

# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dr John Hinchcliff

Auckland Institute of Technology, New Zealand

e-mail john.hinchcliff@ait.ac.nz - fax 64 9 307 9983

Transformation denotes making a difference. This is something we all want to do: make an impact and add something significant to existence. Lying mortally wounded during a battle the Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa said: "Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something." At the end of our lives all of us would like the privilege of saying we made a difference. "To leave the world a bit better - is to have succeeded" said Emerson. Probably this is why we locate our vocational commitments in universities and polytechnics, and our various sheltered workshops for the chronically gifted, because we are directly or indirectly given precious opportunities to influence the next generation.

Transformational leadership is a vast topic because it covers everything we want to imagine as being changed for the better, and we all dream different dreams and see different visions.

## CONSTRAINTS

Of course, however, there are intractable constraints on our leadership in education. Obviously, a promethean attempt to make the local kindergarten into a university is impossible. And, as the old saying goes: "It is better to be lucky than intelligent."

Then there is the bottom line which must be obeyed. In these turbulent yet constrained times the compulsive, obsessive, but necessary quest to achieve the bottom line is a bit like camping on a roller-coaster. The judgment of Oscar Wilde that we know the cost of everything and the value of nothing seems to resonate.

There is Main's Law: "For every action there is an equal and opposite government programme". To a significant extent we are tied politically and financially to governmental apron strings. Appropriately, because they provide most of our finance.

## ACTION

Unquestionably, however, educational leaders do have major opportunities to make many changes.

Fundamental to the notion of transformation, self-evidently, is the required commitment to be involved in action. As Confucius never said: "He who sits on the fence will get electrocuted." The perception of some is that education institutions are incapable of change. It has been alleged that it is easier to move a cemetery than change a university, that we revel in the committeeified sentiments that are dissipated by consensus; and that our action plans are clogged up by hierarchically ordered, pyramid structures that are too languid to unleash any potential for strategic intervention.

Unfortunately, strategic action that fundamentally changes our society is extremely difficult in our age of megamachines, megatons, superpowers and transnational business, where we seem but minute cogs in the wheel of a huge system. Also, it is not easy in our era of analysis, criticism, suspicion and cynicism to be significantly creative. The possibility of dedicated effort is too often castrated by the facile putdown, the dismissive quip or disempowering authoritarianism. Perhaps we can avoid action by yielding to the temptation to delegate, recalling Weiler's Law: "Nothing is impossible for the leaders who do not have to do it by themselves". There are so many challenges facing us that the Buridan's Ass syndrome is not an alien possibility. And there is the urgent quest to be popular by standing for everything everyone else will fall for. But we can't stand for something if we stand for everything. Aristarchus of old said: "Vain is he word of the philosopher who does not change anything." The ecologist Hazel Henderson reminds us that the mind is "a muscle, not an intellectual slop-bucket." We must use the muscle of our mind and the opportunities for action to make our difference.

G B Shaw said: "Some see the world as it is and wonder why - others imagine it as it could be and ask why not." In the end, it is that we act that is important in effecting transformation. The difference between a meaningful vision and the pie-in-the-sky or great pumpkin fantasy is the difference between action and the pipe dream of the bystander.

## **VISION**

But, also, it is how we act that is most important. Churchill said: "It is no use saying we are doing our best. We have got to succeed in doing what is necessary." There is no point in getting there more efficiently if we don't know where we are going and we will not get anywhere unless we have a clear vision of our values. We need a vision to correct our pathways. We need a vision in terms of which to effect our transformation. "Without a vision the people perish", proclaimed the old Hebrew writer in Proverbs. Victor Frankl, philosopher in the concentration camp, said: "He who has a why can bear with any how."

One spring Saturday afternoon while I was gardening, the telephone rang. It was a student. "I've cut my wrist. Why should I stop the bleeding?" she said. Why indeed? What are the transformative values worth offering to someone favouring death. The question of values is a life and death matter. What should be our values? What values should our organisation embrace? And our nation? There must be coherence of action in terms of stated values. Albert Einstein once commented that "we live in a day of perfect means and confused goals". We will be confused about our goals if we do not project them as guiding principles for our institutions.

There was a sign in a French Hotel: "Before going to your room please leave your values with the receptionist". We can't leave our values with any one else. Our values determine who we are. They shape our actions. If we fail to get our values right then it is likely that our actions will be inappropriate.

This process is avowedly, necessarily and most pertinently a metaphysical quest. Therefore, our subjectively intuited moral presuppositions take centre stage. Thus controversy begins. It is not written in large commandments across the sky that we should obey certain values. Arguably, Hitler and Stalin were two of the most transformational leaders of contemporary history, not to mention an array of people dedicated to self-aggrandisement like Pol Pot, Mussolini, Pinochet, and Idi Amin. Instead of promoting an ideal that empowers others they promoted narcissistically the idol of self interest. Social Darwinism, laissez-faire, racial superiority and pragmatic manipulation can all constitute transformative ethical codes.

Then there have been the great and the good transformative leaders such as Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and, latterly, Te Whiti of Parihaka, Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Mandela.

Thus, we must know which values shape our activities now, which alternative values we need to embrace to effect a change for the better, and importantly, how we can make the change. This requires us to take a conceptual seismograph asking: Who are we? Where are we going? What can we believe? What are we to do? Then, as educators, our task is to determine how our education can flow from our preferred values.

These timeless philosophical questions make a habit of escaping from commissions, consultants, conferences and academic treaties. But they have been confronted in some pertinent articles published recently by The New Zealand Herald, by a Values in Education Summit, and by recent statements of the Prime Minister.

The clever and worrying Herald article by Diedre Macken entitled "The decade with no name", suggests we do not know who we are, or what we can believe. Macken describes life as fluid, deconstructed, borderless, relative, meaning what you want to mean: anything, everything and therefore nothing. We have not, she says, been helped by therapies, self-help books, Prozac, yoga, psychological profiling, talk-back radio or a nostalgia kick.

We can estimate that this denial of meaning and failure to construct purpose has many causes, for example, alienation from employment and the alleged advantages of material well-being, boredom from the apparent inanities of our culture, anger with authority, failure to secure a loving relationship, obsession with trivia and passing titillations, despair of the happiness seeking consumer at the failure of ever-new fads pretending to provide Nirvana, and apprehension at the various swords of Damocles hanging menacingly over our civilisation. Our successes become our failures. Some of our marvellous technologies threaten our natural order. The average American TV viewer will have watched 2 million advertisements by the age of 65 on 100 cable channels. For what? The grunge aficionado is not noticed for more than a minute. And nothing much happens for the body piercer and tattooist. We echo Horace of old and "stand in awe of nothing" in order to seek a happiness which is forever elusive.

## **ONTOLOGY**

My philosophy of existence begins with an analysis of a dichotomy stated by Nietzsche. He distinguishes between the Apollonian and Dionysian world views dating back to classical antiquity. The Apollonian model, after the God Apollo, has always been attractive to the Western mind. It is a philosophical mindset that perceives existence to be a rationally constructed cosmos. Interestingly, the term cosmetics comes from the Greek word 'cosmos', meaning order from chaos. Order, control, structure, logic and reason are the governing virtues. Inconsistencies and mistakes are regarded as anathema. Weaknesses are not permitted. There is no respect for risk, subjectivity, mystery, paradox or perplexity. Tight logical systems are crucial. Geometry is the preferred discipline. The closed circle is the perfect shape. Control is a virtue.

The Dionysian approach to reality of Greek drama is substantially different. Dionysus was the God of passion, energy, vitality, and creativity. This is a dynamic, process-related, empowering, encouraging, innovative, questing, thrusting view. Risk, adventure, sensitivity, and process are valued.

The Apollonian approach is represented in modern philosophy by people such as Descartes and Newton who glorified reason. "Cogito ergo sum," said Descartes. They tried to present reality as objective, inert, predictable and separate from mind which in turn speculates about, uncovers, examines, analyses, catalogues and defines. This Apollonian approach sees reality as an observable unity with determined patterns that, being lineal, are predictable according to the laws of cause and effect. The self is an objective observer confronting a separate reality.

The Dionysian approach is represented by existentialists who talk about uncertainty, subjectivity, risk and relationships; by quantum physicists who focused on energy, activity and process as relating to interactions and interconnections; and by chaos theorists who, with mathematical insight, explore the relationship between order and chaos. These three schools recognise the importance of order but also accept that the complex interactions within each particular context means variability, dynamic complexity, uncertainty and unpredictability. And each school requires each of us to become involved in the processes of reality. The self is subjectively an involved and significantly influential part of reality.

## **PILGRIMAGE**

Since life for the Dionysian is volatile, complex, dynamic, and beyond the control of any narrow organisational theory, or any ethical system, we are asked to manifest a fundamental humility and a willingness to engage with others in a never-to-be-completed search for understanding. This is reinforced by a recognition of the history of the cosmos believed to be about 15 billion years old, with the existence of homo sapiens a mere 150,000 years. This cosmological perspective also suggests that we should reject the narrow and separating parochialism of the specialist and the dividing philosophy of the competitor. It affirms the need for cooperation. It challenges the traditional scientific approach which has been fundamentally an adversarily derived preference for one of two or more competing perspectives. Only one can ever be correct. Now, however, we need a more inclusive process which, while confronting ambiguity, nevertheless seeks to integrate various perspectives, which acknowledges complexity, and which requires a never-ending process of analysis and synthesis. It may seem that this is advocating a nebulous, wishy washy eclecticism where we are so open minded that our brains fall out. Rather, this emphasis nurtures respect for existence as being far greater than any limited conceptualisation and also respect for the innovative and creative mind that challenges and grows. The transformational leader finds wisdom in this complex and uncertain process.

We are encouraged to accept that the existing paradigms are not sacrosanct but rather temporary, albeit necessary conceptual constructions and that the different and unusual should be recognised and explored with humility, with intuition as well as reason, with synthesis as well as analysis, with the interdisciplinary as well as the disciplinary, and with objectivity and subjectivity. In other words, we are called upon to engage in a never-ending and holistic process of transformation. Every new idea expands our understanding and thus changes us as a person. Sometimes radically. More often gradually.

From within the context of the complexity of our personal involvement and partial perspectives we must engage in the struggle to give our actions moral shape. There are no certainties and no props in this process of transformation. "A logical system of existence is impossible" said Soren Kierkegaard. "No artist tolerates reality" said Nietzsche. "Creative life always stands outside convention" said Jung. So, as we participate we seek to challenge and to be challenged.

This all means that our approach to dilemmas requires that we encourage ourselves to learn to see things in different ways. We need to learn new ways of thinking to solve new problems. Einstein said: "We will not use the same thinking to solve the problem that we used to create the problem." Otherwise, our successes become our problems. The Law of Retarding Leads, "Nothing fails like success", suggests that our success carries the ingredients for our disaster. For example, we have successfully used science and technology to resolve the challenges and limitations of our natural environment. But now we need to resolve the consequences of science and technology on the environment. Our understandable quest for greater economic growth means greater rates of resource depletion and pollution. Somehow we need a transformational moral metamorphosis to avoid both the problems of the failure to grow and, also, the problems of excessive growth. With such issues we do not need another 'technical fix'. We need to explore the moral dimensions of a transformation. We need to see how we can effect a change to the status quo according to a preferred vision of what might be. We know a quick fix is as faulty as the technical fix. We see the need to patiently persevere with long term plans for change according to our vision.

The existentialist and the quantum physicist calls us to be participants in, rather than observers of reality. No matter how apparently insignificant we may be, every decision we make and action we take is crucial. Individual responsibility, personal freedom, and autonomous decision making are essential. And the willingness to risk is an essential ingredient. Risk means the possibility of failure - which is so often demeaned in our culture. But not to risk failure is to risk being transformative.

In this process of transformation, we need the prophets, the artists, the poets and the visionaries to extricate ourselves from the ordinary and the mundane, and to help us find our new more appropriate symbols, and new ways to overcome the complexities of form and dynamism, the principle and the context. And, when we seek a moral rather than a technical solution, invariably we tangle with a radical option which challenges the status quo and those who benefit from existing fixes.

Out of all this emerges a picture of the self that is creative rather than controlled, cooperative rather than competitive, able to understand weaknesses as well as strengths, active rather than passive, adventurous rather than pedestrian, autonomous in decision-making rather than pre-determined, in search rather than at a destination, humble rather than forever right, respectful of others rather than demanding respect from others, empowering rather than adversarial, syncretistic rather than adversarial, and, therefore, transformative rather than reactionary. This process requires us to be both objective and subjective, capable of synthesis as well as analysis, able to recognise the difference between paradox and platitude and always willing to make that crucial difference according to a clearly enunciated, contextually flexible code of values.

## **RHYTHM OF CELEBRATION AND TRANSFORMATION**

Obviously, transformative work is our activity to improve our experience, but we need to find what John Calvin described as the rhythm of work and play. Play, in its original sense of *paidia* is the sense of celebration of what is, without being required to make a change. For this we need to be able to accept existence as our vibrant home or *Eco*, in Greek, which we enjoy and celebrate. We enjoy and celebrate our minds and our bodies. Not for any teleological process of transformation. So we learn for the sake of learning, for the zest of learning about life, for the enjoyment of the mental stimulation. So we participate in sport for the sheer physical delight.

This I call the sense of being. This is a time when we are not interested in transformation - when we celebrate what is, rather than attempt to do what ought to be. There is no ulterior purpose. The senses are united with a sense of being. This sense of being enables us to be who we are, enjoy who we are, and celebrate who we are. In other words, we become ourselves. "Not to say Torah but to be Torah," explained Martin Buber. "It's the time you have wasted on your rose that makes your rose so important" said Antoine Saint-Exupery.

It is crucial to education that from time to time, we re-collect and affirm the sense of being with our colleagues and our students. This means affirming, empowering, encouraging, and respecting others for who they are. A good transformative leader inspires confidence in others because of who they are. It means encouraging the sense of play through sport, music, literature, learning and art.

Learning for learning's sake, sport for sport's sake, art for art's sake, enables us to achieve a sense of being, a sense of At-one-ment, to borrow a theological term, with existence.

An emphasis on "being" corrects an obsession with which some of us who are workaholics have to contend. Some of us are so engrossed by the transformative work ethic that we lose the "rhythm of work and play" - the rhythm of being and doing. So we can never be satisfied with having done enough. Success is always out there, after the next contract, after the next balance sheet, after the next meeting, after the next exam, after the next sale. Doing runs wild. Mea culpa. But as Rilke said: "The deadliest death is to be alive and not to know it." Tagore said: "We live in the world when we love it." Paradoxically, perhaps, the more we relax from our love of our labour and the more we enjoy life in our play, the more we will want to work at its transformation. And, perhaps, conversely, the harder we work at transformation the more we will forget to love life.

## **DIMENSIONS**

A cautionary note. Administration does involve various dimensions: the structural, the personal, the political and the symbolic. Each requires different virtues. The structural requires effectiveness in designing and developing management processes, procedures and systems. The personal requires the leader to care for, respect, and encourage colleagues. The political leader mobilises resources to get things done successfully. The symbolic leader provides vision and inspiration, giving hope and meaning.

The transformational leader needs to be able to access each of these strengths in close colleagues. There is no point in having one of those attributes without the others. But, crucially, there must be the commitment to agree on the symbolic purposes that guide the organisation in its acting. Although difficult to achieve, the inspiration of the symbolic factor should serve to integrate and guide all our initiatives. The successful transformative leader thus encourages an organisation to embrace a shared vision to activate real change for the benefit of the community.

## **A HIERARCHY OF VALUES**

To ensure the vision statement functions coherently and to ensure there is preferred structure to our transformative actions, there is need for a hierarchy of values. It is a difficult but crucial challenge to continually, carefully, collegially, thoughtfully, sensitively and imaginatively construct a hierarchy of values for ourselves and for our institution, preferably involving a

comparative study of the values of wisdom literature from the great religious and philosophical leaders. Since the task of transformation will never end in our mortal and finite realm, the leader must continue to develop an improved, more contextually relevant and more coherent set of values, while seeking to integrate personal and professional values. And, most importantly, the transformative leader will back up the communicated vision with personal credibility established gradually over time by actions that resonate with, and embody the declared vision. Leadership, thus, is nurtured by a code of values, whether or not it is aided and abetted by charisma.

Each of us would promote a different set of values. My values include several major principles. These I project in a hierarchy of values, that is, they are prioritised in order to help resolve inevitable clashes occurring in different contexts. These are primarily purposive values distinct from modal values such as honesty, integrity, loyalty. In terms of such modal values, Hitler was possibly the most honest politician evidencing honesty, integrity and loyalty to a viciously supremacist and violent ethic. So we would want these modal values related to purposive values. I advocate the following purposive values:

- respect for people,
- respect for Nature,
- respect for the whole,
- respect for personal involvement, and
- respect for community.

By stressing personal inter-relationship and interconnectedness, this mindset suggests a restatement of the value implicit in all great wisdom literature, respect for people, for example, as in the Christian pronouncement to "love your neighbour as yourself," as in Confucianism: "do not do to others that which they would not do unto you," or as in Hinduism: "do not do to others which done to thee would cause thee pain." As a consequence of this principle, "anyone's problems anywhere are everyone's problems everywhere". So we should care for others. So we should respect each other.

So amid the avalanche of minutiae and administrivia of life in the fast lane, and beyond the inevitable clashes over the justice in allocating the scarce resources such as the carpark, larger office or higher salary we need to make time to regard our staff as colleagues. This is not easy, and sometimes in our human-all-too-human way we are likely to utter a curse such as "may the fleas of a thousand camels mate in your underpants", or "when people with small minds cast long shadows you can tell the night is coming."

Instead of regarding staff as a human resource to manipulate, a transformational leader will seek to empower colleagues and encourage their individual creativity, sharing with them a transparency in decision making. The transformational leader will seek institutional policies and procedures which reduce organisational constraints. So the empowerment is not invested in the leader but in the institution itself. In effect, paradoxically, the transformational leader gives away transformational leadership.

And, furthermore, good colleagues will encourage the leader to transform - both by correcting leader error and empowering the leader to do more and be more and to empower others more. So the effect snowballs. Mandela in his 1994 Inauguration speech said: "As we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same." This means leaving the tight-ship, accountability-overkill paradigm, giving away power, relinquishing Apollonian control, and being exposed to things going wrong or differently,

It is not easy for administrators to encourage Dionysus. Vitality and energy can compromise strategic institutional imperatives. It is easier for all concerned if the CEO is Rambo with the jackhammer demanding a tight managerialism where everyone toes the line and all heads nod in the same direction. And many like it that way. Sychophantism has its advantages: comfort, security, and relaxation of effort.

But such control, such dependability is as certain as a graveyard. A perfect error-free strategy is a guarantee of there being an absence of transformational leadership and it guarantees that a leader will not enjoy the privilege of basking in the reflected glory of the numerous achievements of colleagues. So we should restructure our systems of accountability to endorse risk taking and to encourage control-releasing leaders.

Secondly, and as is now so self-evident, we need to revalue our way of treating our home in Nature. The etymological roots of economics calls us to 'manage our home'. We have in the name of objective and rational science viewed Nature as inert, impassive, endless, and waged a cowboy warfare against Her. Our enjoyable affluence has become junkyard effluence causing our environmental destruction. All too often the technical solutions of our technical trance have provided only further problems leaving us in the serious crisis of our many ecological crises. We must see ourselves as responsible participants, caring stewards and transformative agents within a living, integrated Nature, rather than as some separable exploiters of a useful environment. We need to recover the humility required from recognising that our human journey in this cosmos is limited to about three score years and ten and that those who follow us may well curse us for our indulgent and criminal misuse of Nature.

Another pertinent value is to gain respect for the whole context, sometimes described as holism. Those who hide away from the contextual and the systemic, for example in the "closed shop" of their own professional cocoon, lose any sense of responsibility for the whole. Thus, Professor Calder described the Hiroshima bomb as "the greatest sin of all time for not only did the scientists not know what they were doing, but they knew they did not know". A transformational leader is almost iconoclastic, preferring that colleagues exercise their academic freedom to challenge both their own institution and the institutions of society in order to respect the whole social reality.

Another item to add to our hierarchy of transformative values is the respect for personal involvement in making a difference. Personal responsibility and the will to transform leaves no room to hide behind a determinism or fatalism or escapism. We need to reject such determinisms whether shaped by theological predestination, scientific utopianism, the Greek fates, genetics, or psychological behaviourism. We have the right, indeed the obligation in the nature of things to intercede, to interconnect, to interrelate and make decisions about the values and structures of our institutions and societies. We are empowered according to this holistic vision to be dynamic, responsive, proactive, and interventionist within the process of becoming. It may be easier to indulge in the paralysis of analysis, blame the system, pass a resolution into our filing cabinets forever, succumb to the requirements of the accountability overkill syndrome, remain obedient functionaries of the status quo, or wallow in the slough of omphalepsis - the disease of navel gazing. Perhaps it is better to be a happy pig rather than an unhappy Socrates. Such is to deny our personal responsibility to make a difference. Such is to reject the ideal of transformation. Sitting passively on the sidelines is not living. To be alive is to decide to be committed to be and to do.

Respect for the community is another related value to be included in a progressive and transforming code of ethical principles. The concepts of "public good" and of "public servant" are almost old fashioned these days, with the primary concern being on the individual self rather than the long term future of the community. In emphasizing the good community we reject the structure of society whereby people exist to pursue their own pleasure and competitive self interest, where control becomes more important than empowerment, legal finagling more important than trust, and negotiation more important than communication. We need the good community where people are respected as people, where respect and trust shape communications, where negotiation implies mutual dialogue for the greatest good and where there is enormous strength in the collective collegial and responsible actions of the team committed to enhance society. Each of us, the CEOs included, has less individual power than we need to make a significant difference. But together we can move mountains. Margaret Mead affirmed: "Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that has."

A commitment to such an enabling hierarchy of values reduces the need for charisma or majestic bearing which are hard to fabricate.

A major question that must be asked is whether we can descend from our protecting Towers of Babel from which we intone our idealism and commit ourselves to gifting the next decade such a new significance, without there being some powerful force requiring our obedience, whether a transcendent deity or political dictator or tough boss. Perhaps, the crisis of our questionable social and ecological future will be some reality therapy for us, encouraging us in our quest for a coherent set of values. Perhaps people will find a renewed discipleship and follow the great charismatic spiritual leaders. Perhaps we need to contemplate Macken's portrait of our brokenness and alienation. Perhaps we need to experience the ennui and anomie described by Sartre and Camus. Perhaps we need to experience a sense of lonely despair. Perhaps we can only rebuild our new future when our old-fashioned patterns of meaning are shattered. Perhaps we need to be on the edge of catastrophe before we are capable of significant response. Dostoyevski said: "Nothing concentrates the mind so wonderfully as the threat of death." Perhaps this can be a cleansing era that is a prelude to our transformation. But, in the meantime, perhaps we can choose to redirect ourselves according to beacons prescribed by a Code of Values. Whatever our ideological bias, I believe we could and we should find an enthusiastic commitment for, and dedication to a new responsible altruism.

Leadership in a democratic institution requires that we be open to alternative perceptions. Sometimes these come at us like bulldozers - from different directions at once. Perhaps it may be that if you do not ride on one of them you can end up rather flat on the road. Some say democracy is tiresome because it is so tortuous, so energy sapping, so time consuming. So many good ideas die in our sub-committees. But there is no preferred alternative. And we need colleagues to share our democratic experience by engaging with us in our committees and dare to question our values thereby risking our inclination to dismiss them as outsiders, radicals or rebels. We cannot endorse Truman's Law: "If you can't convince them, confuse them." There can be no progress, no creative action, no change agent and no transformation without the question or the challenge. Leadership begins when someone disagrees and there is a responsible response.

However, a criticism is not necessarily valid because it is a criticism. Whatever we do there is always someone who knows how to do it better. All-too-often cynical carping criticism of a leader is offered as the panacea. According to North American wisdom, the importance of a

leader is measured by the number of arrows in the back. Sometimes it seems that the only thing we do right is what is left after we do everything else wrong. Our death notices will be listed under public improvements. But it is important to recognise that our perception of the world is not sacrosanct in the face of their criticism. We will only go beyond our boundaries when constructively challenged. So transformational leadership begins when we confront criticism, engage with others in resolving disputes and reconciling opposites. Sometimes the only way to stimulate such an encounter is by what Camus calls "creative rebellion". "I rebel therefore we are." He sees creative rebellion as the means whereby people ask questions and challenge assumptions with honesty and perseverance in order to challenge the other into a meaningful encounter.

Some parents, administrators and teachers have experienced this "creative rebellion" when their sons, daughters, staff and students challenge them with a "shocking statement". The purpose is not so much to shock nor to promote the culture of victimhood but to ask for a response, an encounter, an opportunity to speak with, and to be with others. Thus, our ideas clash, we relate, we communicate, we learn and we are not the same. We are transformed.

This quest for moral purpose is like sliding down a bannister with some of the splinters pointing the wrong way. But the further we are down the bannister with all the hurtful splinters, there will be more wisdom, more experience and more self-transformation to rely on. And the more the self-transformation the more we will have the fortitude and moral strength to challenge and critically examine even the most treasured idols of our tribe.

The transformational leader has patience with pain, is sufficiently wise and flexible to steer from either the stern or from the bow, and is confidently creative to engage in "breakthrough thinking", whereby the "yet unthinkable" is thought with a foresight anchored in wisdom. Thus transformative leadership urges us to venture out to the edge of our possibilities, to welcome the unholy clash of the paradox smashing against the platitude, the extraordinary against the ordinary, the unusual against the usual, the innovative against the routine, the independent against the dependent. This is not to sail into Vesuvius but it is to use the glow of Vesuvius to see a bit further into the gloom.

Failures are as inevitable as we are human. We are but one person and as mentioned before, we have influence when we give away power through delegation. If we impose our values we destroy our values. Therefore we can only count on our powers of persuasion and sometimes these do not match the power of our passion. And most of us who aspire to be transformational leaders for the betterment of society inevitably fail, shipwrecked too often by personal weakness, confounded by superior forces to the point of frustration, and all-too-easily given to a sense of despair. Again and again, our appeal to a motivating idealism falls on stony ground. But the measure of our transformative activity relates to our patient determination and our dedication to the process. Whether or not we succeed is beside the main point - which is to try to make a difference.

## **FOREWORD**

History and literature are not silent about all this. This challenge of transformation screams out at us throughout history. It is as old as Moses seeking to leave Egypt for the promised land and the prophets of all ages who have railed against the vices of the old order. The Jeremiahs of today have the advantage of scientific research and computer printouts but, instead of being persecuted by Judean monarchs, their warnings gather dust in our filing cabinets. We must be

hopeful and positive and see the crises as challenges for us to act. Hope is only realistic when we are involved in doing something. Sitting comfortably on the sidelines like the Epicureans, Stoics and Cynics at the demise of the Hellenic Civilisation is a recipe for disaster.

The last five centuries of this second millennium began with the great geographic explorers such as Prince Henry the Navigator, Diaz, Vasco de Gama and Columbus. Their exploration helped transform Europe into greatness through commerce. Values such as faith in progress, unlimited resources, open markets, individual opportunity propelled the emergence of the dynamic Western culture.

Now we need great explorers of ideas and values to chart for us a new destiny for the global village. It must be possible for us to avoid a tragic destiny, escape an infatuation with the status quo, and begin our new future with hope. If we can reconstruct our values, transform our mindsets and create a clear vision that generates hope, and a commitment both to the good, and to the empowerment of others, then the year 2000 AD will be a strategic and defining beacon, a turning away from the point of no return, a turning point transforming our fragile and threatened civilisation. It is our choice to decide whether our generation gifts any significantly different vision to the new millennium. Heidegger calls for those prepared to "trace for their kindred mortals the way toward the turning." In education, we each have many opportunities of being transformative influences.