of the four major areas of effects from the workshop experience described by the participants has to do with an increased awareness. This category includes awareness of both self and the realities of others.

Self-awareness. Many of the participants reported that they had been more aware of their internal thought processes following the training. Rather than being carried unintentionally in the direction of their automatic thoughts and consequent emotions, they experienced more occasions as the “observer” of themselves. From this perspective, their judgments of a situation or event were to a larger extent, within their control. In other words, they began to see how the meanings they gave to different phenomena were subjective and, therefore, flexible. Awareness may be one of the first steps toward self-mastery and changed behavior. Yalom (1985) states: “Self-knowledge permits us to integrate all parts of ourselves, decreases ambiguity, permits a sense of effectance and mastery” (p. 89).

Some management development efforts facilitate self-awareness processes. Whiteside (1994) uses family therapy concepts to teach interpersonal skills and self awareness to business students. Chiaramonte and Mills (1993) recently wrote an entire article on the how self-reflection counseling processes for leaders enable them to lead an organization through its own development. In their article they cite Bennis and Nanus (1985) who reported findings from a major leadership study stating:

When we asked our 90 leaders about the personal qualities they needed to run their organizations, they never mentioned charisma, or dressing for success, or time management, or any of the other glib formulas that pass for wisdom in the popular press. Instead, they

talked about persistence and self-knowledge; about willingness to take risks and accept losses; about commitment, consistency, and challenge. But, above all, they talked about learning (p. 187).

Learning about one's self seems to be a critical aspect in a person's ability to deliberately perform in the different roles they have. The increased self-awareness experienced by participants of the workshop, therefore, is consistent with what researchers are saying is important for self and leadership development.

Other-awareness. Participants reported having an expanded ability to see the interactional patterns they were engaged in with others. This required them to not only be aware of their own internal processes, but to have some understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the other person and in the process. As the workshop was designed to help increase the participants' relationship competencies, an increase in a person's empathic understanding of another is foundational to achieving the workshop's goals. Jacobson and Margolin (1979) state that empathy "implies a direct apprehension of the other's experiences, especially the emotional component of the other's experience" (p. 201). Being able to understand the thoughts and feelings of others is a basic part of relationship building. This assumption is validated by the fact that entire relationship enhancement models have been developed based on the principles of empathy (Guerney, 1977).

In regards to their leadership role, some participants were also more aware of the power of their positions in the lives of those they lead. In essence, many of the participants were able to increase their empathy for the experiences of others. Gaining this awareness and the ability to empathize with others may help the participants avoid being derailed, since having this ability has been associated with managers' success (Lombardo & McCauley, 1988).

#### Greater Relationship Orientation

Besides increasing the participants' awareness, many reported changes in their attitudes toward relationship issues. This general category is referred to as "greater relationship orientation," connoting a shift in desire toward building more intimacy in their relationships with others.

Increased focus on family relationships. Many of the participants described how they had re-prioritized their family relationships. They experienced a mental shift where family members and relationships began to take a more prominent place in their thoughts. Participants began to experience a greater desire to have their outward behaviors match the internal values they held which placed having close family relationships as a priority. This re-prioritization may be somewhat due to an increased awareness of their own value systems and of the things in life that tend to bring them the most satisfaction and joy.

Increased focus on work relationships. Besides a greater desire to build closer family relationships, many of the participants described an

increased desire to also build healthy work relationships. For some of the participants, they saw the need to build broader, less formal, relationships with those they lead. This process, they understood, would require them to be receptive and inviting of the emotional side of those they worked with and to make people and their relationships with them the primary focus rather than the person's productivity. Placing the quality of the relationship between themselves and those they lead as a high priority is consistent with much of the current thinking on employee empowerment and leadership effectiveness (i.e., Dansereau, 1995; Hollander, 1992; Keller & Dansereau, 1995; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990) .

#### New Relationship-Oriented Behaviors

With the new awareness and attitudes about the importance of building strong relationships with others, the participants exhibited new behaviors that they credited to their experience in the workshop. In some cases, the behaviors reported here are relationship actions that the participant was already engaging in but that the frequency had increased. Other behaviors were very new in the participant's repertoire.

Increasing family closeness. Many of the participants reported using better communication skills with their family members. The better communication described here most often was the result of better listening, where the participant listened with the intent to understand the other person. This was accomplished by asking questions of others and being slower to make negative judgments about what they heard.

Relationship competency or social intelligence requires being effective in several areas, one of which is the skill of communication (Riggio, 1989). Having the skills to effectively communicate, along with a caring attitude toward the person being communicated to, has been said to be important in order to avoid misunderstandings and to build empowering relationships (Miller et al., 1992).

Building collaborative work relationships. Interpersonal skills has been cited as one of the three major categories of competencies required for leaders to be effective (Yukl, 1994). These competencies enable leaders to build trusting, collaborative relationships with others, which enables leaders to be successful in their positions (Hollander & Offermann, 1990a,b). Relationship issues are also central to many other aspects of organizational life including the modern practice of self-managed work teams (e.g. Hackman, 1977; Neck & Connerley, 1996). Therefore, being able to foster such relationships between one's self and others is an important competence for modern management.

Some of the new behaviors reported by the participants include listening and being slower to make negative judgments, resolving conflict between self and others and/or between team members, and celebrating success. All of these behaviors can be labeled as supporting behaviors and are those actions leaders need to take to build and maintain effective interpersonal relationships (Yukl, 1994). Celebrating success is an action

that some leadership researchers see as one of the keys to empowerment (Kouzes & Posner, 1987).

Participants also reported including others more in decision-making processes and sharing non-work related information about themselves in an attempt to create broader work relationships. Both of these behaviors may be considered actions to break down the hierarchical barrier and to equalize the power between management and employees. Giving employees power through participatory practices and through building relationships of equality are thought to be linked to productivity, better quality, and greater innovation (Bluestone & Bluestone, 1992).

Being solution-focused. Besides behaviors directly related to relationship building, some of the participants reported using the solution-focused philosophy to approach difficulties and challenges. In some cases, the participant actually taught others the concepts in an attempt to facilitate problem solving processes faster. Although these new behaviors may not appear to be related to relationship competency, they are closely related when the participants choose to apply these skills to problems they face in relationships with others.

### Perceived Outcomes

This section describes the outcomes that participants perceived as happening as a result of attending the leadership training workshop. Two categories of themes emerged; larger themes that were shared by many in



the group, and individual outcomes that describe the outcome effects for individual participants.

Larger themes. Several of the participants reported that there had been an increase of trust in some relationships as a result of the changes they had made. There were reports of an increase in trust in both the work and family domains. As reported in the literature review, trust is a key factor in a leader's ability to develop effective relationships with those they lead; therefore, some of the leadership training objectives hoped for were experienced by several of the participants. When trust is not present in a relationship, other negative qualities replace it, such as defensive and protective actions that are contrary to interpersonal dynamics associated with a leader's ability to influence in the workplace (Frost & Moussavi, 1992).

The participants reported having greater intimacy in certain relationships as a result of the changes they had made due to the workshop. Greater intimacy was experienced in both the workplace and at home. Although the word "intimacy" is not often associated with relationships in the workplace (and there is good reason to keep the relationship boundaries clear due to sexual harassment), there are appropriate levels of closeness that enable work to be done more effectively. Several of the participants reported feeling closer to some people they worked with. Intimacy, whether at home or in the workplace, is associated with trust and, therefore, increases and decreases with the level of trust.

Participants also reported engaging in better communication with others which included listening to others rather than defending their own positions, and asking questions that demonstrated their desire to understand the perspective of others. In some cases, the improved communication was a result of being more expressive. A few of the participants shared more of their own feelings with others and generally provided others with more personal information in an attempt to build greater trust in their relationships. These positive developments in the participants' communication are related to the other two general themes of increased trust and greater intimacy. Effective communication is often considered central to any effective relationship since it is through communication that persons get to know one another and come to understand each other's frame of reference. In such a climate, intimacy and trust is established. When communication processes are not effective, it is likely that misunderstandings and conflict will ensue (Miller et al., 1992) and people often resort to control tactics to deal with the conflict (Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). Such interactions often create hard-to-break negative interaction cycles. Therefore, effective communication is a key factor in creating intimacy and trust and avoiding negative interactions that destroy these positive relationship qualities.

Individual outcomes. Where there were general outcome themes experienced by several of the participants, there were also very specific outcomes that single individuals attributed to their experience in the

workshop. These outcomes included having greater job satisfaction, having staff that feel more involved, having greater confidence in resolving conflict, having less stress at work, a change in job, more availability for staff, and being respected more by a boss. Individual outcomes, such as these, should be expected any time a training takes place since people naturally take from a training experience those aspects that fit best for them at that particular time. This individualized effect may be even more pronounced in this particular workshop since it has several components that are tailored specifically to the participants' needs (Patton, 1987). The one-on-one coaching process itself encourages the participants to progress at their own pace and their self-specified direction.

#### Implications of Findings for Leadership Training

In general, participants reported changes in their awareness, attitudes, and behaviors, which produced outcomes unique from those experienced previous to the workshop. These changes were most often in connection with relationships, thus, suggesting that the workshop was at least somewhat effective in enhancing the participants' relationship competency. These findings give preliminary evidence that MFT processes may be effective in helping leaders develop interpersonal or relationship competencies in a workshop setting. This study adds to the collection of research where family therapy models have been utilized in settings outside the family to intervene in other human systems. Although the systemic effects of the workshop interventions were not analyzed on a

organizational level, preliminary evidence suggests that, at least, dyadic relationships within the organization were affected for the better.

#### Factors Contributing to Outcome

Besides the assumption that the MFT models employed accounted for some of the changes made by the participants, the researcher acknowledges the importance of the facilitators in the outcomes. As organizational leaders need a trusting relationship with those they lead to be effective in their role, the same is true for facilitators, and in the author's case, for therapists (Gelso & Carter, 1985; Kokotovic & Tracey, 1990). An awareness of the parallel roles of leaders and facilitators, and believing in the relationship principles being taught, encouraged the facilitators to model the kind of trusting, collaborative relationship they were asking the participants to create in their work place. The participants commented that they were impressed with the models set by the facilitators in setting up a gentle, understanding, communicative atmosphere. One stated that, "No one emerged as 'the ego' and all were very professional." On several occasions, the facilitators explained the concepts taught in the workshop using personal experiences from both their workplace and family life. The researcher believes that this approach to teaching and relating with the participants helped to create a greater level of trust and intimacy with them which was foundational to any positive outcomes from the workshop.

Another relationship factor related to the workshop's effects was the relationships fostered among the participants. Several of the participants mentioned that one of the most helpful and influential aspects of the workshop was the relationships built with other participants. Two comments demonstrate this point:

I think something that's had a really major impact on me was just the interaction with all those other people [in the group]. That was almost better than almost anything else. I keep thinking of everybody, comments that other people made, or conversations that we had and things I learned from the other people there.

I think it was neat for me to just meet the other people. It was interesting to meet all those people and also to see that we all kind of go through the same sorts of things, you know? That's something I definitely took away from [the workshop].

Timing was said to be another factor in the extent to which the workshop made a difference. Those who made larger changes tended to be "ready" for the experience and were willing to change things that otherwise may have been too difficult given their motivation level. For example, one person stated:

I was just at the perfect place in my life, so to speak, to use the tools and the information and the experience from the workshop. Timing was perfect and I think there is a lot to be said for timing. I was

really seeking and searching and in the mode, so it came at a perfect time for me to use it and really benefit from it.

### Philosophical Consistency

One of the challenges of conducting an interdisciplinary training experience is to maintain the difficult philosophical balance necessary for workshop coherence and power. This was also a challenge for the current workshop. Facilitators with different backgrounds naturally tended to emphasize experiences and concepts from their own fields. For this particular workshop, the facilitators worked hard to have a working knowledge of the concepts in the other disciplines by reading literature from the other disciplines and by discussing the concepts together, however, more emphasis on interdisciplinary training may have been beneficial.

### Suggestions for Future Research

The current evaluation study provided information concerning the changes that could be implemented to make the workshop stronger, and possibly more effective. The study also suggested that certain participants might expect to increase their relationship competence through the training experience. This study, however, was only a preliminary process that gives validity to the continued development and evaluation of the Solution-Focused Leadership workshop. The following section gives suggestions for future research, that if attempted, could add greater validity to any claims about the workshops effectiveness in enhancing leaders' relationship competency.

### Controlled Studies

The credibility and validity of the outcome results of this workshop would benefit from having a controlled evaluation study where the results are tested empirically. The current treatment approach could be compared to other leadership programs or experiences where self-awareness, or more skill based leadership training, processes are used. A controlled study comparing these different modalities of training could help confirm the findings from the present study.

Going hand in hand with a controlled study is the use of more quantitative methods. Such methodologies would require a larger sample and offer different kinds of information that would strengthen the program. Results from such a study would begin to answer the question of whether the workshop is an effective tool for increasing the relationship competency of leaders in general, rather than with a limited group of people as were reported in the present study. In other words, the workshop outcome effects could be said to apply to the larger population of managers and leaders.

### Levels of Measurement

Future research should also attempt to use a different level of measurement besides just the individual leader. Since leadership is essentially a phenomena that takes place in relationship with others (Graen, 1995), the dyadic or relationship level of leadership effectiveness could be measured which could be done in a pre-test/post-test fashion to measure change in key relationships themselves. As the workshop's aim is

to increase the relationship competency of the participants, and because family relationships in addition to work relationships are focused on, family relationships could also be measured and evaluated for change.

### Limitations and Considerations

This study was limited in scope to individuals who lived in a relatively small geographical area, and who also responded favorably to being involved in a leadership development training experience. These delimitations restrict the researcher's ability to generalize the findings of the present study to diverse organizational leader populations. This sample did, however, create a certain homogeneity in the group which allows the results of the present study to be applied to targeted populations.

The present study was not an experimentally designed evaluation where the results were based on comparisons with a control group. Such a design would have required a much larger sample than was possible given the resources available. Because of this limitation, and more importantly because the evaluation's purpose was to understand the workshops effectiveness from the participants' own experience, qualitative methods appeared to be the most appropriate course for evaluation.

The researcher acknowledges that there has been some tension in shifting between the three major roles of program developer, facilitator, and evaluator. He understood the need to stay focused on the particular task he was performing and not let the objectives of other roles become a



priority until the appropriate time. In some cases, managing these differing roles may have enhanced his overall effectiveness. For example, a thorough understanding of the program's objectives and philosophies helped him maintain the theoretical consistency in carrying out the treatment phase. By performing a critical role in both the development and facilitation of the workshop, the researcher was able to apply his depth of understanding of both the program and the participants to the evaluation process.

As for his role as evaluator, he acknowledges the fact that objectivity in analyzing the data is very difficult, if not impossible. Subjectivity is a challenge to any qualitative research where the data are sifted through the deductive and inductive thinking processes of the researcher who ultimately defines the meanings found in the data. In other words, the researcher is the main instrument in qualitative research. For these reasons, there is always the potential that the biases of the qualitative researcher will shape the meanings found in the data.

To moderate the effects of these subjective tendencies, the researcher solicited the help of a person who had had previous qualitative research experience who read through the transcripts and determined what she saw as the themes, independent of the researcher's own analysis. The person was familiar with qualitative analysis theory and techniques. This provided a validity check since the themes that were identified were common between them. The same person was also asked to read drafts of the

evaluation results and determine whether the researcher's description of the data sounded "true" from her perspective.

### Epilogue

After the training sessions for the current evaluation were completed, a large health care system contracted for their mid-level managers to experience the Solution-Focused Leadership workshop training as an in-house program. Approximately 40 managers have now gone through the training. The facilitators were concerned that some of the processes were better suited for groups where the participants were from different companies. However, the anecdotal evidence from these in-house training sessions suggest that there are significant and unique benefits for the people who go through the training as in-tact work groups. Although some participants may feel less comfortable discussing relationship issues in the presence of their peers, such an experience has had a "team building" effect where greater understanding and empathy of differences is often generated. Participants also discover that they share a similar vision for the kind of workplace culture they would like to create. After discovering that their "visions" are shared by one another, the participants have expressed feeling greater levels of hope and belief that the organization can begin to move toward more empowering directions. The in-house training has also enabled the participants to have more frequent and direct support from their peers as they try to make changes in the way they interact with others in the work place. This extra reinforcement is likely to enhance the

participants' chances of making real changes in the way they interact with others.

The workshop being reported on in this dissertation was made up of participants who were self-selected for the training experience. For example, when they were approached about the training, they determined for themselves whether or not to attend. This left the researcher with questions as to how it would be experienced by people who were asked by their employer to come. Our work within the health care organization offers some insights into this question as several participants have now attended only because it was made mandatory by the president of their company. In addition to the negative feelings some have experienced by being "asked" to come, many have also had anxiety around being away from their work for an extended period of time. In spite of these possible barriers to a positive training experience, several of these individuals have reported that their time was well spent and that it has helped them to put the work "crises" that they had been catering to into perspective. In addition to the participants' self-reports, peers of some of these individuals have observed them make changes in their behavior. The behavioral changes that were reported have to do with showing greater cooperation and connection with those they work with. So far, anecdotal data suggests that mandatory attendance at the workshop does not necessarily cancel out the possible positive effects of the workshop. In fact, depending on several other factors, those coming under required circumstances may be those who stand to gain

the most out of such an experience and may experience the greatest amount of change

The organizational effects of the training were also outside the scope of the current evaluation. However, many individuals within the health care organization have expressed the belief that the workshop is making a difference in their organization. Some strongly believe that the Solution-Focused Leadership workshop has the potential of making a significant difference in their corporate culture and have therefore determined that the training be extended to all of their management levels. They have also asked the author to spend a significant amount of time reinforcing the processes and concepts taught in the training to all management levels in the organization over the next 18 months. These developments indicate that the executive levels of the organization see the Solution-Focused Leadership workshop as having the potential to positively affect their whole organization.

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## (Appendix A)

## Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI): Self

On the next two pages are thirty descriptive statements about various leadership behaviors and activities. Please read each statement carefully, then rate *yourself* in terms of how *frequently* you engage in the practice described. Record your responses by drawing a circle around the number that corresponds to the frequency you have selected. You are given five choices:

1. If you RARELY or NEVER do what is described in the statement, circle the number one.
2. If you do what is described ONCE IN A WHILE, circle the number two.
3. If you SOMETIMES do what is described, circle the number three.
4. If you do what is described FAIRLY OFTEN, circle the number four.
5. If you do what is described VERY FREQUENTLY or ALWAYS, circle the number five.

In selecting the answer, be realistic about the extent to which you actually engage in each behavior. Do *not* answer in terms of how you *like* to see yourself or in terms of what you *should* be doing. Answer in terms of how you *typically behave*. For example, the first statement is "I seek out challenging opportunities that test my skills and abilities." If you believe you do this "once in a while," circle the number two. If you believe you seek out challenging opportunities fairly often, circle the number four.

If others are going to complete the LPI-Other as part of your leadership assessment, five to ten people should be selected to complete that instrument on you. These should be individuals who have observed you or worked with you in situations in which you led a group on a project. These could be your immediate subordinates. If you are asked to select the people, choose those who will be frank and whose opinions you respect. In some cases, the respondents will be anonymous. In other cases, it may be decided that the responses will be discussed openly between you and the group of respondents. The respondents must be told whether or not their answers will be anonymous. However, *your* name must be written on each of the instruments before they are distributed.

(Appendix A continued)

To what extent do you engage in the following actions and behaviors?  
 Circle the number that applies to each statement.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Once in a while</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Fairly Often</b>	<b>Very Frequently</b>
1. I seek out challenging opportunities that test my skills and abilities.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. I describe to others the kind of future I would like for us to create together.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. I involve others in planning the actions we will take .....	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am clear about my own philosophy of leadership .....	1	2	3	4	5
5. I take the time to celebrate accomplishments when project milestones are reached.....	1	2	3	4	5
6. I stay up-to-date on the most recent developments affecting our organization.....	1	2	3	4	5
7. I appeal to others to share my dream of the future as their own.....	1	2	3	4	5
8. I treat others with dignity and respect.....	1	2	3	4	5
9. I make certain that the projects I manage are broken down into manageable chunks.....	1	2	3	4	5
10. I make sure that people are recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects.....	1	2	3	4	5
11. I challenge the way we do things at work.....	1	2	3	4	5
12. I clearly communicate a positive and hopeful outlook for the future of our organization.....	1	2	3	4	5
13. I give people a lot of discretion to make their own decisions.....	1	2	3	4	5

(Appendix A continued)

- 14. I spend time and energy on making certain that people adhere to the values that have been agreed on.....1 2 3 4 5
- 15. I praise people for a job well done.....1 2 3 4 5
- 16. I look for innovative ways we can improve what we do in this organization.....1 2 3 4 5
- 17. I show others how their long-term future interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision1 2 3 4 5
- 18. I develop cooperative relationships with the people I work with.....1 2 3 4 5
- 19. I let others know my beliefs on how to best run the organization I lead.....1 2 3 4 5
- 20. I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.....1 2 3 4 5
- 21. I ask "what can we learn?" when things do not go as expected.....1 2 3 4 5
- 22. I look ahead and forecast what I expect the future to be like.....1 2 3 4 5
- 23. I create an atmosphere of mutual trust in the projects I lead.....1 2 3 4 5
- 24. I am consistent in practicing the values I espouse .....1 2 3 4 5
- 25. I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.....1 2 3 4 5
- 26. I experiment and take risks with new approaches to my work even when there is a chance I might fail.....1 2 3 4 5
- 27. I am contagiously excited and enthusiastic about the future.....1 2 3 4 5

(Appendix A continued)

- 28. I get others to feel a sense of ownership for the projects they work on.....1 2 3 4 5
- 29. I make sure we set clear goals, make plans, and establish milestones for the projects I lead.....1 2 3 4 5
- 30. I make it a point to tell the rest of the organization about the good work done by my group.....1 2 3 4 5

## (Appendix B)

## Letter of Recruitment of Significant Peers

**(Please use your own letterhead and reproduce the remainder of this letter for those whom you have chosen to offer feedback for your leadership development)**

Dear (>>> *name of person giving feedback* <<<),

Within the next few weeks I will be attending a leadership training workshop. This workshop will assess my leadership strengths and weaknesses as they relate with my ability to foster productive relationships and to invite the empowerment of others. Workshop processes will then help me interact more meaningfully and effectively with those I work with. As part of this experience I'm asking several co-workers to give me specific feedback by filling out a written questionnaire (Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer) before and after I attend the workshop, and by giving me personal feedback over the next few months. Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential. I have asked (>>> *name of person collecting questionnaires* <<<) to collect all questionnaires and send them directly to the program facilitators.

Along with offering me feedback, you have the option of letting your filled out questionnaire be used as an evaluation tool. Read the Informed Consent Form. If you agree to allow the materials to be used in the program evaluation, sign and send the Consent Form to the facilitators along with the *LPI-Observer* and the *demographic questionnaire*.

I hope you will see some positive changes in me as a result of my efforts in this leadership development process. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely

(>>> *Your name* <<<)



## (Appendix C)

## Initial Letter to Participants



Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering

College of Engineering  
 302 Whittemore Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0118  
 (540) 231-6656 FAX (540) 231-3322

Dear:

We're delighted that you'll be participating in the **Solution-Focused Leadership: The Soul of Effective Organizations** seminar. We believe you'll find this seminar very rewarding. As a leader your personal development is important to those whom you lead daily, as well as to yourself and your family. We believe that the Solution-Focused Leadership workshop will prove to be an invaluable part of your continued and ever-expanding success with Carilion as well as result in a marked, positive effect on your personal and family relationships.

In conjunction with the training, the program is being evaluated. The same materials used for the pre- and post-workshop assessments are used for the program evaluation process. Please, consider helping us in the evaluation. If you choose to participate, both you and the people you select to offer feedback should read and sign copies of the Informed Consent Form. There are separate forms for you and for the people who are giving you feedback.

In preparation for this unique seminar format, and in keeping with our theory of human change, we ask that you provide us with information specific to you and your organization. As you will see from the initial assessment, great pains are taken to understand your needs and provide a "custom fit" experience, aimed toward your goals. In order to facilitate this process, we ask that you complete the following tasks before the workshop:

- Select 5 co-workers to fill out the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer (LPI-Observer) and a demographic questionnaire. These same people will complete the LPI- following the second session as well. Choose people at each supervisory level directly around (1-2 supervisors, 1-2 peers, and 2-3 supervisees).
- Retype the "Letter of Invitation" on your own letterhead and give it, along with a copy of the LPI-Observer, the demographic questionnaire, and the Informed Consent form to each person offering feedback.
- Select one person to gather the completed questionnaires and consent forms and send all these materials directly to me in the large, self-addressed, stamped envelope. Remember, all information will be kept strictly confidential.
- Read and sign the Informed Consent form if you are willing to allow your data to be used in the program evaluation.
- Fill out the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)-Self questionnaire, the Social Skills Inventory (SSI), and demographic questionnaire. Return them along with the informed consent form in the small, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

(Appendix C continued)

- Plan to spend 30 minutes in a phone interview before the workshop. These interviews will be used as assessment information for workshop processes. Call Roger Henderson at (540) 231-4878 to set up an interview appointment. If you cannot reach him, please leave several dates and times when you would be available for the interview. Your interview should take place at least a week before the workshop is to begin.

We look forward to meeting with you!

Sincerely,

Tim R. Thayne

(Appendix D)

**Informed Consent Form**  
For Seminar Participants

**Principal Investigators:** Howard Protinsky, Ph.D., M.S.W.  
Tim R. Thayne, M.S

**Purpose of the Study**

We would like to invite you to participate in an evaluation of a leadership training seminar. The evaluation aims to gather information about the effectiveness of this newly developed leadership program.

**Procedures**

The program evaluation will utilize the information you are already providing for the assessment phase of the workshop. This includes the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), the Social Skills Inventory (SSI), and the pre-workshop interview. Additional information from a short demographic questionnaire and a focus-group discussion following the workshop will also be used. This focus group will be facilitated by someone who is not affiliated with the development or facilitation of the seminar and will take about 1 hour.

Please send all materials (LPI-Self, SSI, demographic questionnaire, and the Informed Consent form) to:

**Tim Thayne**  
**302 Whittemore Hall**  
**Virginia Tech,**  
**Blacksburg, VA 24061-0118 .**

**Potential**

The procedure listed above is believed to involve no more risk than you would experience in everyday life.

**Benefits**

For participating in the seminar, we believe you will experience benefits directly related to increasing your ability to interact more effectively in the leadership roles you have. You may also see some of these same competencies reflected in your personal relationships with others outside the work setting.

(Appendix D continued)

As far as allowing us to use the information from your LPI-Observer and from the possible phone interview for research purposes, we believe the benefits will be felt more by those who come through the program after you. This information will be used as feedback to improve the program for future offerings.

**Confidentiality**

The information obtained in the study will be kept confidential. When written materials are received from you, a number will be assigned which will replace your name. This procedure will insure confidentiality and will give us the ability to track subsequent information as coming from the same source. A list of names and their corresponding numbers, along with the LPI forms

will be kept in a locked file cabinet. This master list of names and assigned numbers, and all other information will be destroyed after the results from the study are compiled. The data collected will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Tape recordings of the of the focus group interview will be transcribed shortly after the seminar. They will be kept in a locked file cabinet during this process and then will be destroyed when the results of the study have been compiled.

**Compensation**

There will be no compensation for your participation in this project.

**Withdrawal from the Study**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and thus, you may withdraw at any time without penalty.

**Approval of Research**

This research has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and by the Department of Family and Child Development.

**Contact Person for Questions Involving this Study**

If you have any questions regarding this study, you may contact:

**Tim Thayne  
302 Whittemore Hall  
Virginia Tech,  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0118**

(Appendix D continued)

**Howard Protinsky**  
**Center for Family Services**  
**1601 South Main St.**  
**Blacksburg, VA 24061-0515**  
**Phone # (540) 231-6782, E-mail: *protinsk@vt.edu***

**Participants Permission**

I have read the informed consent and the conditions for the project. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I know of no reason why I cannot participate in this study. If I participate I may withdraw at anytime without penalty. I agree to allow the materials used in assessment purposes for the seminar to be used to evaluate the program's effectiveness. This includes the LPI-Self, a demographic questionnaire, SSI, pre-workshop interview information, and information from the focus group following the second phase of the seminar.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## (Appendix E)

## Pre-workshop Interview Script

## Instructions:

In order to prepare specifically for your leadership development, and to identify some of your strengths as a leader, I would like to ask you a few questions that will help identify your personal resources which can be brought to bare in your leadership roles. These questions will require you to think differently than most questions you have been asked. They will deal with your relationship styles and will ask you to put yourself in the place of others.

I would like to record our conversation so I can give you precise feedback. This will allow us to collect much more information in a shorter amount of time than if you were to fill out a questionnaire. Your responses will be considered your private information and all names will be kept confidential.

- 1- Let's say that tonight while you were asleep, a miracle occurred and the major leadership problem you are facing was solved. How would you know a miracle had occurred when you went to work the next morning? What would you see and hear? What would you feel? What specific things would an observer see?
- 2- Describe the situation in the last 6 months where you were able to provide the most helpful constructive guidance to other(s). What was different about this occasion as compared to other times?
- 3- In what ways have you been able to communicate a vision of possibilities to others? What specific personal resources did you draw on within yourself, that allowed you to think of greater possibilities?
- 4- Think of the people you have asked to provide you with feedback for the workshop. Now, identify the person from that group who would be most likely to give you positive feedback; someone who can really see your strengths. What personal characteristics do you think they will identify in you that highlight your ability to invite those around you to be empowered? Where did these strengths come from?

(Appendix E continued)

- 5- What attributes do you possess that enable you to be a leader in building consensus around a goal? What are the specific situations that invite you to doubt these abilities? What resources did you call on that enabled you to overcome those doubts?
- 6- Explain the last time you were able to solve an interpersonal conflict. How were you able to do it?
- 7- Thinking back over the span of time when you have had a formal leadership role, what traits or skills have you developed into strengths?
- 8- Think about the time when you have been most effective in your role as leader. How did the way you related with those around you contribute to your effectiveness?

(Appendix F)

**Focus Group Interview Guide  
(First Session)  
Solution-Focused Leadership Workshop**

- The purpose of this focus group is to gather information to further develop the Solution-Focused Leadership Seminar. Your responses to the questions will be used to make the program better in content, in delivery and in process. The workshop instructors will be very grateful for any feedback you offer. Thank you for spending this time.
  - It should take between one, and one-and-one-half hours. Feel free to answer any question you want to, but you are not required to answer each one.
1. What made you decide to participate in the seminar?
  2. What were you expecting?  
Probe: how do you generally stand in regards to your expectations being met?
  3. How did you find the assessment materials?  
  
Leadership Practices Inventory? Phone interview?  
  
Probe: Did they give you the feedback you were looking for in this seminar?
- At this point I would like to talk about the different components of the program....
1. Regarding the communication skills training...  
What do you think was the most important thing you learned?  
What was the most helpful in helping that to happen?  
What concerns did you have?  
What might you have done differently with this aspect of the program?

(Appendix F continued)



2. Regarding the lecture on Premature cognitive commitments and the life history assignment...
  - What do you think was the most important thing you learned?
  - What was the most helpful in helping that to happen?
  - What concerns did you have?
  - What might you have done differently?
  
3. Regarding the genogram and workgram activity...
  - What do you think was the most important thing you learned?
  - What was the most helpful in helping that to happen?
  - What concerns did you have?
  - What might you have done differently with this aspect of the program?
  
4. Regarding the ritual development process.....
  - What do you think was the most important thing you learned?
  - What was the most helpful in helping that to happen?
  - What concerns did you have?
  - What might you have done differently with this aspect of the program?
  
5. What was your experience with the giving and receiving feedback exercise?
  
6. What was your experience with the Leadership Maze exercise?
  
7. What about the development of the relationship vision statement?
  
8. Regarding the interpersonal cycles activity....
  - What do you think was the most important thing you learned?
  - What was the most helpful in helping that to happen?
  - What concerns did you have?
  - What might you have done differently with this aspect of the program?
  
9. Regarding the development of the action plan...
  - What do you think was the most important thing you learned?
  - What was the most helpful in helping that to happen?
  - What concerns did you have?
  - What might you have done differently with this aspect of the program?

(Appendix F continued)

10. Regarding reflecting team processes....
  - What do you think was the most important thing you learned?
  - What was the most helpful in helping that to happen?
  - What concerns did you have? What might you have done differently with this aspect of the program?
11. Regarding the facilitators and their style....
  - What was the most effective part of each of their styles?
  - What was the least effective for you?
12. This program attempted to develop your effectiveness as leaders with a special emphasis on the relational aspects of leader. Looking at this program as a whole....
  - What did you find the most helpful?
  - What did you find the least helpful?
  - What else might you have included?
13. How has the program affected you?
14. What would you tell others about this program?
15. Now that you are coming to the end of the program, what other things do you see that might be helpful to you?
16. This ends our prepared discussion, however, are there any more thoughts anyone might like to share?

(Appendix G)

**Focus Group Interview Guide  
(Second Session)  
Solution-Focused Leadership Workshop**

**Part I: Explain the Purpose of the Focus Group**

- To gather information about their experience of the processes used in the workshop.
- To gather examples of how they have applied concepts and tools from the workshop in their personal and professional lives.
- Give them an opportunity to share any additional thoughts or ideas they may have about improving the workshop in the future.

**Part II: Describe the Process of the Focus Group:**

- Focus group will last approximately 90 minutes.
- The group is composed of participants from a single workshop. (In the case of one focus group, the participants are also all from the same company).
- The focus group will be tape recorded and transcribed in preparation for analysis. The tape recordings will be erased after it is transcribed.
- All information shared during the focus group will be kept in confidence and not shared with individuals outside of the group (specifically, it will not be shared with others in the company).

**Part III: General Feedback on Workshop Components**

Give each participant a list of the key components of the entire workshop process, including both pre- and post-workshop activities and evaluations (see list below). Ask participants to share thoughts, reactions, and suggestions on these components. Prompt discussion with questions such as the following:

1. Which of these components did you find to be the most helpful?  
Why?
2. Which of these components did you find to be the least helpful?

(Appendix G continued)

3. What, if anything could we have done differently in order to improve the usefulness of this component?

**Part IV: Closing**

- Thank them for participating in the focus group.  
Ask them if they have any further questions or comments about the program, the focus group, or any other topic related to these.

**MAJOR COMPONENTS OF  
SOLUTION-FOCUSED LEADERSHIP**

Second session.

collaborative communication concepts and exercise  
genogram and workgram  
action plan revisions.

Between sessions

coaching by telephone  
letters

Other aspects

facilitators fit with theory of solution-focused

(Appendix H)

### **Individual Interview Guide**

Discuss with the participants the nature of the interview. Be sure to highlight the following points:

- The need for objectivity.
- The interview is designed to find out if the workshop has affected the participants in one way or another.
- The interview will also be used to better the workshop processes.

Questions to ask:

- 1) Now that you have had a few months since the last workshop session, how do you feel about the workshop? What is your opinion of the workshop?
- 2) Has the workshop and coaching processes had any lasting effects?
- 3) Have you had anyone mention they noticed changes in you? How did you know they could see a difference?
- 4) What parts of these developments would you contribute to the workshop?
- 5) What are some examples of the changes you are talking about?
- 6) What else might these changes be contributed to?
- 7) What, if any, changes have you made that are in line with the goals that you stated in your action plan?

(Appendix I)

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Delta  
(Authors are James Kouzes/Barry Posner)

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

This assessment covers changes in your leadership behaviors or activities:  
**In the past \_\_\_\_\_ months**

**Instructions**

On pages 2 and 3 are thirty descriptive statements about various leadership behaviors or activities. Please read these statements carefully and complete the following three steps.

**Step 1**

Rate yourself in terms of how much, if any, your use of the behavior described in each statement has *changed* in the number of months specified above. Draw a circle around the number that corresponds to the description you have selected. You are given five choices:

1. If your use of the behavior has *somewhat decreased*, circle "1."
2. If your use of the behavior has *remained the same* (neither increased nor decreased), circle "2."
3. If your use of the behavior has *slightly increased*, circle "3."
4. If your use of the behavior has *somewhat increased*, circle "4."
5. If your use of the behavior has *substantially increased*, circle "5."

In selecting your rating, be realistic about the extent to which you have changed the way you typically behave.

**Step 2**

After you have circled a number for a statement, evaluate the extent to which you feel that your *current use* of the behavior is appropriate. You are given three choices:

1. If you believe that the frequency with which you engage in the behavior is *just about right*, circle "OK."
2. If you believe that you could be more effective by engaging in the behavior *somewhat more frequently*, circle "SM."

(Appendix I continued)

3. If you believe that you could be more effective by engaging in the behavior *much more* frequently, circle “MM.”

**Step 3**

After you have responded to all thirty statements, turn to page 4 and transfer your ratings.

**LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY (LPI)--DELTA: SELF**

To what extent have you *changed* the frequency with which you use the following behaviors? Using the scale below, circle the number that applies to each statement:

- 1=Somewhat Decreased
- 2=Remained the Same
- 3=Slightly Increased
- 4=Somewhat Increased
- 5=Substantially Increased

How *appropriate* is the frequency with which you *currently* engage in the following behaviors? Using the scale below, circle the letters that apply to each statement:

- OK=Just About Right
- SM=Should Do Somewhat More Frequently
- MM=Should Do Much More Frequently

(The thirty item questionnaire that follows is the same as was described in the LPI-Self in Appendix A).

(Appendix J)

Sample of Therapeutic Letter

June 6, 1996

Dear Bob,

I've been so impressed by your sincere interest to make meaningful changes in the way you interact with others. This has been demonstrated in many ways, one of which was your inquiry about how to handle the interpersonal conflict between two of the people you lead. You've been willing to do tough things (talk to them about emotionally charged issues, sharing personal feelings) to enable change in the work system. You are willing to do difficult things because you believe they will help, not necessarily because they all come naturally, and that's impressive.

There are at least two levels of relating that you are interested in. First is to have the ability to relate more competently in the relationships you're involved in where there is a need for intimacy between you and another person. The second is the ability to facilitate helpful interactions between others. I believe you are well on your way to becoming very good in both areas.

From our phone conversation, I can see that you have taken action on several of the goals you had in mind when you left the workshop. First, you made it a point to talk to the people you work with about what you learned from the workshop. You revealed to them a desire to confront problems more quickly rather than letting them build and get to large (your natural tendency you say).

The one goal you mentioned that there had not been much progress in was in celebrating and having fun at work. You said that you believe it would help the morale of the group and would energize the "dampened spirits" of the employees. I wonder how the people around you will experience you as celebration and spontaneous fun becomes your focus? What will they say? How will they know when this becomes the case? What thoughts come to your mind when you think of making it a priority? Are these thoughts inviting you to place celebration low on the list of priorities? I'm asking all these questions because I'm curious about the different possibilities. Who would be the first to notice that celebration had begun to occupy more of your thinking? Who would be the last to notice? As these changes come about, how will the interactions in the work place change?

I would like you to try thinking of it in the following ways:

- What do you consider the opposite of celebration or commemoration to be? Now put the words on a continuum with one word at each end. Where do you presently fall?

(Appendix J continued)



- Identify the “stories” that have influenced your thinking about “celebrating”. How have these meanings you have placed on celebration influenced the manner and extent to which you go about celebrating.
- Identify the ways your story about celebrating has oppressed the way you would like to celebrate. You may even see how this story about celebration has influence other parts of your life, maybe even negatively.
- What are the ways you have been able to celebrate effectively in spite of any constraining stories about it. What were the interpersonal results?
- Visualize yourself as someone with great capacity to celebrate. Now think about the emotions that accompany such occasions.
- Based on how you perceive celebration now, make a plan to add celebratory activities to your daily life.

Bob, you have been a wonderful asset to the workshop and to the people in this group. Your personality engenders positive energy for the whole group as well. Thank you for coming and adding quality to the workshop.

Sincerely

Tim Thayne

**Tim R. Thayne, Ph.D.**  
**04/16/97**

**Address:** 3308-G Circle Brook Drive  
Roanoke, VA 24014

**Telephone:** Home: (540) 774-4764  
Work place (800) 695-5656

**Education:**

1997 Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (An AAMFT Accredited Program).

1994 M.S., Marriage and Family Therapy, Brigham Young University (An AAMFT Accredited Program).

1992 B.S., Family Sciences, Brigham Young University.

**Research Interests:**

Leadership development and MFT  
MFT and organizational systems change  
Social constructionist practices in therapy  
Spirituality in therapy  
Work and family interactions

**Experience:**

***Consulting***

1997 - present. Carilion Health System, Roanoke, VA. Facilitator/consultant for the management team in the Solution Focused Leadership Training program. Topics include: empowerment, communication, vision statements, team building, and coaching.

1997 - present. Contract trainer for Roosevelt Thomas Consulting and Training, Atlanta, GA. Working with organizations on diversity issues and leadership training.

1996-97. Staub Peterson Leadership Consultants, Greensboro, NC. Have worked as a trainer/consultant with educational, corporate, and private organizations. Responsibilities include: personal coaching with senior executives to help them develop action plans toward greater leadership effectiveness, team building with groups to increase cohesion and creativity, assisted in conducting climate studies in organizations in preparation for feedback workshops with senior teams.

***Clinical***

1996 - present. Private practice with Joanne Bridegan M.S., seeing individuals, couples, and families dealing with a variety of issues from depression, child conduct disorders, and marital conflict.

1994 - 96. Center for Family Services, Blacksburg, BA. Marriage and Family Therapist: individual, couple, and family therapy.

1994 Comprehensive Clinic, Provo, Utah. Facilitator of group therapy for step-parents, working with couples in their step-parent roles. Group therapist for engaged couples, topics included: finances, intimacy, role, communication.

1992 - 1994. Comprehensive Clinic, Provo, Utah. Student therapist counseling individuals, couples, and families.

***Research Experience***

1995 - present. Collaborating with management Systems Engineering and Continuing Education departments and Virginia Tech in developing an organizational leadership seminar, using MFT theories as the foundation. Responsibilities include: research, co-facilitator of the training,

1993 - 94. Research assistant for Dr. Brent Barlow, Brigham Young University. Research topics included: Individual and marital development during mid-life, divorce, and remarriage.

1992. Research assistant for Dr. Kay Edwards, Brigham Young University. Conducted research around family law issues.

***Teaching Experience***

1997. Instructor of Relationship Enhancement Workshop, four part series for the Family Life Counsel of Greensboro.

1996 - present. Co-instructor of Solution-Focused Leadership Seminar, five day training held at the Hotel Roanoke Conference Center in Roanoke, VA.

1995 - present. Instructor of Couple Communication skills in a three part series workshop for couples in the community.

1994 - 95. Instructor of Marriage and Family Dynamics course at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Responsibilities included: development of lectures, testing, and grading. Topics included stages in the family life cycle, different family types, issues with divorce and remarriage, human intimacy etc. Average enrollment: 85.

1994. Co-instructor of Marriage in the Middle Years seminar with Dr. Brent Barlow at Brigham Young University. Topics included: developmental changes of individuals and their relationships during mid-life, with particular emphasis on the impact of the changes on the marital relationship.

1990 - 1991. Instructor of Latin International Style Ballroom Dance at Brigham Young University. Primarily responsible for teaching, testing, and preparing for competition. Average enrollment: 60.

1987 - 1991. Instructor for retired couples at the LDS Missionary Training Center in Provo, UT. Teaching standardized gospel discussions and helping to develop communication and teaching skills.

***Presentations***

1995. Paper presented at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Conference, Baltimore, MD, Young Adult Children of Alcoholics: Marital Attitudes and Personal Readiness for Marriage.

1995. Paper presented at the American association for Marriage and Family Therapy Conference, Baltimore, MD, Social Constructionism and Client Spiritual Values in Therapy.

1995. Presented paper on MFT Based Leadership Development Program to administrators of Virginia Tech and to the executive staff of Staub Peterson Leadership Consultants, a company based in Greensboro, NC.

***Publications***

Paper accepted for publication in Journal of Family Social Work, "Social Constructionism and Client Spiritual Values in Therapy."

Paper submitted for publication in Family Process, "Young Adult Children of Alcoholics: Marital Attitudes and Personal Readiness for Marriage."

***Professional Affiliations***

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)

Utah Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (UAMFT)

Brigham Young University Management Society