

Creating Leaders: An Ontological/Phenomenological Model

The following Abstract introduces Chapter 16 of Harvard's *The Handbook For Teaching Leadership*. The book is edited by Scott Snook (Senior Lecturer, Harvard Business School), Nitin Nohria (Dean, Harvard Business School), and Rakesh Khurana (Professor of Leadership Development and Dean, Harvard College). The book is published by Sage Publications, 2012.

Chapter 16 of the book is titled, "Creating Leaders: An Ontological/Phenomenological Model". The chapter is authored by Erhard, Jensen and Granger. This chapter is also available as a stand-alone article in the Social Science Research Network (SSRN), and that is where the following Abstract is found.

The chapter introduced and summarized in the Abstract is a 26-page introductory explication of the model utilized in a semester-long leadership course titled *Being A Leader and the Effective Exercise of Leadership: An Ontological/Phenomenological Model*. The course is conducted with a Slide-Deck Textbook (the equivalent of 300 pages), along with 160 pages of eight course reading assignments.

Introduction to the Abstract

The objective of this ontological/phenomenological model for teaching leadership is to leave students being leaders and exercising leadership effectively as their *natural self-expression*. While this method does inform students about leadership, it is in fact designed to transform students into actually being leaders. Because this ontological/phenomenological model of teaching leadership is drawn from a new pedagogical paradigm, you will encounter new terms of art (specialized terms) and new expressions that utilize those terms that are not normally found in the teaching methods (models) drawn from the current pedagogical paradigm.

Abstract

The Editors of *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership* pose the following question in their introductory chapter: "How does one teach leadership in a way that not only informs about leadership but also transforms them [students] into actually being leaders?" (p. XXIV)

The sole objective of our ontological/phenomenological model for creating leaders is to leave students actually being leaders and exercising leadership effectively as their *natural self-expression*. By "natural self-expression" we mean a way of being and acting in any leadership situation that is a spontaneous and intuitive effective response to what one is dealing with.

To create leaders we employ the *ontological* discipline ("science of being" from the Latin *ontologia*). The ontological model of leader and leadership opens up and reveals the *actual nature* of being when one is being a leader and opens up and reveals the *source* of one's actions when exercising leadership. And, ontology's associated phenomenological methodology (explained in 2) below) provides *actionable access* to what has been opened up.

The *being* of being a leader and the *actions* of the effective exercise of leadership can be accessed, researched, and taught either:

- 1) as being and action are observed and commented on “from the stands”, specifically as these are *observed by someone, and then described, interpreted and explained* (third-person theory of), or
- 2) as being and action are actually *lived and experienced real-time* “on the court”, specifically as being and action are *actually present* for the player herself (first-person experience of). As a formal discipline, the “on the court” method of accessing *being* and *action* (that is, accessing being and action as they are actually lived) is named *phenomenology*.

In short, an epistemological mastery (a from-the-stands mastery) of a subject leaves one *knowing*.

An ontological mastery (an on-the-court mastery) of a subject leaves one *being and acting*.

Of course the students themselves do not need to study ontology; they only require the access to *being* and the *source of action* that is provided by the ontological perspective. And, they don’t need to study phenomenology; they only need to be provided with the actionable pathway to the *being* of being a leader and the *actions* of effective leadership made available by the phenomenological methodology.

The body of the chapter itself published as an article in SSRN is 26 pages long. It is followed by appendices which present the participant course evaluations of each of the courses delivered by the authors in various university and public venues.

Short Bios requested by the Editors of the book:

Werner Erhard is an original thinker whose ideas have transformed the effectiveness and quality of life for millions of people and thousands of organizations. While known by the general public for the est Training and the Forum of the 1970s and ‘80s, his models have been the source of new perspectives by thinkers and practitioners in fields as diverse as philosophy, business, education, psychotherapy, emerging country development, medicine, conflict resolution, and community building. He lectures widely, and has served as consultant to various corporations, foundations, and governmental agencies. Erhard was acknowledged in Forbes Magazine's 40th Anniversary issue as one of the major contributors to modern management thinking, and is a recipient of the Mahatma Gandhi Humanitarian Award.

Michael Jensen, the Jesse Isidor Straus Professor of Business, Emeritus, at Harvard Business School is widely respected as a leading financial economist, organization theorist, the intellectual father of private equity, and for advancing the theory and practice of managerial compensation and corporate governance. Jensen is the creator of Agency Theory (with Bill Meckling) and Jensen's Alpha (a widely-used portfolio performance measure); he co-founded the Journal of Financial Economics and the Social Science Research Network (SSRN). Jensen has an MBA and PhD in economics from the University of Chicago. He was given the “Morgan Stanley-American Finance Association 2009 Award For Excellence in Financial Economics”.

Kari Granger is a fellow of the Center for Character and Leadership Development at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA), a former Assistant Professor there. As a decorated former military officer, Granger brings extensive field experience from leading complex logistical operations missions to combat duty in Iraq. Currently Granger is engaged in a collaborative effort to address the challenges of reintegration facing service members returning from hardship deployments. Granger is a Distinguished Graduate of USAFA with a BS in Human Factors and an MA from the University of New Mexico in Education Leadership.