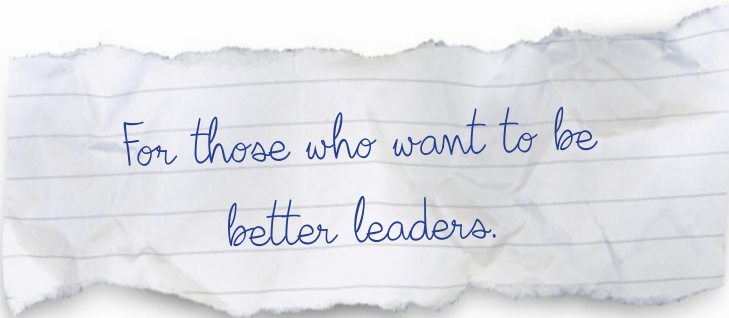


*short*  
V  
**A Guide to  
Leadership**

**Including tasks for readers  
and insights from the author.**



*For those who want to be  
better leaders.*

Student Number: 271778

Date: 07.03.2016

# Content

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. The History of Leadership Theory</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Definition of Leadership</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. The DNA of a Leader</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1. The DNA Helix	
4.1. The 4 Bases (Personality, Capability, Actions, Adaptability)	
4.2. The Backbone (Followers)	
<b>5. The Heart of a Leader</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>6. Management vs. Leadership</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>25</b>

# 1

## Introduction

*"Be the leader you would want to follow."*

Anyone in a position of leadership or interested in the concept of it has come across this quote, whether through reading it or as advice in a conversation. Though it does not give a definition of leadership, it highlights two important aspects of the discourse surrounding leadership:

- » **To this day, no universal definition of leadership exists.**
- » **Every leader is unique and so is every follower.**

This paper aims to serve as a guide to those interested in growing their understanding of leadership by discussing the make-up and purpose of a leader, exploring the importance of power and status for leadership and reflecting on the necessity of holistic leaders. Each part of the guide will offer practical experience, thoughts and tasks to reflect on, allowing the reader to grow his/her knowledge as desired.

# The History of Leadership Theory

2

## Control & Power

Leadership centralises on dominance enforcing obedience, respect, loyalty and cooperation.

1900  
- 1929

## Born Leaders

Personality and traits define leadership, influence gains popularity over dominance and the idea of followers influencing leaders emerges.

1930s

## It's a Group Thing

Leadership is seen as an individual's behaviour in a group setting. Differences between persuasive and coercive leadership are distinguished.

1940s

## Three themes

Group theory prevails, Behavioural theory develops into defining leadership as a relationship developing shared goals and emphasis on leader's effectiveness increases.

1950s

**1960s**

### **Oh Harmony!**

The behavioural approach dominates leadership definition.

**1970s**

### **Established**

The group focus gives way to the organisational behaviour approach.

**1980s**

### **Theory Explosion**

Scholarly and popular work increase, multiple definitions for leadership are proposed, with 4 persevering themes: Do as the leader wishes. Influence. Traits. Transformation.

**21st  
Century**

### **New Perspective & Harmony**

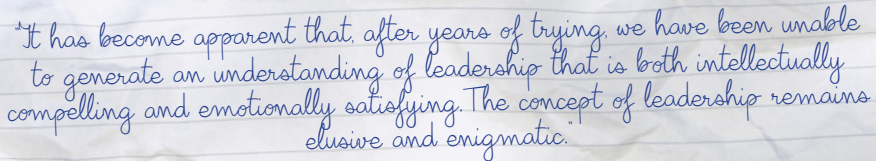
The debate of management vs. leadership continues, while new approaches emerge: authentic, spiritual, servant and adaptive leadership. Scholars agree that there is no common definition for leadership, but will have different meanings to different people.

Source: Northouse, 2016

# Definition of Leadership

## 3

In 1985, Meindl *et al.* made a gloomy yet realistic observation:



*"It has become apparent that, after years of trying, we have been unable to generate an understanding of leadership that is both intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying. The concept of leadership remains elusive and enigmatic."*

To this day this opinion prevailed. Bennis (2007, cited in O'Connell, 2013:183) calls the lack of a definition of leadership a cliché, Armstrong (2013) deems finding a single, comprehensive definition entirely impossible and Northouse (2016) finds that scholars have simply resigned to disagree on the topic.

Though these statements may seem discouraging, they ultimately strengthen an important observation: by nature, leadership deals with complex interactions between individuals and their social and organisational environments, whilst being influenced by global events and generational differences (Armstrong, 2013; Day *et al.*, 2014; Northouse, 2016). Based on this observation, the author of this guide suggests taking a new perspective on leadership, arguing that the definition and practice of leadership must be flexible to be successful and suggest defining leadership by its versatility rather than its limits.

Using Northouse's definition as a basis, the following definition of leadership is used in this text:

*"Leadership is a versatile process whereby an individual, driven by an assigned or chosen purpose, influences another individual or group of individuals, to share and ultimately achieve a common goal."*

**Insight:** In a recent University project my group was given the task to choose a project manager. Looking back, this presumably simple task is an excellent example of the abovementioned versatility of leadership. All five members of the team had proven their leadership skills in previous tasks, wherefore all could have been appointed. However, after discussing the project, needed skills, each other's personality, strengths and weaknesses and the situation overall, my team decided for me to lead, not because I was the best leader, but because my leadership style was the best fit.

### Task:

Whether you are a professional or student, you will have had experiences in the area of leadership. Take a moment to remember them and think about who was leading and how. Does the above-mentioned definition apply?

# The DNA of a Leader

## 4

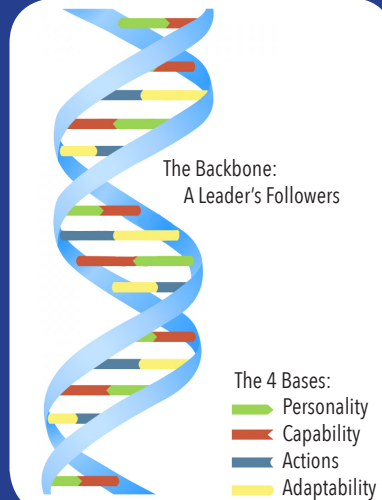
### 4.1 The DNA Helix

The DNA molecule in the human body carries genetic information and is made up of four types of nitrogenous bases connected to a backbone structure made of sugar and phosphate molecules, which together, form a double helix (VGEC, 2016). Just as the DNA molecule is vital for human existence, so is a successful leader vital for the existence of effective leadership. Figure 1 shows an adaption of the double helix to illustrate the make-up of successful leaders.

### 4.2 The 4 Bases

Over the years four theories gathered a large circle of advocates in the study of leadership: the Traits Approach, Skills Approach, Behavioural Approach and Situational Approach. Nonetheless, each approach was used as a separate way of defining leadership, exposing each to the weakness of being unable to provide a holistic picture. This weakness can be easily overcome by combining all four approaches into one, creating 4 equal bases for successful leadership.

**Figure 1: The DNA of a Leader**



**Source:** Adapted from Genome Research Limited, 2016



### 4.2.1. Personality (Traits Approach)

For a long time the personality of a person was seen as the sole key to successful leadership, but this view has been highly contended. Trait theory is seen as too ambiguous, inconsistent and generalised, even prohibiting the development of leadership theory and research (Armstrong, 2013; Day *et al.*, 2014). Though it may have been an easy explanation at first sight, over the years researchers identified over 1,000 traits without reaching a common consensus on a definite list of those that distinguish leaders from followers (Levine, 2008; Northouse, 2016). Another criticism towards this approach is its exclusion of those individuals who may not possess the generated list of characteristics.

Research on the trait approach shows that while personality alone does not make a successful leader, the amount of research conducted gives credibility to the belief that the personality of a leader is important. The trait approach also provides valuable assessment criteria for benchmarking leaders and can serve as a reminder to reflect from time to time (Northouse, 2016). Because of its evident value, the traits approach was added as one of the 4 bases of the DNA Helix.

#### Task:

John Adair produced a list of commonly accepted traits of great leaders. Take a couple of minutes to read through the list and then make notes on which traits you think you can improve on yourself and which ones you think you have already developed.

- Enthusiasm
- Confidence
- Toughness
- Integrity
- Warmth
- Humility

... a versatile process whereby an individual ...

Enthusiasm?

Integrity?

Confidence?

Warmth?

Toughness?

Humility?

... a versatile process whereby an individual ...

**Insight:** Beginning in my teenage years, people started calling me a 'born' or 'natural' leader, encouraging me that I would one day end up in a leadership position. I remember how these comments made me feel valued and important, but they also made me question myself. In times where leadership was required and I was not chosen or when I did not feel the respect I had hoped for from my peers, my belief in my 'natural leadership' was shaken.

The traits approach has shaped not only leaders around the world, but also followers. Unfortunately, as in my case, often also negatively. Though the approach can install great courage and confidence in some, it can also discourage others, depriving society of great leaders. It is therefore essential for any leader to highlight the importance of personality in development, so that no one may be excluded of making the world a better place.

#### 4.2.2. Capability (Skills Approach)

Similar to the traits approach, the skills approach also focuses on the leader, but instead of defining his/her personality, it concentrates on the knowledge and skills that make successful leadership possible. By focussing on the leader's capability, the skills approach actively promotes the image of the developed leader rather than the born leader (Northouse, 2016).

Katz's Three-Skill Model suggests that effective leadership depends on three basic capabilities: technical, human and conceptual skill. Technical skill comprise of knowledge in a specific type of work or activity, while human skill concerns

the understanding of and ability to work with people and conceptual skill describes the ability to create meaning, for example through a company's vision and strategy. Depending on the level of authority the emphasis on each of the three skills varies, as illustrated in figure 2. For example leaders in more senior positions will likely be required to strengthen their human and conceptual

**Figure 2: The Three-Skills Model**

	Skills Needed		
TOP Management	TECHNICAL	HUMAN	CONCEPTUAL
MIDDLE Management	TECHNICAL	HUMAN	CONCEPTUAL
SUPERVISORY Management	TECHNICAL	HUMAN	CONCEPTUAL

Source: Adapted from WEB

skills, while supervisory managers are likely to need high amounts technical skill (Northouse, 2016).

In the early 1990s in-depth research by Mumford *et al.* (2000) developed the Katz's approach further into the skill-based model. This model explored individual attributes and competencies of leaders, as well as the outcomes of

these in leadership, identifying problem-solving skills, social judgment skills and knowledge as the key factors of effective leadership. At the same time, the model aims to take career experiences and environmental influences into account, highlighting the complexity of leadership. The model's descriptive nature contains a significant strength compared to other models, as it urges the understanding of the entire leadership process. Additionally, the focus on development makes leadership available to everyone and presents an appropriate structure for leadership programs (Northouse, 2016).

On the other hand, critics highlight that it seems impossible for any leader to be able to master the entirety of the skills listed in the model. Furthermore, the majority of the samples used to create the model are of military nature, wherefore a connection to business and other areas of leadership can be questioned. Finally,

though the skills approach argues against the idea of traits, it does contain individual attributes, which paradoxically, are very similar (Northouse, 2016).

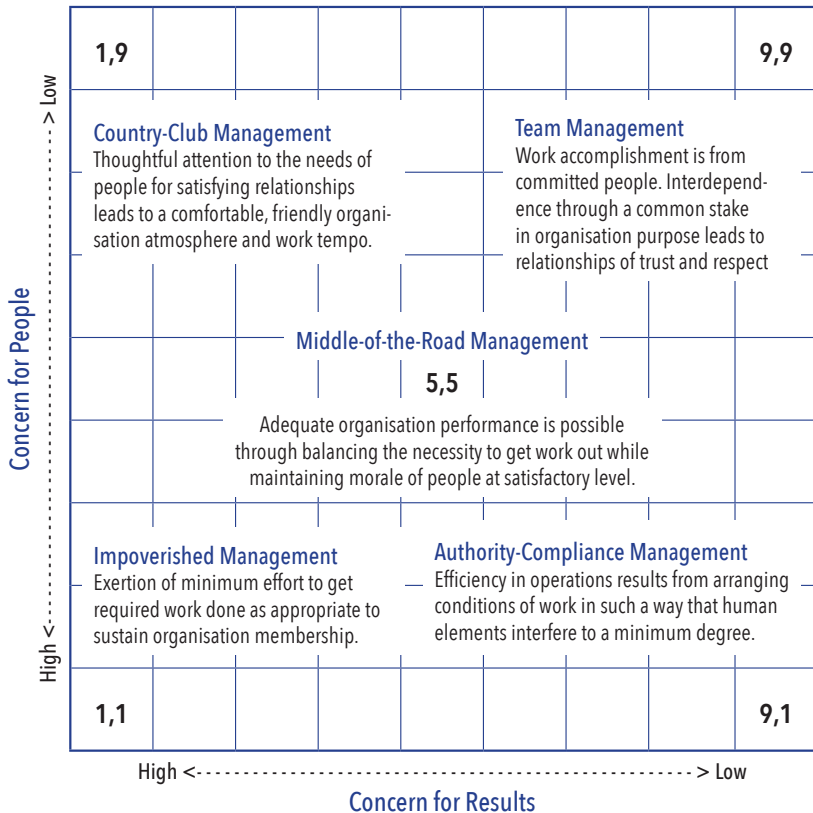
The skills approach is essential to the DNA Helix as it is the defender of developed leadership, making leadership accessible to all, rather than a selected pool of people. Both models also offer distinct areas that can easily be examined for improvement.

### 4.2.3. Actions (Behavioural Approach)

Different from the previous two approaches, the behavioural approach focuses on existing actions of leaders, basically on 'what they do'. The actions of leaders can be divided into two categories: task or also called job-centred behaviours and relationship/employee-related behaviours. While task behaviour focuses on getting the job done, relationship behaviours are concerned with the employees needs and feeling of comfort with themselves, another and the situation. The key to great leadership lies in a leaders application of the right amount of both behaviours to influence followers successfully (Armstrong, 2013; Northouse, 2016). The Leadership Grid gives an overview of the different leadership styles within the behavioural approach (see figure 3).

Instead of giving clear criteria by which leaders can measure their ability to lead well, the behavioural approach, similar to the skills approach, takes a descriptive style and explains the characteristics of existing behaviour rather than the needed behaviour. Some scholars criticise that the leadership grid suggests that the 9,9 Team Management Style is the most successful style, not taking into account the situational aspect of leadership (Armstrong, 2013). Others criticise the lack of a universal style of leadership that applies to all situations (Northouse, 2016). Based on the definition chosen for this text, this criticism is not considered significant as the definition defines leadership to be variable and a perfect fit in-existent.

**Figure 3: The Leadership Grid**



Source: Northouse, 2016:76

Due to the wide range of studies validating the model and the value of understanding the right balance between relationship and task orientation in leadership, the behavioural approach was added as the third base of the Leader's DNA.

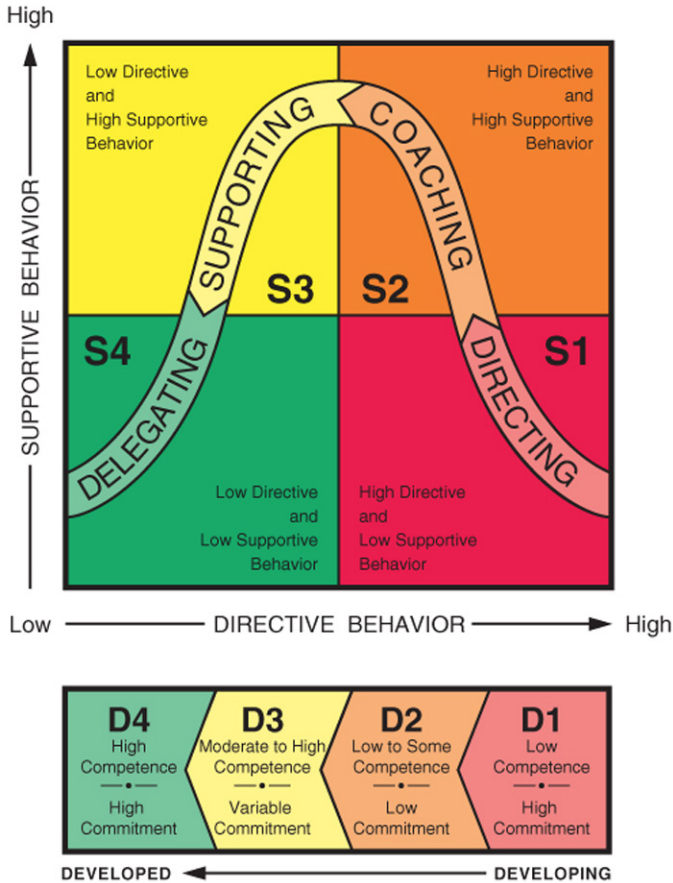
#### 4.2.4. Adaptability (Situational Approach & Contingent leadership)

Contingent leadership focuses on the leader's ability to read and understand situations and act appropriately, essentially drawing the opportunity to influence from that situation (Armstrong, 2013). Situational leadership is an extension of contingency theory. In 1969 Hersey and Blanchard first devised the Situational Leadership Model, which later developed into the SLII, the Situational Leadership II Model illustrated in figure 4 (Blanchard *et al.*, 2013). The SLII proposes that effective leadership requires leaders to understand their follower's developmental stage and adapt their leadership style to match it. This two-step method is particularly popular because of its practical nature and ease of application. It has served as great basis for many training programs, especially because it gives clear instructions for leaders on how to act and adapt. Nonetheless scholars ask for further research to prove the assumptions of the model, to improve the conceptualisation of competence and commitment and to create a more in-depth explanation of the development levels of followers. Finally, some criticise that the model does not clarify the boundaries of adaptability, leaving the leader to decide whether to adapt to the development level of each individual of a team or to that of the group (Northouse, 2016).

The situational approach highlights the importance of flexibility and adaptability in leadership, while stressing the individuality of followers and variability of leadership styles. Though more research is necessary to fully validate the SLII model, the principles of the approach fit perfectly into the chosen definition, wherefore adaptability forms the final base of the Leader's DNA Helix.

... influences another individual or group of individuals ...

Figure 4: Situational Leadership II

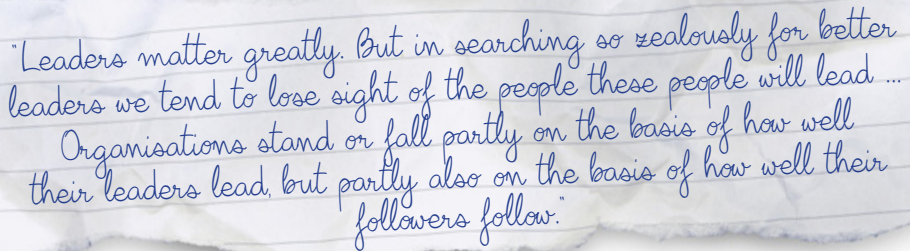


Source: The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2016



### 4.3 The Backbone

Without the backbone, the DNA helix cannot exist, because it forms the outer structure for the nitrogenous bases. Applying this to leadership, it becomes clear that the backbone of the Leader's DNA consists of the leader's followers.



"Leaders matter greatly. But in searching so zealously for better leaders we tend to lose sight of the people these people will lead ... Organisations stand or fall partly on the basis of how well their leaders lead, but partly also on the basis of how well their followers follow."

(Kelley, 1988:142)

Leaders need effective followers to be successful. While the theories that make up the four bases mostly concentrate on the development and engagement of the leader, the theories making up the backbone focus on supporting and enabling followers through effective leadership.

The following three theories have gained significant recognition in the field: the Path-Goal Model, Leader-member exchange theory and Leaders/Follower theory. While the Path-Goal Model is concerned with a leader's skill to motivate followers to accomplish certain goals, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory links successful leadership to a leader's ability to create a two-way relationship with all of his/her followers. Leaders/followers theory defines successful leadership by the leader's assistance of follower growth and his/her understanding of his/her follower's needs and hopes (Armstrong, 2013; Northouse, 2016).

## Task:

The following questions aim to provide a basis to reflect on how your backbone is established and where change could improve your leadership.

- What situation are you currently leading in and how do the circumstances affect your followers?
- How connected do you relate to your followers? Can you trust them and do they trust you? What kind of actions can you perform to get to know your follower's needs better?
- What are the expectations of your team towards you? Are you meeting these expectations?
- To which extent do your followers share your values and norms?
- Can you identify a distinction between the members of your team/your followers? Does your team consist of an in-group (team members you trust and happily give responsibility to, who directly impact your success) and an out-group (team members that are not very engaged, are usually given low responsibility jobs and often seem to hold you back) exist? How would you be able to include these 'out-group' members of the team?

# The Heart of a Leader

## 5

The chosen definition of leadership in this text presupposes the existence of a driver of leadership that is rooted in the chosen or assigned purpose of the leader. As discussed under 'The DNA of a Leader' traditional leadership theory mainly focuses on the leader and the interaction between leaders and followers. In recent years, leadership literature has taken a new approach aiming to explore successful leadership styles rather than criteria leading to successful leadership.

The author argues that these styles are the 'Heart of a Leader', reflecting his/her purpose and values and which most likely prompted the decision to take on leader responsibilities.

Based on this assumption, known leadership styles were categorised according to their purpose:

Leadership Style	Purpose/Driver
Charismatic Leadership	Inspiring followers to trust
Visionary Leadership	Gathering people under and convincing people of a common vision
Transactional Leadership	Obtaining control and results through exchange of valued things

<b>Transformational Leadership</b>	Bringing followers to embrace and enact change » Leaders that aim to be transformational, need to give support their followers in dealing with change. Adaptive leadership gives more insight into this subject, wherefore it should be considered when choosing the transformational leadership style.
<b>Authentic Leadership</b>	Convincing followers of authentic interest and empowering people based on deep personal values and convictions
<b>Servant Leadership</b>	Empowering people by putting them first, innate desire to serve

**Insight:** For two consecutive years I lead a team of 10 staff in taking care of 20-30 children and youth at a Summer Camp. Each year I was paired with another leader and each year we discussed each others personality, capabilities, leadership behaviour and situations we might face. Already throughout the summer camp I realised that though our preparation did have an impact, it was our team of staff and their respect, recognition and trust towards us which made the summer camp a success for all participants. Another observation I had was how even the senior leadership of the camp was not based on a desire for power, but every volunteer was devoted to the children and youth participating in the camp. This servant leadership style shaped everyone's behaviour during the camp and even afterwards.

# Management vs. Leadership

## 4

The management vs. leadership debate is an on-going one, with some regarding leadership and management as distinct but closely linked, other considering one a subset of the other and again others believe they are the same thing. Joining with Armstrong (2013), Adair (2003), Northouse (2016) and Drucker (*cited in* Walter, 2013), the author of this text regards management and leadership as distinct but linked.



"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."

(Drucker *cited in* Walter, 2013)

Management deals with objectives and goals set by the manager himself or his/her supervisors, while leaders are driven by their personal values and purpose. The terms already insinuate their difference with the term 'Management' implying a top-down, subordinate nature and 'Leadership' indicating autonomy and voluntary obedience. The following definitions highlight this distinction even further: management is the process of using all available resources efficiently to achieve set goals and leadership focuses on people as the key resource that enables goals to be reached (Armstrong, 2013).

... to share and ultimately achieve a common goal.

---

It is important to notice that since both management and leadership are needed to achieve a company's success, they are tightly linked in the organisational setting, but outside this setting, not all leaders will have to be involved in management. Great figures like Nelson Mandela, Ghandi, Martin Luther King and Anne Frank for example were not in charge of managing people, but their main task was to inspire people to embrace and support positive change (Bennis and Nanus, 1985).

# References

Adair J. (2003) *Not Bosses but Leaders: How to lead the way to success*. London: Kogan Page.

Armstrong, M. (2013) *Armstrong's Handbook of Management and Leadership: Developing effective people skills for better leadership and management*. London: Kogan Page.

Bennis W. G. and Nanus, B. (1985) *Leadership: The strategies for taking charge*. New York: Harper & Row.

Blanchard, K., Zigarmi, P. and Zigarmi, D. (2013) *Leadership and the one minute manager: Increasing effectiveness through Situational Leadership II*. New York: William Morrow.

Day D. Fleenor, J. W., Atwater, L. E., Sturm, R. E. and McKee, R. A. (2014) 'Advances in leader and leadership development: A review of 25 years of research and theory'. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25 (1): 63-82.

Genome Research Limited (2016) *Unravelling the double Helix* [Online] Available from: <http://www.yourgenome.org/stories/unravelling-the-double-helix> [Accessed 7 March 2016].

Mumford, M. D., Zaccaro, S. J., Harding, F. D., Jacobs, T. O. and Fleishman, E. A. (2000) Leadership skills for a changing world: Solving complex social problems. *Leadership Quarterly*, 11 (1): 11-35.

Northouse, P. G. (2016) *Leadership: Theory & Practice*. London: SAGE.

---

Kelley, R. (1988) 'In praise of followers'. *Harvard Business Review*, November/December : 142-48.

Levine, K. J. (2008) 'Trait theory'. In: Marturano, A. and Gosling, J. eds. *Leadership: The key concepts*. London: Routledge: 163-66.

O'Connell, P. K. (2014) 'A simplified framework for 21st century leader development'. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25 (2): 183-203.

The Ken Blanchard Companies (2016) Situational Leadership II (GSA) [Online] Available from: <http://www.kenblanchard.com/Solutions/Government-Solutions/Situational-Leadership-II-%28GSA-Approved%29> [Accessed 7 March 2016].

VGEC (2016) *Virtual Genetics Education Centre: DNA, genes and chromosomes* [Online] Available from: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/genetics/vgec/schoolscolleges/topics/dna-genes-chromosomes> [Accessed 7 March 2016].

Walter, E. (2013) '50 Heavyweight leadership Quotes', *Forbes*, [Online] Available from: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ekaterinawalter/2013/09/30/50-heavyweight-leadership-quotes/#3e15e756b6b4> [Accessed 7 March 2016].



# Appendices

## *About the Author*

My name is Jana Carina Wisekowski and I am currently a third year Business Management with Media Communications student at Bath Spa University. Throughout the past 10 years I have lived in various different countries (Germany, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Cambodia, Vietnam, South Africa, the UK and Kenya) and settings (academic, voluntary and casual), which made me subject to several leaders and their individual leadership styles. I do not deem myself an expert by all means, but I believe that I have undergone moments that have developed my understanding of leadership and have been surrounded by inspiring leaders that impacted me just the same.