

# Distinguished Leadership Model

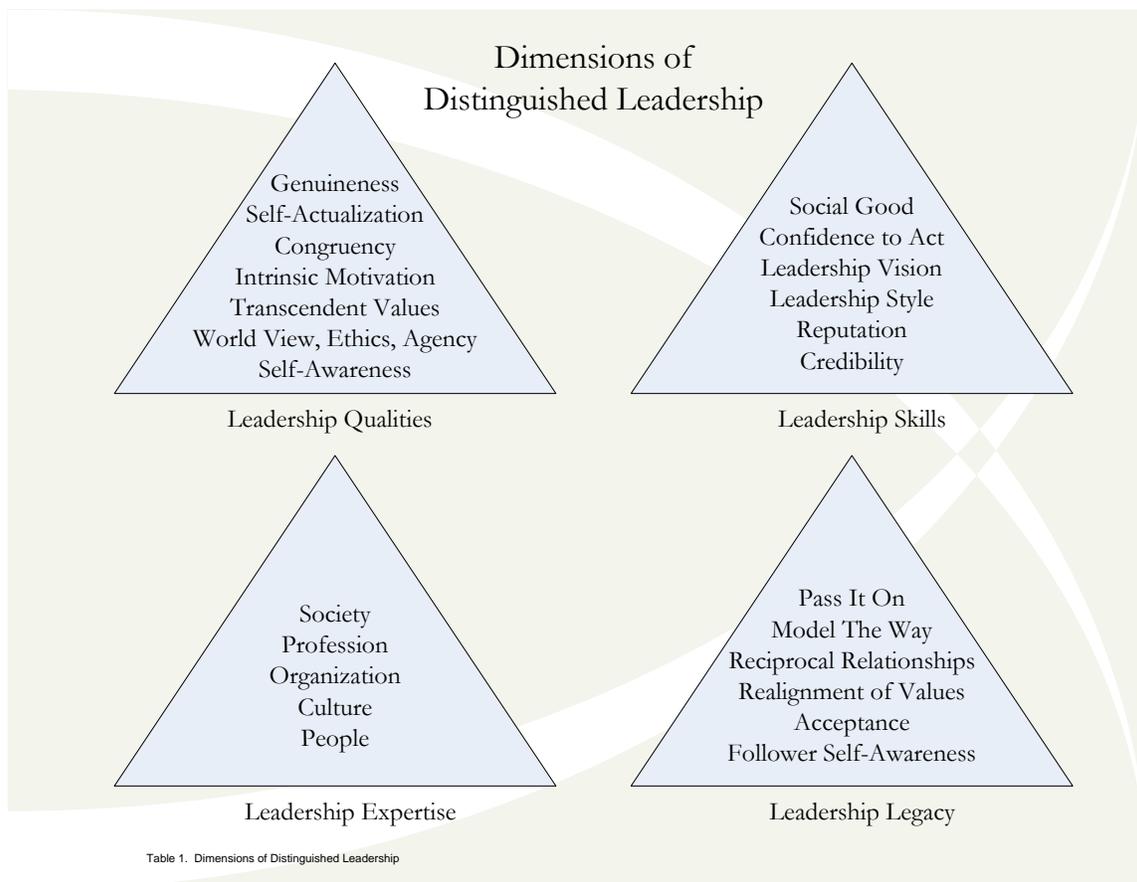
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Leadership is a complex process of using power to influence followers within a given context (group, organization, society) so mutual goals are attained. This minimalist definition covers the basics of “leader, follower and situation” promoted by current leadership theorists. Yet leadership is about much more. Any leader can learn leadership skills, learn to understand and influence followers, and learn to be competent within a given context. All who wish to become leaders can gain the appropriate education and experience. With that said, what is the difference between leaders and Distinguished Leaders? What do Distinguished Leaders have that other leaders do not? Where is the difference and can these difference be overcome? The difference is choice...and the courage to choose is within each individual.

The major differences between Distinguished Leaders and leaders are the leaders’ choice to be self-aware, the choice to focus on transcendent values, the choice to become self-actualized and the choice to be genuine. Few leaders distinguish themselves in this manner because of the personal honesty and courage required to become self-aware and to live a life of personal and leadership development. Few leaders distinguish themselves by going outside of themselves to leave a legacy that promotes personal and leadership development within their followers. Few leaders distinguish themselves by transcending their own personal value systems and focusing on the values directed toward working for the social good. The choice to be a Distinguished Leader is within the grasp of every leader if they have the honesty and courage to reach within and beyond themselves.

Distinguished leaders develop themselves and their followers so that they can mutually embrace transcendent values and work together toward the social good. They also use their teams, groups, organizations, and professions to affect change that universally benefits and inspires others to work toward the social good. The Distinguished Leadership Model has four

dimensions: Leadership Qualities (leader), Leadership Skills (leader and situation), Leadership Expertise (situation) and Leadership Legacy (followers and society). The attributes of each dimension are conceptualized by the width of that building block and its positionality (refer to Table 1). The widest building block positioned as the foundation of that dimension represents the core attributes needed to support that dimension effectively. The median building blocks representing the next sets of necessary attributes are positioned as an extension of the foundation. The narrowest building block, which is often the hardest to attain, but creates the pinnacle of that dimension, cannot be sustained without the foundation or its median building blocks; hence, each attributes' and dimensions' mutual interdependency is illustrated both vertically and horizontally.



The foundation for the Distinguished Leadership Model is the dimension of Leadership Qualities. Without strong leadership qualities within the individual, the other dimensions cannot be effectively developed. From Leadership Qualities, Leadership Skills develop which allow the

individual to assume the role of effective leader. With strong Leadership Qualities supporting the development of effective Leadership Skills, Leadership Expertise within the context of the leadership opportunity is acquired. Finally, leaders share these multi-layered dimensions with their followers through the Leadership Legacy.

Leadership Qualities (first dimension) reflect “**who** Distinguished Leaders *choose* to become” and include self-awareness, world view, ethics and agency, transcendent values, intrinsic motivation, congruence, self-actualization and genuineness. The foundation for Leadership Qualities is self-awareness, which includes understanding the self and one’s own beliefs, and then relating this understanding to the acquisition of knowledge within the proper context of leadership. Respecting one’s self affects one’s beliefs, meaning making, and interactions with others. Self-awareness allows leaders to understand themselves as human beings and as a part of the society where they lead.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to accept an unconstrained vision (world view) that says people have the ability to reason and are inherently good in nature. They believe people are virtuous, empathic, and compassionate and have the ability and sincere desire to strive toward perfection. They believe that everyone has a moral and social duty to work toward the social good. The exercise of ethical principles is paramount. Ethical philosophies that consider the good of society are the foundation for leaders’ character development (Self-Realization and Consequentialism) while those that emphasize self-interest are shunned (Egoism). An acceptance of agency is essential because it supports the philosophy that everyone, as an individual and collectively, can make a difference in this life. Those who feel they can make a difference are more apt to take action than those who feel nothing they do will effect anything.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to focus on transcendent values over modal values. They go beyond those values that personally benefit themselves and act upon those values that benefit society. Self-awareness allows Distinguished Leaders the insights and knowledge of those core values developed, accepted and given the highest priority that are transcendent (liberty, equality,

and social justice, as well as the collective well being: concern for others, acceptance of others' ideas, and understanding and appreciation for the diversity within others).

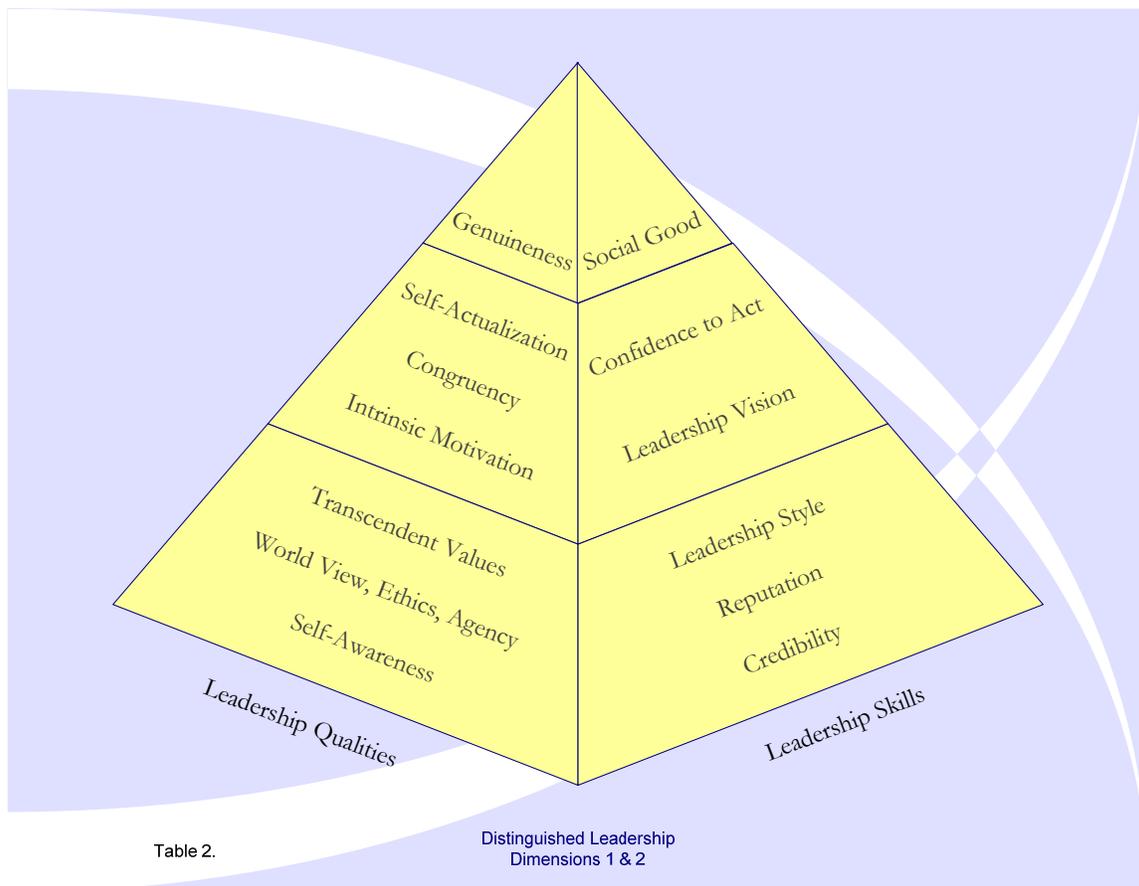
Distinguished Leaders *choose* intrinsic motivations over extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivations are often closely aligned with personal values, and such alignment results in personal satisfaction and enjoyment when acted upon. Innately valuing such issues as high achievement orientation, transcendental values and intrinsically rewarding tasks are a choice made by Distinguished Leaders. Extrinsic motivations are often monetary in nature, which often bring about external power and prestige. These are rarely motivating factors for Distinguished Leaders.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to be congruent with their values, ethics, ideals and actions. Their self-definition is consistent with the image they project to the outside world. Their ethical philosophy and world view are congruent with their focus on transcendent values. Their words and deeds are congruent. Such consistency allows leaders to behave in accordance with their values rather than merely to please others, which means responding to internal cues, as opposed to societal pressures.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* a life's path of personal and professional growth that leads to self-actualization. The development of leaders' full potential is a life long process that requires much self-analysis, self-awareness, and self-development. Honesty and courage are required to attain self-actualization, which Distinguished Leaders tap into so that they can develop and then assist others with their own personal and professional development. Distinguished Leaders always develop themselves as a means to the end (developing others toward the social good).

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to live their entire lives in a state of genuineness. They are transparent about their views, beliefs, values and ethical principles. They are transparent, as well as congruent, with their words and deeds. Such open and honest behaviors allow others to believe what they see and hear from such leaders. Such genuineness requires leaders to be

vulnerable to praise and criticism, but is a core tenant of the Leadership Quality dimension. Self-awareness is the foundation for the Leadership Qualities dimension with world view, ethics, agency, transcendent values, intrinsic motivation, and congruency supporting it. The pinnacle of the Leadership Quality dimension culminates with self-actualization and genuineness, which builds the bridge toward Leadership Skills (refer to Table 2).



Leadership Skills (second dimension) reflect “**how** a Distinguished Leader *chooses* to act” and include credibility, reputation, leadership style, vision, confidence to act, and a focus on the social good. Congruence with words and deeds leads to skill development that enhances credibility. Being open and honest with followers can be challenging, but is the only way that leaders’ credibility is established. The top five qualities that build credibility between leaders and followers are being honest, forward-looking, inspiring, competent, and fair-minded. Credibility is the foundation of leadership because it engenders trust that sustains the relationships necessary to implement shared visions. Credible leaders foster credible followers

who have the commitment to a culture of honesty, openness and fairness. Credibility is the basis for reputation.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to develop a reputation that reflects their genuine selves. A reputation is built over time with other leaders and potential followers. A reputation is the embodiment of the personal integrity and credibility that the leader has developed and exhibited over time. The time dimension is important because the effectiveness of leaders is determined by their beliefs, words and actions over multiple leadership opportunities, not just one major event. Reputations are established over time by the words and actions observed by followers and other leaders. Congruence between words and deeds projects the genuine leader, which becomes a part of the reputation.

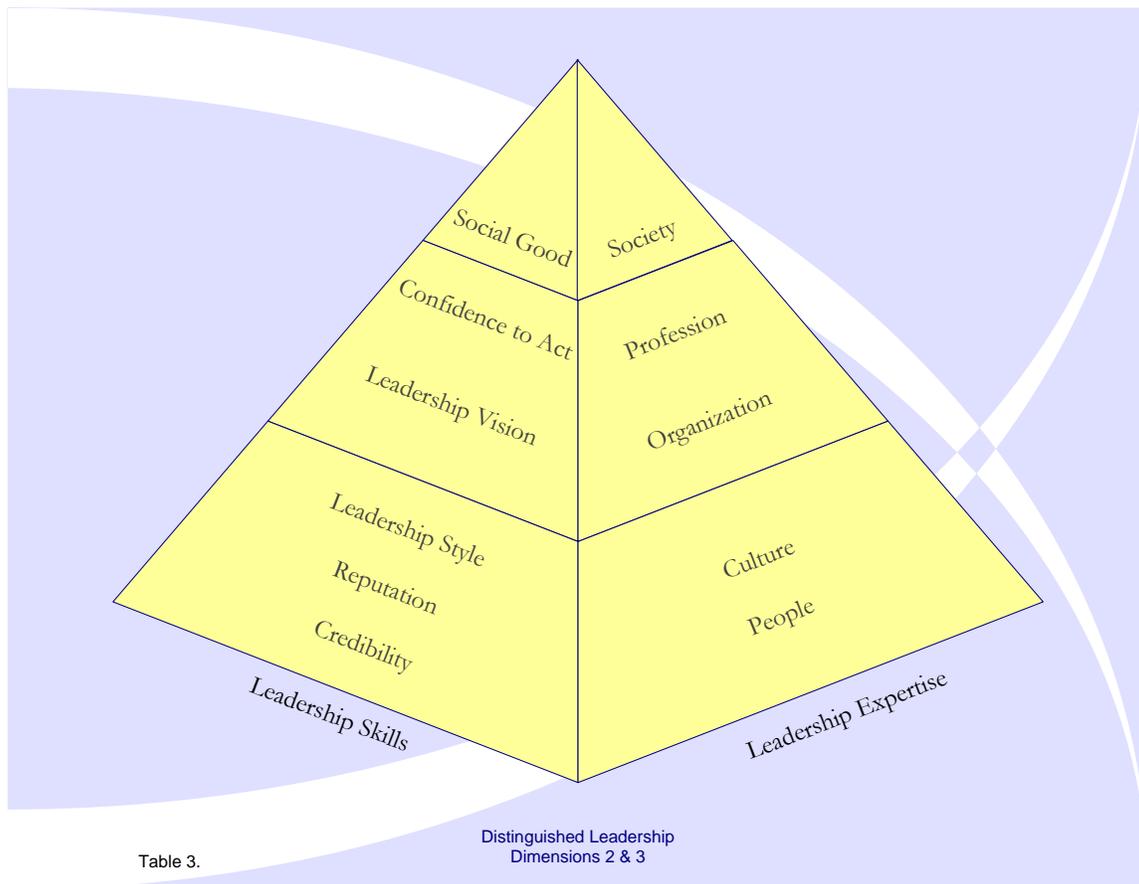
Distinguished Leaders *choose* to use a leadership style that reflects a distinctive manner of behaving to convey the essence of their words and actions. A consistent, effective style, during times of stress and non-stress, is essential in establishing a leader's integrity, credibility and reputation. Therefore, Distinguished Leaders use a kind, caring and compassionate style that manages meaning to promote personal growth and leadership development both within followers and leaders. However, a solid reputation and an effective style are ineffectual without a strong vision.

A Distinguished Leader *chooses* a vision that focuses on the social good. A vision is developed by the leader's ability to see what can be done and what must be done for success to be attained (either by the individual or the group). A vision is more than a good idea; a vision is a plan of action that is attainable and that incorporates the values and beliefs of the leaders and followers. A vision is never developed by the majority view nor developed by consensus because consensus is the lowest common denominator of decision making that satisfies the majority. Rarely can the majority see "that which could be." A vision is bold, imaginative and inspiring while transforming those who hear it, who accept it, and who follow it. Leaders

develop visions that inspire others to follow ideas, not leaders, so there is a ripple-effect of inspired change and commitment to action long after the leader has moved on.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to develop the confidence to act. Words, ideas and visions are not enough to affect change; carefully developed strategic plans and competently trained followers are not enough to affect change. Action, based on words, ideas, visions, ethical stances, strategic plans and competency, are what affect change. Taking action is a choice. Few people have the moral courage to take action when pressure is exerted in defense of the status quo. In particular, moral courage is necessary to take action toward the social good when many of privilege benefit from the current environment. It takes moral courage to develop, articulate and implement a vision, which may be beyond the grasp of the majority. Confidence to act is developed by tapping into moral courage and exercising it over time. When words and deeds are congruent, confidence to act becomes a natural extension of the Distinguished Leader's moral courage. Such confidence to act enhances their vision, their style, and their reputation while strengthening their credibility amongst the followers.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to focus on the social good. A focus on personal interests is self-serving and easy. Distinguished Leaders focus on what is right, not what is easy. The pinnacle of Leadership Skills is having a universal vision that includes all people. Their focus is not narrowly focused on short-term issues. Distinguished Leaders believe in promoting social justice by using the power available to them to ensure social responsibility and equality. Promoting a focus on the social good is insufficient. Teaching and coaching others to focus on transcendent values, ethical philosophies and unconstrained visions that promote taking action to affect the social good is the life long mission of Distinguished Leaders. Cultivating this vision in others is paramount to effective social change. Credibility is the foundation for the Leadership Skills dimension with reputation, style, vision, and confidence to act supporting it. The pinnacle of the Leadership Skills dimension culminates with a focus on the social good, which builds the bridge toward Leadership Expertise (refer to Table 3).



Leadership Expertise (third dimension) reflects “**what** a Distinguished Leader *chooses* to focus on,” and includes competencies associated with people, cultures, organizations, professions, and society. Without a primary focus on people, no leader can be effective. Cultures, organizations, professions and societies are not living, breathing organisms. They represent the people who compose them. People make cultures, organizations, professions and societies either effective or ineffective. People are living and breathing, not cultures or organizations. Therefore, Distinguished Leaders *choose* to focus on what matters...and people matter. They have the humanistic focus, the social skills and the competence to make a difference in people’s lives. They have a desire to have a reciprocal relationship that is mutually beneficial. They have just as much of a focus on followers’ personal and professional growth as they do their own because Distinguished Leaders understand “people are the future.” They take the time and utilize their expertise to develop people so that collectively, everyone can make a difference.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to create and sustain positive, progressive, and ethical cultures. Understanding the culture of the group requires knowledge of the institutional characteristics of the organization, the political processes used, the bureaucratic issues present, the people and personalities involved, the internal and external pressures, as well as the impact of the dynamics created by this culture. An acceptance that culture is created, influenced, impacted and controlled by the people within it allows Distinguished Leaders to influence the culture through the people within that culture. A culture that supports personal and professional growth allows everyone to focus on the actions necessary to implement the vision.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to create and sustain positive, progressive, and ethical organizations. The people and the culture within each organization create and sustain the environment that allows them to work toward their vision. As a result, each organization has its own personality or flair. The Distinguished Leader must realign organizations that are not focused on the social good. Recruitment, retention and promotion efforts must be used to promote the social good within the organization and the society the organization dwells within. The existence of an organization is authorized by the society within which it exists. Therefore, the organization, through its Distinguished Leaders, has a moral duty to utilize the organization for the good of the society that has authorized its existence.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to support the positive, progressive, and ethical growth within their profession. Leaders who understand the profession they and their followers are working within will be able to successfully develop their followers within that profession. Understanding of the profession, its internal and external pressures, its potential and opportunities, increases the credibility and reputation of the leader. No one, leader or follower, wants to follow anyone who does not have a thorough understanding of the profession or industry, or its place within the global economy.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to support society as a whole. The society includes the privileged and the underprivileged. All segments of society matter. Hence, the Distinguished

Leader focuses on transcendent values and social good. As a person of agency, intrinsic motivators support efforts to improve society, which enhances the moral conviction to act. Through reciprocal personal growth and professional growth, leaders and followers work toward mutually shared visions for social good. People are the foundation for the Leadership Expertise dimension with cultures, organizations, and professions supporting it. The pinnacle of the Leadership Expertise dimension culminates with a focus on society as a whole, which builds the bridge toward Leadership Legacy (refer to Table 4).

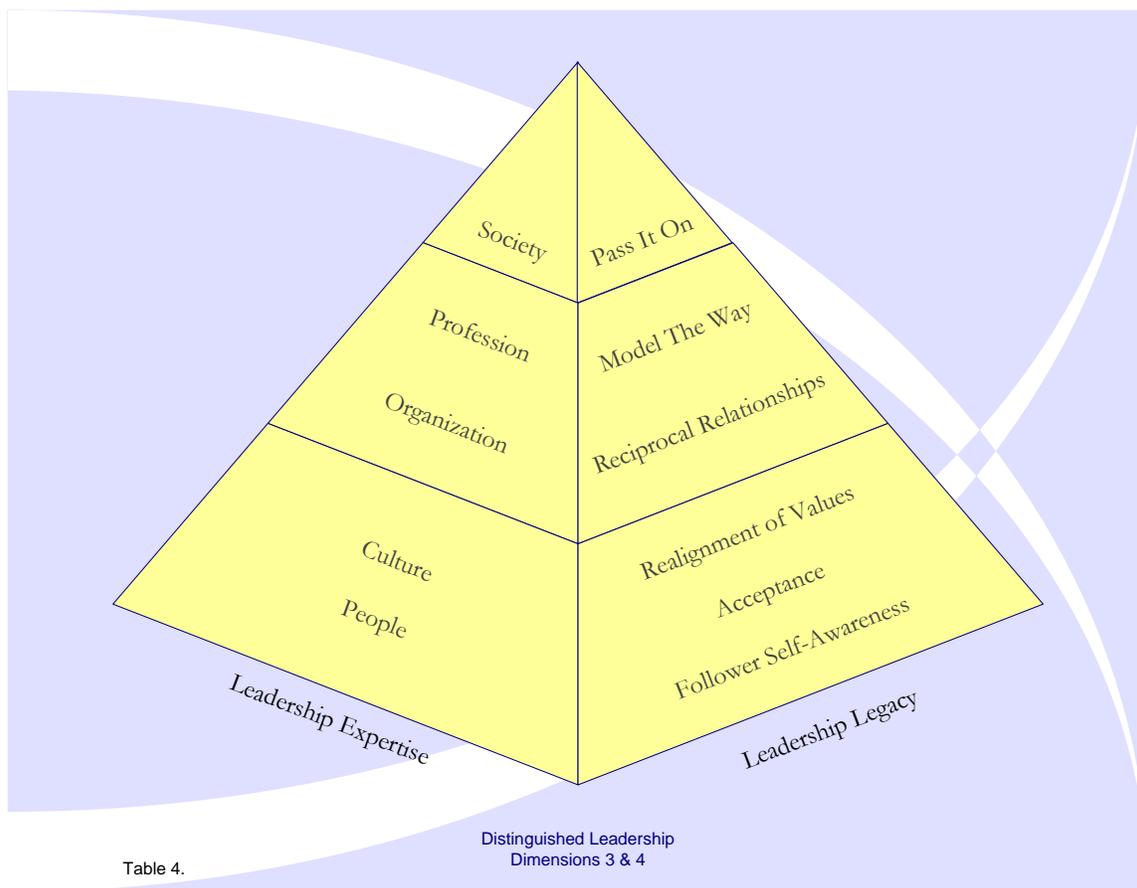


Table 4.

Leadership Legacy (fourth dimension) reflects the “**intention** of the Distinguished Leader to *choose* to make a difference” by promoting follower self-awareness, acceptance, realignment of values, reciprocal relationships, modeling the way, and the concept of “passing it on.” They realize a universal focus on all of society redirects their efforts toward all those around them. Even Distinguished Leaders understand they alone can change little; that their destinies are synchronistically and inextricably intertwined with everyone they encounter in this lifetime.

Collectively, the many can get much done for society. Yet the catalyst for change comes initially from the Distinguished Leader, but is shared and developed within followers so that the synergy of the many can be directed toward the social good for all.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to focus on followers' self-awareness and self-development. By developing others, the Distinguished Leader can assist with the development of effective followers and potential leaders. Followers' personal growth will enhance their professional growth, which will lead toward attainment of the social good. Distinguished Leaders believe in investing in people because people matter. They believe in and do not fear assisting potential leaders to assist them now and to take over for them in the future.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to accept followers for who they are and for where they are at this point in time in their lives. With that said, they also work toward assisting followers with becoming aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and then developing plans for personal and professional growth. Distinguished Leaders accept followers for the diversity of cultures and ideas that they bring to the organization. They appreciate the differences and respect followers for those differences.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to take the time and energy to articulate values that transcend the self, explain the importance of these values, and explain how they support the social good. They assist followers with realigning their values away from modal values and toward transcendent values so that the followers may develop into potential leaders who can work toward change. They support them on a personal and professional level so that followers develop the moral courage to stand up for what is right and then develop the confidence to act upon that courage.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* to model distinguished leader behaviors, attitudes and leadership styles. They model these behaviors so followers will emulate them. By emulating such behaviors, the realignment of values, ideals and words can be expressed in a way that affects change. Followers will move along the continuum toward leadership behaviors that can

make a difference in the future. Ultimately, followers will, in turn, model distinguished leadership qualities, skills and expertise for the next generation of followers who will become the change agents of the future with a focus on the social good.

Distinguished Leaders *choose* enthusiastically to share their knowledge and wisdom with others. They abhor those who covet and harbor from followers the knowledge and wisdom of leadership. Their life's goal is to pass their wisdom toward succeeding generations. Distinguished Leaders have an innate understanding that people are what matters and that anything and everything they can do to share with others will assist society as a whole. Through this sharing with future generations of leaders and followers, transcendent values and the social good will be inculcated within the society. Distinguished Leaders know that their legacies have taken hold when their followers, in turn, choose to share their knowledge and wisdom with others as they "pass it on." Followers' self-awareness is the foundation for the Leadership Legacy dimension with acceptance, realignment of values, reciprocal relationships, and modeling the way supporting it. The pinnacle of the Leadership Legacy dimension culminates with leaders' and followers' sharing their knowledge and wisdom by "passing it on" to future generations to affect long-term social change.

In summary, the four dimensions of the Distinguished Leadership Model include: Leadership Qualities, Leadership Skills, Leadership Expertise and Leadership Legacy (refer to Table 5). This is not a leadership model for the masses. It is a leadership model for those self-actualized leaders who wish to transform individuals, cultures, organizations, professions and society as a whole. It is for those who can see "that which could be." It takes much courage to consider what could be, but it takes even more courage to take action toward that end. Like the world-class athlete, the Distinguished Leader is gifted, accomplished, proficient and adept at what they do. They are visionaries; they are inspirational; and, they are holistic with their approach. They have *chosen* a role of leadership and have worked personally and professionally to perfect the qualities, skills, and expertise they need to leave a leadership legacy worthy of the

effort. Few people are willing to look within themselves deeply to become self-aware, to question their values and ethical beliefs, to be honest with themselves and others, to tap into their courage, and to then take action that will make a universal difference.

Everyone is capable of being a leader and influencing others. Yet how many leaders choose to be self-aware, choose to focus on transcendent values, choose to become self-actualized, and choose to be genuine with themselves and others? How many leaders choose who they will be (genuine), how they will choose to act (inspirationally), and choose to be transparent with their intentions (open and honest)? Few accept the challenge of becoming Distinguished Leaders. Those who do are capable of influencing the many to work toward the social good for all. They **Distinguish** themselves.

