Re-interpreting the Leadership-Management Relationship

This is Chapter 4 of:

In the Leadership Mode

Don Dunoon

Trafford, 2008

(pp. 75-92)

FOUR

Re-interpreting the Leadership-Management Relationship

❝ The expectation is that we deal with the here and now, the urgent. Leadership is important, too, but it's hard to get to."

"Usually, I take the expert role in solving problems in my area. I can now see that's the management mode. The leadership mode is another option for when I want to help the other person take charge of their own problems."

"I find the leadership and management distinction helps me be more conscious of how I'm allocating my time. I'm going to work at freeing up some time for leadership."

"My preference is for the more concrete side of things, so I probably lean towards management. I like the idea that I might start off a meeting with my managers with a clear agenda but maybe go into leadership to drill down into a particular issue. And then we can come back to management to decide on what to do next."

"I recognize that I need to do more leadership. It's handy to know that when I do move into the leadership mode I can move back to management again—such as when I need to sort out a problem with one of our suppliers."

These comments, typical of those made by participants in my workshops after discussing the leadership–management relationship, suggest that we can potentially make sense of the relationship, and that there is practical benefit in doing so.[1] Yet, such views are at odds with a common assumption: that little is to be gained from seeking to differentiate the two. This assumption is another one of the "vines" obscuring our view of leadership, referred to in Chapter 1.

The terms leadership and management are often bandied about and sometimes used together, as in the names of professional institutes and academic journals. But serious consideration of the relationship tends to be lacking. For all the many hundreds of books on leadership, relatively few appear to deal in a thoughtful way with the question of how leadership relates to management. It is as if the relationship between them is seen as just too difficult to fathom, too complex and multifaceted to be deconstructed.

Here, I propose that the relative lack of careful attention to the relationship reflects in large measure the confusion generated by the other three vines of leadership discussed in Chapter 1.' Those vines represent the out-dated assumptions that:

- Leadership is equivalent to leaders;
- Leadership is the province of people in positions of authority; and
- Leadership essentially involves influence processes.

The assumption that there is little value in seeking to distinguish leadership and management seems to be an "offshoot" of these out-of-date assumptions. In turn, these vines also get in the way of our seeing how management and leadership are distinct, as well as how they relate to and complement each other.

To appreciate the distinction between the two, we need to continue our work of pulling back these vines and holding them clear. In doing so, we might discover that distinguishing leadership-mode action from management-mode action gives us significant additional traction in dealing with contentious problems. This is a potential benefit that awaits discovery.

Our purpose in this chapter is to clarify a vision of leadership-mode action in relation to action in the management mode such that each complements the other, while recognizing that such complementarity also brings challenges. In the following section, we look into how the conventional assumptions concerning leaders, authority, and influence make it difficult to see leadership and management in relationship.'

First, though, let me recognize some other writers whose ideas—not necessarily on leadership and management as such—have informed my thinking and the development of the ideas in this chapter: Chris Argyris and Donald Schön,[4] Arthur Deikman,[5] John Kotter,[6] Robert Quinn,[7] and Joseph Rost.[8]

How Conventional Assumptions Obscure our View of the Relationship

Leadership and Leaders If leadership is equated with leaders, discussions on leadership and management can quickly turn into comparisons between leaders and managers. In such comparisons, managers tend to come off second best, sometimes portrayed as fulfilling a foot-soldier role in keeping the existing order of things moving along. Leaders, on the other hand, are often portrayed as undertaking the more elevating, enriching, and high-status work of building visions and mobilizing people.

Consider these three statements comparing leaders and managers by the noted leadership scholar Warren Bennis: "The manager imitates; the leader originates," "The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust," and "The manager is a copy;

the leader is an original."[9] Who would want to think of themselves as a manager rather than a leader after reading a comparison like that? As another prominent leadership scholar, Gary Yukl, notes, any attempt to sort people into two categories, where one of the categories is of clearly lower status, is problematic.[10] For this reason, the common equation of leadership and leaders tends to put a damper on serious consideration of the leadership-management relationship.

Here, the focus is on *processes*: the processes of leadership as distinct from those of management. The accent is on the kinds of work performed at different times --recognizing the importance of both types of processes—rather than on categorizing people. This enables us to effectively bypass the prevailing tendency to compare leaders and managers.

Leadership and Authority The assumption that leadership is the domain of people in authority gives rise to problems, as I pointed out in Chapter 1. One example is the difficulty those in positions of relatively little authority experience when they try to exercise leadership. But, management is also widely assumed to derive its basis from authority. The belief that *both* leadership and management are grounded in authority has added to the confusion of the two.

In this book, as discussed in Chapter 1, authority is positioned as a background factor, not a requirement, for leadership-mode work. In contrast, authority is one of the defining features of management-mode work, as we shall explore in this chapter. So we are, in effect, loosening the connection between leadership and authority, and reaffirming the view that management is based in authority. In this view, authority is fundamentally a matter of management, not leadership.

Leadership and Influence While notions of influence are integral to most contemporary constructions of leadership, influence is important in management, too. As so many popular management books advise, influence is critical in "getting things done," whether in convincing your manager to support a project or to persuade a business partner that your proposed strategy will meet his needs.

As with authority, pervasiveness of talk about influence adds to the cloudiness surrounding the leadership—management relationship.

With respect to leadership, we have highlighted the importance of learning rather than influence, as discussed in Chapter 2. This shift in emphasis should help to reduce—if not remove—influence as a source of confusion in our attempts to make sense of the leadership—management relationship.

The identification of leadership with leaders, authority, and influence obstructs our view of management as well as its relationship to leadership. It is true that the view will probably never be entirely clear. A degree of ambiguity is almost certainly inevitable, but we can sharpen our understanding of the relationship if we:

- Think of leadership and management as both being grounded in processes rather than in individuals;

- Regard authority as a defining feature for management and as a contextual feature for leadership; and

- Consider leadership as based in learning—while recognizing that influence is an important, if not defining, feature of management.[11]

We move now to considering the concept of the management mode, delving into the nature of management only as far as necessary to clarify the relationship with leadership.

Understanding the Management Mode

"During my meetings I bring up agenda items pertaining to the group's area of responsibility. We may have a customer with a dramatic increase in unexpected volume that requires immediate attention. I will start by asking them to clearly define the problem; then we start listing alternatives to fix our problem. I keep prodding them to give more alternatives and will only volunteer some of my alternatives after I have exhausted all of their alternatives. All of them understand that no alternative is wrong or inappropriate, that we want to get everything out on the table. After the options are out, we then look at the up and down side of each and continue to proceed to narrow them down until we have a basic course of action. This is the way we solve the problems of the day, week, or month."

This extract, from *Leading with Questions*, by Michael Marquardt, quotes an executive describing how he works with his group to solve operational problems.[12] As it happens, the action recounted by the executive is typical of the management mode. The management mode has three characteristic features:

- The focus is primarily on the explicit, rather than implicit, aspects of a problem (whether operational or more strategic in nature);

- Considerations of task are given priority over working in relationship; and

- The basis, or legitimacy, for action comes from authority. .

Focus is on Explicit Aspects of a Problem

When a person functions in the management mode, the accent is on "things," such as plans, business systems, strategies, governance arrangements, databases, reports, structures and measures. These things are perceived to have an existence in the external world separate from the person perceiving them. In terms of the iceberg model (from Chapter 2), the focus is primarily above the waterline; it is on explicit,

overt, or tangible matters that we are capable of observing and/or documenting. In the example about handling operational problems, a tangible matter of concern to the executive is the customer's "dramatic increase in unexpected volume."

Task has Priority Over Relationship

The second feature of the management mode is an emphasis on undertaking tasks. The management mode emphasizes doing or acting. Examples include assessing customer needs, allocating resources, delivering product, improving business processes, monitoring performance, measuring results, and so on.

To act in the management mode implies operating on the surrounding environment to achieve individual or group objectives, perhaps doing so jointly with others, but with the emphasis more on task accomplishment than on working in relationship. In the extract about the executive's meeting, we see the task orientation in the focus being put on the staff to identify a course of action to deal with the customer's volume increase.

It is important to note that giving priority to task accomplishment in a particular situation does not imply a rejection of contemporary human resources concepts to do with including, respecting, and valuing people. In the example, the executive apparently values the input of his team members in that he relies on their cooperation to identify and assess possible solutions. But, the interaction is not of the relational variety considered in chapters 2 and 3, with its emphasis on joint inquiry. The executive here maintains control of the interaction; for instance, he does not reveal his alternatives until the team members have exhausted theirs.

Basis is in Authority

We have said that to act in the management mode is to focus on the explicit side of problems, and to put task above relationship in the particular instance. What enables us to take such action? It is the authority we hold, even if that authority is expressed in subtle ways, or only alluded to obliquely, as in the executive referring to "my meeting." Authority is what gives legitimacy to actions in the management mode.

Authority takes different forms—and we shall briefly outline three types insofar as they are relevant to the leadership-management relationship:

* Supervisory authority

* Technical/professional authority

* Implied authority.

Supervisory Authority This is the authority that characterizes manager-subordinate relationships, and is the form most customarily associated with management.[13]

We tend to link the use of such authority with the giving of direction and the application of sanctions. Often, supervisory authority is not overtly referred to, but it is there, in the background, shaping the interaction.

In today's workplace, relying directly on supervisory authority is generally not the best approach for getting things done. Good management practice involves working with others in ways likely to elicit cooperation and goodwill. Nevertheless, employees tend to be aware of the presence of authority, as we saw in Chapter 1; they may elect to suppress thoughts and feelings if they sense that to speak up might displease those holding authority over them.

Technical/Professional Authority This is authority conferred upon people to allow them to perform particular services or functions. (The definition is a variation of one Ronald Heifetz proposes in *Leadership Without Easy Answers*.[14]) Examples include the authority that a parking enforcement officer uses to issue an infringement notice, the authority an auditor uses to review a set of financial accounts, or the authority a doctor in a hospital uses when ordering diagnostic tests. Often, people acting with technical/professional authority are in an advisory, rather than decision-making, role. In such instances, the exercise of authority is more about having a "seat at the table," about being in a position to put forward one's views and to advise, rather than about making decisions. An example is a human resources manager proposing a recruitment strategy to a line manager.

When the human resources manager proposes a recruitment strategy, we could say she is operating in the management mode. The explicit aspect of the problem being dealt with is the recruitment strategy; the task aspect is *proposing* the strategy; her authority comes from her specialist role. The point of making that distinction is not to label every action by a professional or technical person in which they rely on their authority as being in the management-mode, but to encourage us to consider whether alternative interventions, reflecting a learning-leadership stance, might be available. As an example, let us imagine a leadership-mode alternative to this intervention. For instance, the HR manager might work with the line manager to explore the underlying problem for which a "recruitment strategy" has been seen as a solution. They jointly identify deeper issues which are resulting in increased rates of staff turnover. Together, they work towards developing a vision of the future in which these issues have been overcome.[15]

Implied Authority This category describes the authority that people claim to hold as their "right," even when they cannot specify the basis for that authority. (It may, in fact, have an explicit, statutory, or other basis). Examples include a person asserting the moral authority to speak up and complain that a colleague has no right to bully her, or a father asserting parental authority in order to negotiate a homework agreement with his daughter.

With this category, we are including authority that people *expect* to be able to exercise, whether in the workplace or in their lives outside of work. The inclusion of this category underscores that management-mode action can occur in circumstances that we might not ordinarily associate with "managing." Consider the father negotiating with his daughter as an example. An implication here is that if a person is acting in relation to the explicit dimension of a problem (such as a homework agreement), is favoring task action (negotiating the agreement), and is relying on the authority they believe they have ("my authority as a parent"), then we can describe them as acting, in that instance, in the management mode.[16]

Again, identifying this form of authority with management-oriented action encourages us to think about the possibility of leadership-mode intervention alternatives. Perhaps what to the father is a homework problem, to the daughter is more a problem of her father being too controlling. We might imagine the father (or the daughter) seeking to establish shared meaning in order to create a fundamental change in the way they relate to each other, incorporating homework-related considerations. Such action is suggestive of the leadership mode.[16]

The key point from this section is that we act in the management mode when we rely on authority to focus attention on the explicit aspects of a problem and on task attainment, as a priority over relational interactions. Identifying specific actions as being in the management mode sensitizes us to consider the possibility of learning-leadership alternatives.

Deepening our Understanding of the Management Mode

While attention to task accomplishment is integral, the management mode is not only concerned with implementing plans, executing decisions, and attending to day-to-day matters. Management mode work can also encompass activities that might be thought of as more strategic: where complex questions as to possible courses of action need to be considered, and where higher-order cognitive processes are critical. Activities such as determining a corporate strategy, reviewing a merger proposal, or deciding on whether to launch a new product line or to close down a business can all be considered as being in (or mainly in) the management mode, insofar as they involve a focus on the explicit part of a problem, have a task orientation, and are legitimized by authority.

When we choose to address a problem in the management mode, we are assuming, though perhaps not consciously, that the problem requires action other than the kind of relationally-oriented, joint exploration discussed in chapters 2 and 3. We may make that assumption because we see the problem as largely technical (with a single solution to be found). Alternatively, we recognize the problem is contentious—with multiple possible interpretations—but we see the contention as something to be controlled or "dealt with," rather than as a potential source of intelligence, insight, and energy.

Many kinds of action are possible in the management mode, with the core element being that we are "operating on" the problem; we are taking some kind of action in relation to it. We might be trying to push our own views through in the face of perceived opposition; we might be trying to broker an agreement or compromise; or, we might be seeking to find a solution through "arguing" the matter out with others. We might set about obtaining additional information (e.g., more data and/or specialist advice or assistance). Possibly, we could be using our authority to defer, re-allocate, or shut-down activity. Whatever the form of action, we are utilizing the more detached style of working (as described in Chapter 3 in relation to Alice), rather than a relational style, in which we consciously view ourselves as having a connection to the problem, and we hold our own views as open to question.

We are now in a position to summarize the key differences between the management and leadership modes.

In general, we are operating in a **Management Mode** when we:

- Assume that a detached, rather than relational, style of working is needed to bring a problem, whether technical or contentious, under control;

- Focus on the explicit aspects of the problem/issue;

- Focus on tasks and actions; and

- Rely on whatever authority we hold.

By contrast, we are in a **Leadership Mode** when we:

- Assume that the problem we are facing is not technical, but contentious— reflecting different perceptions—and that dealing with it effectively will require shifts in thinking, and perhaps behavior, by some or all stakeholders;

- Focus on both the implicit and explicit aspects of the problem, recognizing that engaging with defensiveness (including our own) is likely to be a key factor in making progress; and

- Focus on working relationally to "mine" collective intelligence and build shared meaning so that integrated understandings, directions, and solutions can emerge.

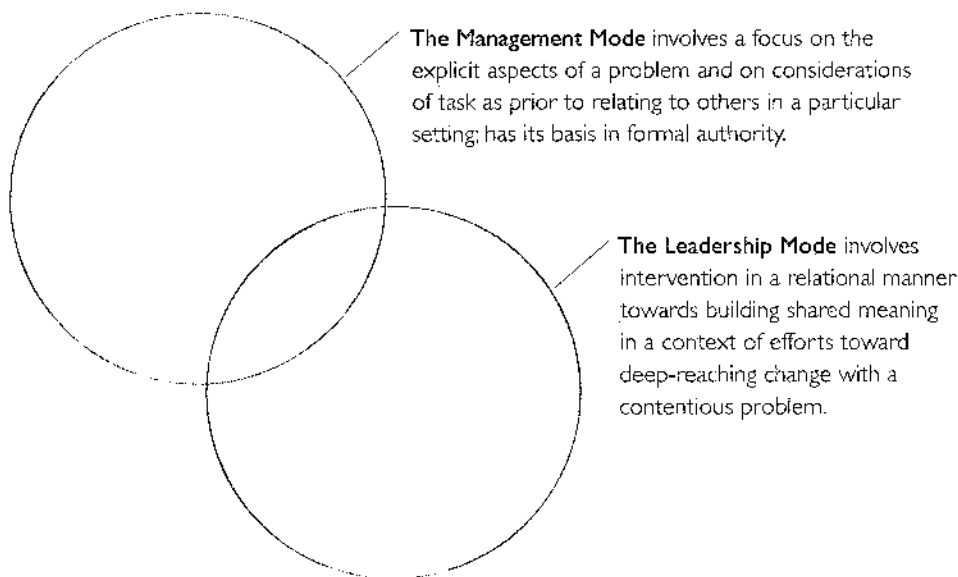## Leadership and Management as Complementary Processes

Now that we have effectively distinguished leadership from management, it is important to point out that the management mode is not the opposite of the leadership mode; it is different. Regarding the two as opposites only leads into

unhelpful debates about whether one is superior to, or more important than, the other. Rather than thinking leadership *versus* management, it is more productive to think in terms of leadership *and* management; they are complementary.

The complementarity can be seen in the story of Alice's efforts toward school change in Chapter 3. Her earlier actions, such as sending staff to development programs and developing improvement strategies, indicate that she was working in the management mode (though the management-mode side of her work was not named as such at that point).[17] Later in the story, there were signs that Alice was moving in the direction of working jointly with the teachers to think about teaching and learning practices. This suggests she was taking more of a leadership-mode stance. To achieve substantial change, Alice would very probably need to make many interventions—in each of the modes—over a lengthy period.

Just as the two modes are not opposites, there is also no sharp separation between them.[18] At one level, each mode does have clearly distinguishing features, but there is also a degree of ambiguity in the relationship. Some activities are hard to label as either leadership or management.[19] As with the relationship between the three leadership-mode concepts in the last chapter (relational working, mindful working, practice-basis), it is more productive to think of the leadership-management distinction as a soft or permeable one, acknowledging that in some situations the differences can be difficult to discern.[20] (In Figure 4.1, below, the ambiguity is represented by the overlapping area of the circles.)

FIGURE 4.1 Relationship of Leadership and Management

The Management Mode involves a focus on the explicit aspects of a problem and on considerations of task as prior to relating to others in a particular setting; has its basis in formal authority.

The Leadership Mode involves intervention in a relational manner towards building shared meaning in a context of efforts toward deep-reaching change with a contentious problem.

The point, therefore, is not to try to assign each and every action you take (or observe) to one or other category.[21] Nor is there likely to be much value in "typing" people as being oriented more toward one mode or the other. While it might be presumed that most will have a preference for one or the other form, conceivably just about everyone in an organization needs to do some of each, even if a very small amount. (Of course, the preferences of work colleagues come into the equation; if your co-workers are mainly inclined toward leadership, there may be little need for you to demonstrate capability in this mode.) Likewise, the relative importance of the two modes can be expected to vary over time for any individual—though not in any predictable fashion, being more dependent on circumstances at a particular time. It might also be expected that those further up the organizational hierarchy would perform—or at least be expected to perform—more leadership work than their less elevated colleagues. Ideally, virtually anyone in an organizational role could develop the capacity to function to at least some degree in each mode, and to be able to move into the appropriate mode as required. In practice, this is difficult, particularly because many forces come together to encourage a predominance of the management mode.

Leadership in the Shadow of Management

Although we tend to attach greater importance and status to leadership than to management when we think of the two in conceptual terms (as suggested at the beginning of this chapter),[22] when it comes to *practice*, management generally takes precedence over leadership.

The idea that management, rather than leadership, tends to constitute the bulk of effort in organizations is not new. Prominent authors including Warren Bennis, John Kotter, and Stephen Covey have variously made this point.[23] Perhaps not so well understood are the patterns and dynamics that tend to keep leadership playing second fiddle to management. Gaining an appreciation of these factors is essential if we are to better capture the potential for mutually supportive actions in the two modes.

Managers and professionals attending my workshops routinely state they would like to do more leadership work, but that there is "no time." The sense of not having enough time to do the things we want or need—is obviously a struggle with which many of us in today's pressure-cooker world can relate. There is relentless pressure to produce short-term results; to satisfy customers, boards, and regulatory agencies; to keep day-to-day business moving along. These all tend to reinforce a "deliver now" task-orientation, as well as a preoccupation with the explicit aspect of problems.

Under such pressures, people are likely to put their energy into what Stephen Covey, in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, termed "urgent" rather

than "important" matters.[24] As the old expression goes, it's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. Important—but less pressing—matters, such as building a shared agenda for the future, or integrating knowledge from diverse perspectives, can be effectively crowded out by forces to perform management-oriented functions.

In addition, the payoffs from leadership work can take some time to become evident—assuming they eventually do. This further buttresses the bias towards management-mode work. As one general manager put it, when discussing a proposal to develop learning-centered leadership among his managers, "What is this going to do for my next quarter sales results?" The answer is probably very little. Learning-centered leadership involves acting in the present for benefits that are often deferred, as with developing the capability of the general manager's business to achieve future results. Such delayed benefits are difficult to quantify, at least initially. Something of a leap of faith is required to justify investing in leadership in the short term, believing it will pay dividends at a later time. A degree of both courage and conviction is necessary as well, for we must deal with the combination of uncertain future outcomes and short-run pressures to perform.

These same pressures also ensure that the effectiveness of one's performance is most likely to be judged on the basis of management, rather than leadership. Consider the case of Gary, a middle manager and former union organizer. Gary enjoyed getting involved in all sorts of innovative activities in his organization. A lover of ideas and of change, Gary was credited by his colleagues with kick-starting several important initiatives. Yet, his boss regarded him as lacking in the management of ongoing tasks, noting timeliness and tuning in to stakeholder expectations as "areas needing improvement." If, like Gary, you are not seen, first-and-foremost, as able to deliver the results or outputs that stakeholders require on a day-to-day basis, you are unlikely to command a great deal of credibility for your ability to enact leadership, learning-centered or otherwise.

Learning-centered leadership, with its emphasis on working relationally on deep-seated problems, necessarily brings us up against sensitive and emotionally-loaded issues and the fears and anxieties that accompany these. Will I be seen as rocking the boat? What if people do not like my ideas, or do not share the vision? How will I deal with those who oppose me? Will my leadership be seen as effective? It can be easier to avoid engaging in leadership action than to face such fears directly. Because of the strong management focus in most organizations, such avoidance can usually be rationalized without difficulty; you can easily tell yourself, or instance, that short-term task priorities necessitate your focusing on management-oriented work.

A preoccupation with the management mode relative to leadership can act as a shield, a false protection that prevents us from deeply engaging with reality. It can enable us to skirt around the more troublesome, covert side of issues that leadership implies. The task emphasis associated with the management

orientation sees problems as "out there," apart from us. This distancing protects us from having to face up to how we may be contributing to the creation and framing of those problems. In contrast, the relational emphasis in the leadership mode requires that we place ourselves at least partly within the system of concern. We saw this in the Chapter 3 story concerning Alice and her efforts to achieve school change, where Alice discovered she needed to focus less on "operating on" the teachers, and more on working in relationship with them. A central question for practitioners in the leadership mode is, "In what ways might my own behavior or approach be contributing to the problems with which I am engaging?"

Another reason for its dominance is that working in the management mode brings its own satisfactions; for many, it provides a great sense of fulfillment. "Fixing" problems can seem to be more personally satisfying than the process-oriented work of delving into underlying (non-technical) causes and building shared vision. To the extent that we do it successfully, our focusing on tasks and the explicit aspects of problems yields immediate, positive feedback and affirmation; the more nebulous nature of leadership-mode work means these benefits are often harder to come by.

Although the theme being explored here concerns how and why the management mode overshadows leadership in practice, it is, quite ironically, the case that management skills are not well developed in many organizations. In addition, those who need to apply them, often do not. Technically oriented people, in particular, frequently prefer to focus on their area of passion—be it software development, teaching, accounting, neurosurgery, or whatever—rather than attend to management-oriented work. In these instances, developing management proficiency should be an important priority.

The concern here is not with the management mode as such, but with the pervasiveness with which a management perspective on problems tends to eclipse a leadership view. Often, leadership seems to exist in the shadow of management; in more extreme cases, the eclipse is virtually total. When that is so, leadership is a largely untapped potential, as suggested in Figure 4.2.

FIGURE 4.2 The Management Mode Commonly Eclipsing Leadership

The Management Mode

The Leadership Mode
(largely obscured)
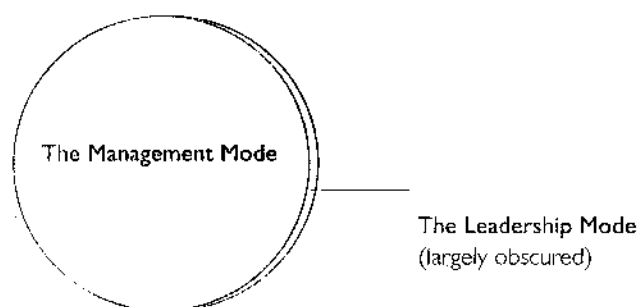
The dominance of the management mode tends to be self-perpetuating. If few people are actually practicing leadership, there will be hardly any role models to inspire and support others. In these circumstances, those who are potentially interested in practicing in the leadership mode receive few signals indicating that such actions are encouraged and valued.

The core problem is that the management way of seeing and acting does not recognize or provide any mechanism for engaging relationally with the implicit domain. It does not concern itself with the realm of hidden, but vital, perceptions, assumptions, feelings, and experience that we saw in chapters 2 and 3 as being so critical to dealing effectively with contentious problems (and thus, critical to learning-centered leadership). In environments that value the explicit over the implicit, task-oriented working over relational working, and authority over collaborative processes, it is difficult to create conditions to support the kind of deep-reaching conversation needed to explore what is really going on, develop shared vision, and generate energy for change. An organizational obsession with "things," tasks, and authority can snuff out virtually all efforts towards leadership. Leadership becomes almost encased within a management-oriented view of the world.

The pre-eminence of the management mode does not come without cost. Continually playing catch-up can become the order of the day; deeper issues remain unattended, perhaps undiscussed, while patch-up solutions are applied, possibly to the organization's eventual detriment. Frequently, the lack of meaningful engagement with deep-seated issues becomes a major source of dissatisfaction for both employees and other stakeholders. Reality can come to be defined in pessimistic terms—"This is the way it is, get on with it"—reflecting a sense of powerlessness that people at all levels feel about their capacity to effect or change anything important.

Differentiating between leadership and management does not, of itself, eliminate such problems, but it does provide a structure for thinking and acting differently in relation to them. Our first step in realizing this potential is to strive to recognize what is unambiguously leadership and management, and to carefully consider our use of each, while also being alert to the ambiguity at the interface of the two modes.

"Seeing" Leadership in Relation to Management

The vision inspiring this chapter is that our understanding of the two modes will lead to more informed action. That means being able to interweave the two productively as circumstances suggest, possibly on a moment-by-moment basis. To do so, we must be able to consciously *choose* between the two modes at a point in time (a theme to be developed in the next chapter). That is why we must be able to distinguish leadership from management action.

Unless we can absorb this distinction ourselves, and help others to see it, it is likely that management-mode thinking and action will continue to overwhelm leadership in most organizations. The prospect is that leadership will exist as little more than lofty words and perhaps good intentions, as an espoused value rather than an enacted value. If the status quo continues, people will believe they are enacting leadership when their activities could be described more accurately as management-related. The kind of leadership we are discussing here would remain just an untapped potential.

This should be a concern, but not an obsession. Echoing the concept of mindful working from Chapter 3, we need to become aware of the differentiation between leadership and management, without becoming preoccupied or unduly distracted by it. An illustration of this attitude comes from an interview on Australia's *Radio National* with a former prisoner.[25] Asked how he looked back on his life in jail, the ex-inmate talked about the need to "see it, but not stare at it." The need he expressed is to notice, to be aware, but not to become consumed by such thoughts.

Distinguishing leadership and management processes is a step in empowering ourselves to make conscious choices about how to act, to move between the two modes as circumstances require. As the comments at the chapter's beginning suggest, making the distinction can help build awareness of different action possibilities. Having an appreciation of the two modes and how they fit together enables us to assess how much of each we are actually doing, and how much we need to do. If we understand, and seek to develop our capability in leadership-mode interventions as well as those of the management mode, we can potentially develop a much stronger and better-rounded repertoire of responses to the challenges we face.

Holding the two modes apart is not a matter of agonizing over whether particular actions represent leadership- or management-mode work, or striving to attain some preconceived notion of balance. It is more a matter of reflecting from time to time on the choices one makes and on the relative amount of attention we give to each mode. Obviously, if you find yourself practicing very little leadership—or none at all—it might be opportune to consider what factors are driving this outcome, and what options are open to you. To the extent you are able to catch yourself making decisions about intervention strategies, you may open up more opportunities for trying a leadership-mode approach. (The following chapters provide more guidance on how to take advantage of such opportunities.)

Obsessive concern is not the answer, nor is under-playing the significance of the leadership-management relationship. Such under-emphasis is sometimes indicated when people acknowledge that the two forms of action are different, but then act as if the difference is of no consequence. One workshop participant put it like this: "Yes the differences are interesting, but can't we just note them

then move on?" To do so is, in effect, to allow the dominance of the management mode to continue unrecognized, unquestioned, and unabated. Yet, it is easy to turn away from serious consideration of the relationship.

Imagine you are in a city you have not previously visited. You are walking through a shopping area when you come across two young street performers. One a baritone, the other a tenor, the two men are performing a jazz classic. You listen for a few moments. You notice that while each of the voices is pleasing in its own right, one of the voices basically overpowers the other. Somehow the idea of the two singers as a duo is not effectively realized. You move on.

So it is with leadership and management. The common confusion between leaders and leadership, the multiplicity of leadership models (most of them influence-based), and the dominance of management processes in most work settings all make it harder to imagine and seriously envision the prospect of leadership and management enhancing one another. As with the two discordant singers, the prospect can seem more pipedream than reality.

Yet, setting aside ideas about "the leader," and about leadership as grounded in authority and influence, as we did in Chapter 1, opens up scope for conceiving of the leadership and management relationship afresh. To the extent that we are able to recognize, and set aside, our well-worn assumptions about leadership, we will have a clear vantage point for developing our practice in the leadership mode in light of the relationship between the two.

Interweaving the Leadership and Management Modes

The essential message is that each of the two modes provides something not found in the other. Once we see the distinction, the potential arises to create a more complete set of pathways for intervention. There are no hard and fast rules as to how best to combine the leadership and management modes to good effect. While sometimes you might intervene primarily in one mode, on other occasions you may find that utilizing the two modes in close conjunction gives added traction. Below are some illustrations that demonstrate how actions taken in each mode can beneficially round out efforts in the other.[26]

Re-orienting the Executive Group This group spends most of the time in its extended monthly meetings discussing pressing business issues, sharing information, and coordinating activities (management mode). The chief executive is frustrated that the group does not give more attention to some of the "bigger" issues involving complex change, and that members seem to place low importance on their membership of the group in comparison to running their own parts of the business. He initiates conversation with group members about their perceptions of the group and of him; he declares his own dissatisfaction and inquires into how

others feel about the group (leadership mode). As an outcome of these conversations, the group decides to restructure their meetings (management mode)[27] to enable more time for conversing and coming to new understandings of the previously neglected issues (leadership mode).

The Customer Survey A divisional head arranges for a customer survey to be undertaken in order to assess satisfaction with her division's products and services. On receipt of the results, which identify some significant issues, the head and her executive colleagues compare the results with those of a previous survey and with industry benchmarks, and identify some potential action strategies (management mode). The head also works with mixed groups of stakeholders from different parts of the business, as well as external partners, to make sense of the underlying messages and implications for change (leadership mode).

Executive Performance Problem A general manager is unhappy about the performance of one of his managers. The general manager arranges for an external review of the manager's area (management mode), which confirms several problems. The general manager and the manager agree on an improvement strategy and monitoring process (management mode). After a while, and noticing the manager still seems dissatisfied, the general manager initiates a conversation with him with a view to uncovering and working on any deeper issues, including those affecting their relationship (leadership mode). One issue that emerges is a lack of support by the general manager; this is factored in to a revised improvement plan (management mode).

Organizational Restructuring Due to concerns about the quality of customer service, an executive team initiates a restructure to create incentives for staff to improve their skill levels, and to better reward those with advanced skills (management mode). A discussion paper is prepared and circulated among the staff, to gain input on the proposals (management mode). As the discussion paper attracts little response, the executive team rethinks its approach and initiates conversations with groups of managers and staff to better understand the reasons for the customer service problems (leadership mode). As a result, the restructure plans are modified (management mode).

Leadership and Management in the Classroom A schoolteacher engages her class in a small group dialogue process to explore the implications of climate change, and to consider how everyone's behaviors, including her own and those of the students, can contribute to making a difference (leadership mode). During the dialogue she monitors the participation of individual students and seeks to draw out those who are holding back (management mode).

Dealing with Risk Keen to reduce its exposure to workplace accidents, a business unit institutes a program to categorize and evaluate major risks, improve its risk assessment and treatment processes, and ensure that employees are appropriately trained (management mode). In addition, employees are involved in ongoing conversations and action learning projects, designed to strengthen the organization's capacity to recognize and respond to risks before they have an adverse impact (leadership mode).

These examples have illustrated how leadership- and management-mode interventions can potentially support and reinforce each other. The leadership mode contribution is in the joint thinking; it is in the relational processes of achieving well-grounded understandings of the issues, contemplating preferred futures, and drawing forth energy to make change happen. The management mode shows its usefulness when the need is to focus on the harder, more concrete aspects of the problem, and to take action to improve or remedy the situation, with the legitimacy of the action stemming from authority.

Activating the leadership mode and interweaving it with management requires bringing it out of the shadow of management. This is not a matter of seeking to put leadership on a pedestal, or to mark it as more important than management. It is more a case of striving to ensure that leadership is valued and enacted in practice when it is needed, not just declared as important. Bringing about a greater emphasis on leadership-mode practice for ourselves and others requires facing up to the kinds of obstacles described in this chapter. For many of us, the greatest challenge may be to deal with our own fears and anxieties about undertaking this work. Leadership-mode work involves an element of personal choice. Admittedly, such choices are constrained by the realities of the modern workplace, but a degree of choice exists nonetheless. The challenge is to find openings, and then to act on them.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we set about untangling the fourth "vine in the forest of leadership," the assumption that leadership and management cannot be gainfully separated. We recognized a need to set aside questions of leaders and managers in order to distinguish leadership processes from those of management. Without a process emphasis, we would bump up against the problem of leader-manager comparisons relegating managers to a second tier. We saw also how the other vines—those identifying leadership with authority and influence—contribute to confusion regarding the leadership-management relationship.

The management mode was defined in terms of a focus on the explicit aspects of problems and a concern with task accomplishment, with its legitimacy

deriving from authority. The leadership mode was defined earlier as involving relational thinking and action in order to build shared meaning on contentious problems in the pursuit of deep-reaching change.

While both modes are necessary, it is the management mode that predominates in most organizations and settings, often overwhelmingly so. Some reasons for this dominance were canvassed. One consequence of the pre-eminence of management processes is that leadership can become little more than an espoused value, while most action reflects a management-oriented way of seeing.

The leadership mode is different to, but not the opposite of, management; they are complementary. Maintaining an awareness of the differences between the modes—while recognizing a degree of overlap between them—opens up the prospect of making much more informed and intentional choices in our use of the two modes. We can utilize one or the other mode, or interweave both, in particular circumstances, as well as become more aware over time as to the relative attention we are giving each mode. Some examples were provided to illustrate how interventions can draw upon the complementary nature of the two modes, and to show the power of doing so.

uestions for Reflection

4.1 Thinking about your own organization, in what specific ways, if any, do you find the distinction between leadership and management helpful?

4.2 What proportion of your own work would you consider to be management-mode oriented? What proportion would be leadership? Based upon our discussion here, how satisfactory does this split now seem to you?

4.3 What implications, if any, do your responses in Questions 2 have for your approach to your work?