

Be an Agent of Positive Change: The Social Change Model of Leadership



“Leadership is a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change.”

Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007



Why use this model?

The Social Change Model promotes a highly participatory and nonhierarchical approach to leadership, meaning it is not necessary to have authority or a title in order to participate in a group’s leadership processes. It emphasizes commitment to making a difference rather than pursuit of position of power. Leadership ultimately serves as a catalyst for change that benefits others in our local and global communities.

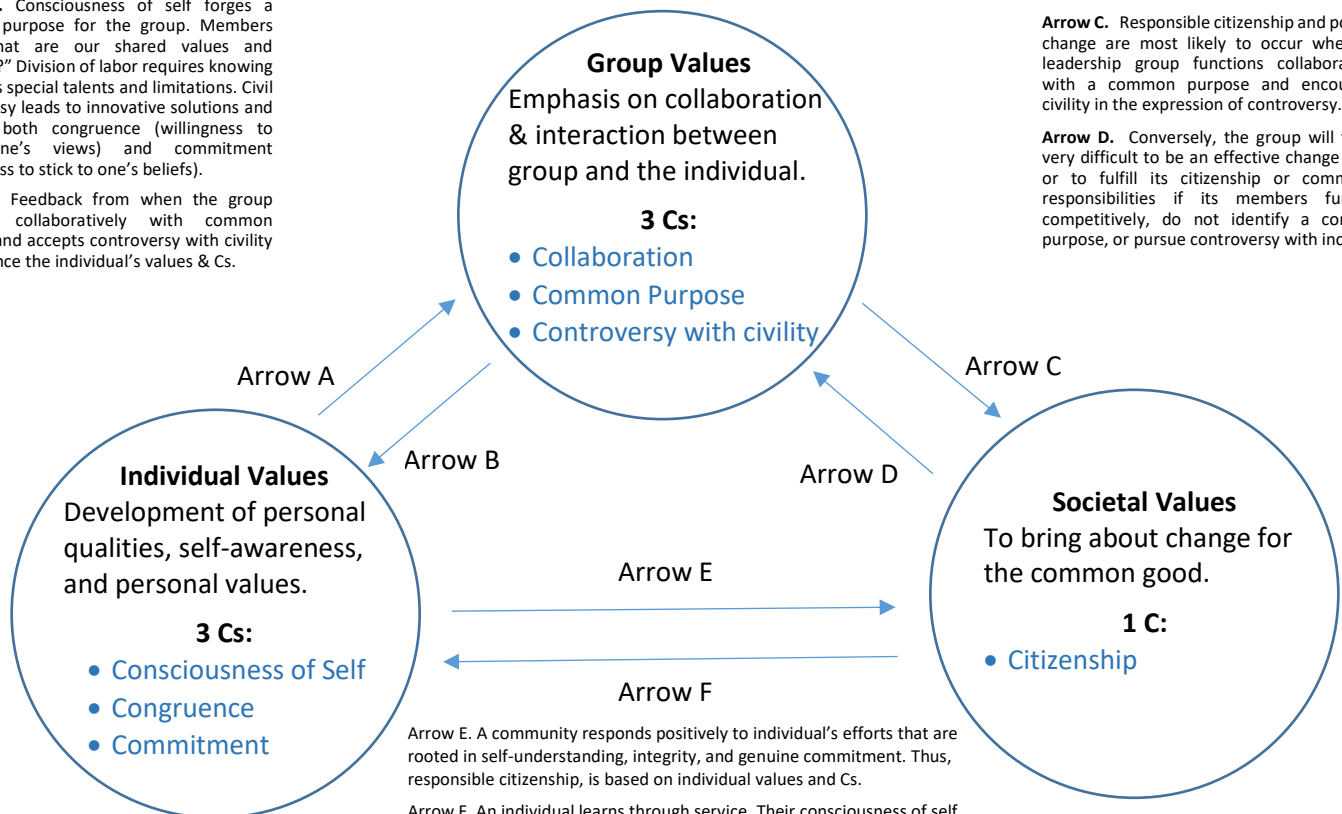
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LEADERS? Working as a leader in social change, one must understand the effective approach to working in a group to create change. Social change happens by addressing issues through active engagement with stakeholders as well as having a deep understanding of the root causes and needs of the community.

Arrow A. Consciousness of self forges a common purpose for the group. Members ask, “What are our shared values and purposes?” Division of labor requires knowing member’s special talents and limitations. Civil controversy leads to innovative solutions and requires both congruence (willingness to share one’s views) and commitment (willingness to stick to one’s beliefs).

Arrow B. Feedback from when the group operates collaboratively with common purpose and accepts controversy with civility will enhance the individual’s values & Cs.

Arrow C. Responsible citizenship and positive change are most likely to occur when the leadership group functions collaboratively with a common purpose and encourages civility in the expression of controversy.

Arrow D. Conversely, the group will find it very difficult to be an effective change agent or to fulfill its citizenship or community responsibilities if its members function competitively, do not identify a common purpose, or pursue controversy with incivility.



Arrow E. A community responds positively to individual’s efforts that are rooted in self-understanding, integrity, and genuine commitment. Thus, responsible citizenship, is based on individual values and Cs.

Arrow F. An individual learns through service. Their consciousness of self is enhanced through the realization of their capability. Commitment is enhanced when the individual realizes that positive change is likely to occur when individual actions are rooted in a person’s most deeply held values and beliefs.

INDIVIDUAL VALUES

Consciousness of Self

This simply means self-awareness of the values, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs that motivate one to take action. A person with a highly developed capacity for consciousness of self not only has a reasonably accurate self-concept but also is a good observer of their own behavior and state of mind at any given time.

Consciousness of self is a fundamental and constitutes the necessary condition for realizing all the other values in the model. It is key to being able to develop consciousness of others.

Discussion Questions: Why is it important to pay attention to your consciousness of self? How can one improve their consciousness of self? Do you know yourself? Do you know yourself well?

Congruence

Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity and honesty toward others.

Congruent persons are those whose actions are consistent with their most deeply held beliefs and convictions. Being clear about one's values, beliefs, strengths, and limitations, is essential. Congruence is interdependent with Consciousness of Self.

Discussion Questions: Why is congruence important? Have you ever behaved differently in a team and why? What is the risk of behaving inconsistently, with the lack of genuineness or authenticity? One can experience a strong pressure on expressing their values and beliefs while working in a team...what can one do to resist such pressure?

Commitment

The intensity and duration in relation to a person, idea, or activity that motivates the individual to serve. It is the energy that drives the collective effort. Commitment is essential to accomplishing change- It is the heart, the profound passion that drives one to action. This requires knowledge of self. No one can force a person to commit to something, but colleagues can create an environment that resonates with each individual's heart and passions.

Discussion Questions: Why is commitment important? Think about the commitment of the people in a group your involved with, or about the commitment in a relationship you have...what can you do to improve this commitment? What can instructors, mentors, and your peers do to improve their mutual commitment to the group?

GROUP VALUES

Collaboration

A central value in the model that views leadership as relational and a group process. Collaboration is about human relationships, about achieving common goals by sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability. It is leadership for service. It increases group effectiveness because it capitalizes on the multiple and diverse talents and perspectives to generate creative solutions and actions.

Discussion Questions: Why is collaboration important? What might be the negative impacts of a group not operating collaboratively? What does collaboration look like in a group?

Common Purpose

This develops when people work with others within a shared set of aims and values. Shared aims facilitate group members' engagement in collective analysis of the issues and the task to be undertaken. Common purpose is best achieved when all members of the group build and share in the vision and participate actively in articulating the purpose and goals of the group work.

Discussion Questions: Why is common purpose important? What might happen to a group whose members do not share a common purpose? How can you facilitate common purpose in a group?

Controversy with Civility

It recognizes that differences in viewpoint are inevitable and valuable, as well as, differences must be aired openly and with respect and courtesy. Disagreements are inherent in almost any social interaction or group process. They bring valuable perspectives and information to the collaborative group. Resolution is accomplished through open and honest dialogue backed by the group's commitment to understand the sources of the disagreement and to work cooperatively.

Discussion Questions: Why does controversy with civility look like? Why is it important? What may happen to a group whose members do not handle controversy with civility? Why wouldn't you just avoid controversy completely?

SOCIETAL VALUES

Citizenship

Citizenship names the process whereby the self is responsibly connected to the environment and the community. It acknowledges the interdependence of all involved in the leadership effort. Citizenship thus recognizes that effective democracy requires individual responsibility as well as individual rights. Citizenship, in the context of the Social Change Model, means more than membership; it implies active engagement of the individual and the leadership group in an effort to serve the community. It implies social or civic responsibility. It is, in short, the value of caring about others.

Discussion Questions: Can you explain the concept of citizenship using real-life examples? What are the communities you feel a part of? How can you be an active citizen in these communities? Why is citizenship important?
