SELF-ACTION LEADERSHIP:

AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF SELF-LEADERSHIP THROUGH ACTION RESEARCH IN SUPPORT OF A PEDAGOGY OF PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

A dissertation submitted
by
JORDAN REX JENSEN
To
FIELDING GRADUATE UNIVERSITY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

This dissertation has been accepted for the faculty of Fielding Graduate University by:

____________________________________
Rodney J. Beaulieu, PhD
Committee Chair

Committee:
Kathy Tiner-Sewell, PhD, Research Faculty
Four Arrows - Don Trent Jacobs, PhD, EdD, Faculty Reader
Fred Ellis, EdD, Student Reader
Christopher P. Neck, PhD, External Examiner

Self-Action Leadership:
An Autoethnographic Study of Self-Leadership Through Action Research

by

Jordan Rex Jensen

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an analytic Autoethnography that investigates Self-Leadership through the lens of Action Research for the purpose of introducing a new approach, Self-Action Leadership (SAL) through Self-Action Research (SAR). Self-Action Research is a form of Action Research focused on building one’s own personal and professional effectiveness and wellbeing, and Self-Action Leadership refers to an original, comprehensive theory and model of Self-Leadership that utilizes Self-Action Research, and that could potentially be utilized by any self-leader. In this study, personal stories and artifacts are presented as an autoethnographic case study of my journey in developing Self-Leadership, and connections are made to the primary, extant model of Self-Leadership (A Comprehensive Self-Leadership Framework) developed by leading Self-Leadership scholars Neck and Manz (2010). The SAL Theory and Model are presented as nomological constructs derived from an analysis of presented, qualitative data synthesized with relevant literature in multiple fields of inquiry including Self-Leadership and Action Research, and are intended to be applicable to other individuals seeking greater control of their personal development. The accompanying Pedagogy of Personal Leadership represents a basic curriculum template and toolbox that may benefit leaders and educators seeking to practice and teach Self-Leadership theory in nations, states, communities, schools, organizations, neighborhoods, homes, and individual lives.
KEY WORDS AND PHRASES: Self-Leadership (S-L), Autoethnography, Action Research (AR), Self-Leadership Efficacy (SLE), Self-Action Research (SAR), Self-Action Leadership (SAL), SAL Theory, SAL Model, Natural Laws of Acquisition (NLA), Self-Leadership Gravity (SLG), Self-Oneness, and Pedagogy of Personal Leadership. For the sake of clarity, key words and phrases will be capitalized throughout this dissertation—an APA style deviation.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I express appreciation to my dissertation chair, Dr. Rodney J. Beaulieu. Working with Rodney has proved to be a providential privilege along the pathways of my doctoral journey. Aside from admiring Rodney’s student-centric mentoring capacities and personal integrity, I also walk away from Fielding Graduate University having formed a genuine friendship with an impressive scholar. From our initial conversation together in 2010 (where I was first introduced to Autoethnography), to the final stages of my doctoral work, I have been blessed to work under his insightfully encouraging and respectful tutelage. An intelligent, savvy, and generous human being, Rodney is one of the rare members of the academe who is both intellectually secure and refreshingly honest and humble.

Next, I wish to thank the other faculty members on my committee: Drs. Kathy Tiner and Four Arrows (aka Don Trent Jacobs). Drs. Jacob’s and Tiner’s feedback was as valuable as their cooperation and optimism was supportive. This treatise is better for the insightful counsel you both offered so generously. Thank you both for your interest in my work and your willingness to serve on my committee.

To Dr. Fred Ellis, my student reader. I met Fred at Fielding’s 2011 National Session in Alexandria, Virginia. In so doing, I was honored to shake the hand of a man who has shaken the hand of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Fred’s unique life experiences growing up in Atlanta near Dr. King in the 1950s as well as his wealth of experience in education and beyond have molded him into a wise and generous scholar for whom I felt privileged to have on my committee. Thank you Fred, for your willingness to serve.
To Christopher P. Neck, Ph.D., my external examiner. An Associate Professor of Management and University Master Teacher at Arizona State University, and a former nine-time teacher of the year recipient at Virginia Polytechnic University (Virginia Tech), Dr. Neck is one of the most prolific and prestigious scholars in the field of Self-Leadership. He is also a remarkable teacher, researcher, and human being who has become a valued personal mentor of mine since we first began our correspondence in early 2011. Like Rodney, Chris is one of those rare members of the academe who is both intellectually secure and refreshingly honest and humble.

Lastly, I wish to express an added word of appreciation to my combined doctoral committee for their upbeat generosity and positive attitude in wading through the unusual length of this dissertation—a ponderous tome by anyone’s standards. I am awed that I did not hear more complaining. To Rodney, Kathy, Four Arrows, Fred, and Chris: a thousand thanks to each of you!

To Self-Leadership scholar Dr. Charles C. Manz (University of Massachusetts). I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Manz—the father of the Self-Leadership field in the academe. Dr. Manz first coined the term “Self-Leadership” when I was just four years old. His pioneering scholarship in the field has since paved the way for students like me to stand on the shoulders of giants like him in adding my two cents to the fire of Self-Leadership—an academic and professional fire that is destined to burn ever brighter and hotter as we move deeper into the twenty-first century. I also wish to thank Dr. Manz for his generosity in answering personal questions I posed to him via e-mail.
To Dr. Leon Anderson (Utah State University)—the father of analytic autoethnography. Like the work of Charles Manz, Leon’s work provided an essential academic foundation whereon I was able to build with this work.

Also to Self-Leadership scholars Henry P. Sims, Jr. (University of Maryland) and Jeffery D. Houghton (University of West Virginia) for answering the personal e-mails of a stranger (me) with generosity and enthusiasm.

To Barbara Mink, Ed.D., my Fielding mentor and dissertation chair for the first half of my doctoral program. Barbara helped me bridge the gap between the art of popular writing and the science of logic and scholarly script. Also to the late Dr. Norman Harris, who provided a valuable critique of my dissertation while still in the proposal stage.

To Dr. Bruce H. Jackson, through whom I learned about Fielding’s distributed learning opportunity. I first met Bruce in college when my brothers and I built shelves in his garage and basement. I later served as one of his personal assistants at The Center for the Advancement of Leadership at Utah Valley State College (now Utah Valley University). An anomalous example of Self-Leadership, Bruce has been, and continues to be, a valued mentor and appreciated friend of mine.

To Pauline S. Jensen, Ruth S. Silver, Steve & Ida Anderson, the late Laverda B. Jensen, Ida Smith, and Rex Buckley Jensen for provided financial loans and/or personal grants that enabled me to write and publish I Am Sovereign: The Power of Personal Leadership (2005), a book I wrote on personal leadership for teens that represents the popular beginnings of the academic work contained in this dissertation.
To my father, Rex Buckley Jensen, and my mother, Pauline Smith Jensen, for raising me in an atmosphere of love and respect where my value and importance as a human being was continually affirmed. Thank you for never giving me a reason to doubt I possessed the talent and potential to accomplish significant goals if I was willing to think big, work hard, and play by the rules. My parents were not perfect, but they were providentially perfect for me.

To my older brothers: Paul, David, Wayne, and Joe, for their examples of Self-Leadership excellence and their continual affirmation of my worth and potential as I was growing up. As a boy, I idolized my brothers. Today they continue to exemplify honorable characteristics of Self-Leadership and integrity in the way they lead their lives, care for their families, and contribute to the greater good of mankind through their chosen professions.

To my older and younger sisters: Jody and Jessie. Jody has often been like a second mother to me; I cherish her friendship, and Jessie is one of the more salient examples of conscientious Self-Leadership in action I have ever observed. Fortunate is the man who has sisters.

To my uncle, Hyrum W. Smith, Co-founder of FranklinCovey Company, for indirectly introducing me to, and directly teaching me about, the Franklin Day Planning System\(^1\) which started me on the road of interest in goal setting and other Self-Leadership related principles and practices when I was still just a child. Also for his personal advice to go out and gain experience in the “real world” after graduating from college rather than immediately pursuing a Ph.D., advice I followed for seven years before attempting

---

\(^1\) I attended a Franklin Day Planning seminar taught by my uncle at about age eight. It was one of the first, if not the first professional seminar I ever attended.
this doctoral work. Without the “real world” experience those seven years afforded, this present work would have been much less articulate and substantive. Thank you, Uncle Hyrum, for your generosity and example. I admire your many accomplishments.

To the late Dr. Stephen R. Covey. I’ve both admired and profited from Dr. Covey’s work ever since I read his book and listened to his audio programs on The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People as a freshman in college. I do not personally know Dr. Covey, although I did meet him once in Salt Lake City on an obscure occasion he almost certainly would not have recalled. I also spoke with him on the phone for about 15 minutes on December 24, 2003, wherein he generously answered an epistolary solicitation I had made for his personal advice and counsel. I will always cherish the unique, educational experience of that call, wherein Covey suggested I read the brilliant and thoughtful work of E.F. Schumacher, a source I cite repeatedly in this dissertation. Covey’s work has been hugely influential in my own thinking about Self-Leadership, an influence that will be evident in this work.

To my friend, Dr. James G.S. Clawson, of the Darden Business School at the University of Virginia. Dr. Clawson, author of Level Three Leadership: Getting Below the Surface, is a serious career academic who possessed the kindness and generosity to seriously consider and endorse the fledgling work of a stranger (me) simply because I asked him to. At the time, I was a “nobody” in terms of professional and/or academic accomplishments, and I’ll always remember how honored I felt that someone of his stature would give me the time of day. I am grateful to no longer be a stranger to him. I value his friendship and proudly (and relevantly) cite some of his own fine work in this dissertation.
To Mrs. Denny Gee of Houston, Texas, for her skill in designing the original SAL Theory and Model graphics in chapters 11-13.

To others in the fields of philosophy, theology and religion, poetry, politics, education, business management, leadership, athletics, and self-help whose work, achievements, integrity, and/or writings have played a synergistically integrative role in shaping my own thinking and writing. While there are too many (living and dead) to provide a comprehensive list in this work, I do wish to offer a short list of those who have prominently and/or particularly influenced my thinking and writing.

- William Shakespeare
- Benjamin Franklin
- Abraham Lincoln
- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- C.S. Lewis
- Abraham Maslow
- Victor Frankl
- M. Scott Peck

To my Self-Leadership Advisory Board (SLAB). See Chapter Eight for a complete listing of my SLAB Board Members.

I hope this next acknowledgment does not come across as disingenuous because I desire to extend it in a spirit of self-honesty and sincerity: to all the girls and women who rejected my romantic overtures over the years. I now see how, narcissistically absorbed in lower levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy, I often unfairly demonized you in my own mind and world—a world so often marked by adolescent or post-adolescent insecurity and puerility. Few individuals knowingly—or more likely unknowingly—did more to motivate me the disciplined exercise of Self-Leadership than all y’all. I confess to suffering much over your rejections. This suffering was caused by a hybrid of mental
neurosis, existential insecurity, and genuine disappointment. Such suffering provided me with the refining fire of seemingly countless opportunities to grow, for which I am sincerely grateful. Such progress, produced through the excruciating crucibles of neurotically acute disappointment and poignant heartbreak, has proved providential in the piecemeal production of this present treatise, as well as the actualization of a better life as a result of rising to higher levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy. I do not blame you for my pain; I thank you for it, for true pain rightly suffered always brings about welcomed growth and a brighter future. Moreover, I see now that we were never right for each other anyway. It is rather miraculous to me how well things manage to work themselves out for the best in the end. As my dear cousin Ida Anderson once remarked: “things will work out in the end; if they haven’t worked out yet, it isn’t the end.” Ida was right. Thus, in the words of the Immortal Bard, “all’s well that ends well!” I sincerely hope for the happiness and well being of each one of you, as well as to whoever did eventually win your heart.

Lastly, but most importantly, to my Heavenly Father, who gives me life, health, freedom, grace, a Redeemer, opportunity, inspiration, and the potential to influence others: His guiding hand was upon this work every step of the way—and long before I ever put pen to paper.

– Jordan Jensen
Houston, TX
March 2013
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Lina Marie (Tucker) Jensen. Lina is my greatest mortal counselor, advocate, supporter, and friend. She provides enormous meaning to my life and has, in part, made the creation of this treatise possible. Thank you, my darling, for taking a chance on a poor man with little to offer except a vision, a good will, Self-Leadership, and an undying adoration and affection for you.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .............................................................................................................. xxxvii
LIST OF FIGURES .......................................................................................................... xxxviii
PREFACE ......................................................................................................................... xlix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY ...................................................... 1

Conceptual Introduction to Self-Leadership ............................................................... 5
Sources of This Study ................................................................................................. 11
Self-Leadership ............................................................................................................. 12
Autoethnography ........................................................................................................ 14
Action Research .......................................................................................................... 17

Research Problem ....................................................................................................... 18
Research Goals ............................................................................................................ 23
Self-Leadership and Emotional Intelligence: A Moral Imperative ......................... 24
Research Question ..................................................................................................... 25
The Twenty-First Century Self-Leadership Opportunity ........................................ 25
The Greater Good ........................................................................................................ 26
A Pedagogy of Personal Leadership ......................................................................... 27
Not an Empirical Study ............................................................................................... 29
Self-Leadership: A Divergent Problem ..................................................................... 31
A Self-Leadership Paradox ....................................................................................... 33
The Need for Self-Leadership ..................................................................................... 33
Is Self-Leadership Self-Evident? ............................................................................. 37
What Has Already Been Developed? ..................................................................... 39
Real World Example of Benefits: From My Life .......... 71

Variable Two (2): Congenital Physical Variables ......................... 72

Limitations .................................................................................... 72

Real World Examples of Limitations ............................................ 72

Benefits ......................................................................................... 73

Real World Example of Benefits: Kobe Bryant ......................... 73

Variable Three (3): Congenital Familial Environment ................. 74

Limitations .................................................................................... 75

Real World Examples of Limitations ............................................ 76

Benefits ......................................................................................... 77

Real World Examples of Benefits ................................................. 78

Variable Four (4): Genetic Predispositions and Mimetic Inclinations .... 80

Limitations .................................................................................... 80

Benefits ......................................................................................... 82

Real World Examples of Limitations and Benefits:
From My Life ............................................................................. 83

Variable Five (5): Initial Opportunities for Education ................. 88

Limitations & Benefits ................................................................ 88

Real World Examples of Limitations & Benefits:
From My Life ............................................................................. 89

Variable Six (6): Congenital Social Environment ....................... 91

Limitations and benefits ............................................................. 91

Real World Example of Limitations: From My Life ............ 92

Real World Examples of Benefits: From My Life ............ 94
Variable Seven (7): Choices of Others ..................................................... 95

Limitations ................................................................................................. 95

Real World Example of Limitations: From My Life .............. 96

The High Dive ......................................................................................... 96

Bob the Bully ......................................................................................... 97

Benefits ....................................................................................................... 98

Real World Example of Benefits: From My Life .............. 99

Variable Eight (8): Time ........................................................................ 100

Limitations & Benefits of Time, and Examples ................. 100

Variable Nine (9): Structural Inequality & Diversity .......... 101

Limitations ................................................................................................. 102

Real World Examples of Limitations:
Frederick Douglass & Abraham Lincoln ......................... 102

Variable Ten: Geopolitics & Economics .............................. 105

Limitations & Benefits .......................................................................... 105

Real World Examples of Limitations & Benefits:
From My Life ......................................................................................... 107

Variable 11: Good & Bad Luck ....................................................... 109

Limitations & Benefits .......................................................................... 109

Real World Example of Limitations: From My Life ..... 110

Real World Example of Benefits: From My Life ........... 111

Variable 12: Suprarational Intervention ....................................... 112

Perceived Limitations & Benefits ............................................... 114

Real World Examples of Perceived Limitations .......... 115
CHAPTER THREE: SELF-LEADERSHIP, AUTOETHNOGRAPHY, & ACTION RESEARCH; A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction to Chapter Three

PART ONE. Self-Leadership Literature Review

Introduction to Part One

Self-Leadership: A Historical Perspective

Roots in Religion

Philosophy Joins the Conversation
Popular Participants ................................................................. 172
Self-Leadership in the Academe ................................................. 173
What is Self-Leadership? ................................................................. 174
Self-Leadership Defined ................................................................. 174
Academic Genealogy ................................................................. 174
  Academic Peripherals of Self-Leadership Theory .................. 175
Who/What Preceded Manz? ....................................................... 177
Recent Research ........................................................................... 180
  Thought Self-Leadership ......................................................... 180
  Self-Managed/Directed Work Teams &
  SuperLeadership ................................................................. 180
Empirical Studies ........................................................................ 182
Models ..................................................................................... 184
Measuring Self-Leadership ......................................................... 188
Diversity, Multiculturalism and Self-Leadership ................. 189
Contingency Factors ................................................................. 192
Where in the Academe Does Self-Leadership Fit? .................. 193
  Self-Control & Self-Management ........................................... 194
  Social Cognitive Theory ......................................................... 194
  Motivation Theory ................................................................. 196
  Self-Regulation ................................................................. 198
  Emotional Intelligence ......................................................... 199
  Organizational Behavior ......................................................... 200
  Leadership ........................................................................ 202
CHAPTER FIVE. VIGNETTE ONE: OCD IS HELL .................................................. 366

Introduction to Vignette One .............................................................................. 366

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD): A Medical Review ......................... 369

Definitions, Features, and Symptoms ............................................................... 370

History ............................................................................................................. 373

Prevalence ....................................................................................................... 374

Etiology ......................................................................................................... 374

Symptoms: A Classic Pattern .......................................................................... 377

Impact on Loved Ones ................................................................................... 379

Treatments..................................................................................................... 380

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) ............................................................... 380
Depression Joins the Mix................................................................. 451
The Ultimate Joy Killer ................................................................... 451
Moments of Relief and Saving Graces ........................................... 452
Missionary Angst .......................................................................... 453
Romantic Ruminations................................................................. 461
Existential Frustration, Ennui, Nihilism, Panic Attacks, and Depression......................................................... 461
Miscellaneous Symptoms (Obsessions & Compulsions) ............... 471
Getting Help..................................................................................... 475
Self-Compassion.............................................................................. 495
The Two-Edged Sword of OCD ...................................................... 495
My Quest to Become Easy Going................................................... 501
Good at OCD ................................................................................ 503

CHAPTER SIX. VIGNETTE TWO: THE ROCKY ROAD OF ROMANCE.... 504
Introduction to Vignette Three....................................................... 504
Falling Hard .................................................................................... 505
My Dating Record.......................................................................... 512
Pre-Mission Dating ....................................................................... 513
Robin Hood Date .......................................................................... 516
Post-Mission Dating....................................................................... 526
Pathological Disappointments and Heartbreaking Failures........... 528
The Paradox of my Insecurity........................................................ 531
The Cops Come Calling................................................................. 534
The Greatest Secret in the World: Part I ................................................................. 630
The Greatest Secret in the World: Part II ................................................................. 634
The Role of Religion ................................................................................................. 658
The Influence of Scouting ......................................................................................... 661
Heeding Wise Counsel .............................................................................................. 662
The Role of Grace ...................................................................................................... 668
  Finding My Wallet .................................................................................................. 670
  Building Shelves for Bruce .................................................................................. 672
  The Bitter-Sweetness of Failure ........................................................................... 673
Merciful Professors .................................................................................................. 676
Help With OCD and Other Life Challenges ............................................................ 680
Covey ......................................................................................................................... 680
Dreaming Big ................................................................................................................ 681
Combating OCD and Other Ills .............................................................................. 687
Self-Leadership and Poetry ....................................................................................... 688
Action-Oriented Self-Leadership Exercises .............................................................. 699
  Physical Exercise ................................................................................................ 699
  Creative Visualization, Mental Imagery, and Positive Thinking & Self-Talk ....... 700
Utilizing Positive Cues ............................................................................................... 700
  Designing One’s World By Decorating His/Her Surroundings.. 705
Goal Setting ................................................................................................................. 705
Applying the Insanity Test to Goal Setting ............................................................... 709
The Self-Action Leadership Theory Postulates .................................................. 911

Postulate 1.0............................................................................................ 911

Postulate 2.0............................................................................................ 911

Corollary 2.1 ............................................................................... 912

Corollary 2.2 ............................................................................... 912

Corollary 2.3 ............................................................................... 913

Corollary 2.4 ............................................................................... 913

Corollary 2.5 ............................................................................... 914

Corollary 2.6 ............................................................................... 914

Corollary 2.7 ............................................................................... 914

Postulate 3.0............................................................................................ 915

Postulate 4.0............................................................................................ 916

Postulate 5.0............................................................................................ 917

Corollary 5.1. (NLA Paradox, Part 1)........................................ 918

Corollary 5.2. (NLA Paradox, Part 2)........................................ 918

Corollary 5.3. (An NLA Paradox, part 3). ................................. 919

Corollary 5.4 ............................................................................... 920

Corollary 5.5 ............................................................................... 920

Postulate 6.0............................................................................................ 921

Postulate 7.0............................................................................................ 922

Postulate 8.0............................................................................................ 922

Postulate 9.0............................................................................................ 923

Corollary 9.1 ............................................................................... 925
Corollary 9.2 ........................................................................................................ 926

Corollary 9.3 ........................................................................................................ 926

The Rocket Ship Metaphor ........................................................................ 927

Layers of the Earth’s Atmosphere ..................................................... 929

   Layer One: The Earth’s Surface .................................. 929
   Layer Two: The Troposphere .................................... 929
   Layer Three: The Stratosphere ................................. 929
   Layer Four: The Mesosphere .................................... 930
   Layer Five: The Ionosphere ....................................... 930
   Layer Six: The Thermosphere ................................... 930
   Layer Seven: The Exosphere ..................................... 931
   Layer Eight: Deep Outer Space .................................. 931

Corollary 9.4 ........................................................................................................ 932

A Hierarchy of Self-Leadership Efficacy ......................................... 933

Eight Stages of Self-Leadership Efficacy ....................................... 934

   Level One: The Education Stage .......................... 935
   Level Two: The Beginner’s Stage ....................... 936
   Level Three: The Practitioner’s Stage .................. 938
   Level Four: The Refining Stage ........................... 942
   Level Five: The Polishing Stage ......................... 946
   Level Six: Self-Leadership Actualization Stage . 949
   Level Seven: The Leadership Stage ..................... 952
   Level Eight: The Transcendence Stage .............. 955
CHAPTER 12. THE SELF-ACTION LEADERSHIP MODEL .................................. 961

A Construction Metaphor ................................................................. 962

SAL Model Part I. Pre-Construction (Planning & Preparation) ............ 965

SAL Model Step 1.1: Self-Education .................................................... 967

Learning to Learn ........................................................................... 968

Rote-Learning .............................................................................. 969

Ongoing self- and other training .................................................... 970

SAL Model Step 1.2: Build Relationships ........................................... 972

Level One Relationship ................................................................. 975

Level Two Relationship ............................................................... 975

Level Three Relationship ............................................................ 975

Level Four Relationship ............................................................... 976

Level Five Relationship ............................................................... 977

The Self-Leadership Advisory Board (SLAB) ................................. 977

SAL Model Step 1.3: Self-Awareness ............................................... 978

Self-Observation ........................................................................... 979

Self-Examination ........................................................................ 979

SAL Model Step 1.4: Self-Organization ............................................ 980
SAL Model Step 1.5: Self-Recording..................................................... 981

SAL Model Step 1.6: Self-Oneness........................................................ 982

Learn to Effectively Spend Time Alone ........................................ 983

Tips to Developing a Healthy and Wealthy Inner Life...................... 985

Self-Love..................................................................................... 986

SAL Model Step 1.7: Self-Constitution.................................................. 987

Writing a Self-Leadership Declaration of Independence............... 989

Drafting a Self-Leadership Constitution........................................ 991

Step 1: Preamble: Statement of Personal Vision ...................... 992

Step 2: Article I: Statement of Personal Mission ...................... 992

Step 3: Article II: Identification, Clarification, & Prioritization of Personal Values ................................ 993

Values Identification................................................................. 993

Values Clarification ................................................................. 993

Values Prioritization ................................................................. 994

Step 4: Article III: Self-Standards Standardization ................. 995

Intrapersonal Standards............................................................... 996

Interpersonal Standards............................................................... 996

Step 5: Article IV: Self-Goal Setting............................................. 997

S.M.A.R.T.I.E.S. Goals ................................................................. 997

Long-Range Goals ......................................................................... 1,000

Mid-Range Goals .......................................................................... 1,000

Short-Range Goals ......................................................................... 1,000
Daily Task Goals.............................................. 1,000

Prioritizing Daily Task Goals. ............ 1,001

S-L Daily Task Tracker ................. 1,002

Step 6: Article V: Establishing a Self-Leadership Advisory Board............................................................ 1,003

Step 7: Additional Articles..................... 1,004

Step 8: Signature of Commitment............... 1,004

Step 9: The Amendment Process............. 1,005

SAL Model Part II. Constructing the Foundation (Developing an Integrity-Based Character)................................. 1,006

SAL Model Step 2.1: Honesty ......................... 1,009

SAL Model Step 2.2: Humility ....................... 1,010

SAL Model Step 2.3: Reverence .................. 1,011

SAL Model Step 2.4: Rectification................. 1,012

SAL Model Step 2.5: Service ....................... 1,013

SAL Model Part III. Constructing the Superstructure (Taking Action) ....... 1,014

SAL Model Step 3.1: Self-Discipline ................... 1,016

SAL Model Step 3.2 & 3.3: Self-Action in Public and Private ........ 1,018

Motivation leads to action and vice versa......... 1,020

SAL Model Step 3.4: World Altering Strategies .......... 1,023

SAL Model Step 3.5: Self- and Natural Rewards .......... 1,024

SAL Model Part IV. Maintenance & Upgrades
(Observation, Analysis, & Change)................................................ 1,025

SAL Model Step 4.1: Self-Renewal .................... 1,026

SAL Model Step 4.2: Self-Observation and Feedback ........ 1,028
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 45-Week Challenge Results</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sampling of Diary Entries from 45-Week Program</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Self-Leadership Daily Task Tracker (October 3-16, 2011)</td>
<td>726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Self-Leadership Daily Task Tracker (June 18 – July 9, 16-19, 2012)</td>
<td>728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Self-Leadership Daily Task Tracker (October 8-12, 2012)</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Scripture Memorization Tracker</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Pretend world Tetris records for different categories</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Thomas Maddox’s (my) Tetris performance stats</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Personal Best Tetris Times</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. 2010 summer/fall mileage total and personal best (PB) times</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. 2010 summer/fall personal best times progression</td>
<td>851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Four Steps of Action Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Notes from Mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Joe mission picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Joe mission letter envelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Joe’s mission letter excerpt #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Joe’s mission letter excerpt #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Joe’s mission letter excerpt #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>American flag flying above Salt Lake City LDS Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Benjamin Franklin Printing Press Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Benjamin Franklin Burial Plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The Washington Monument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>The Jefferson Monument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>The Lincoln Monument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>First paycheck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>On a cattle ranch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Fort building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>My trademark jeans’n’boots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Gardening with Grandma Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Presiding/speaking at funeral of dead bird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Standing on an Emerson-Brantingham Big 4 Tractor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22. Playing with mortar, circa 1984-1985 ................................................................. 290
23. Dam building ...................................................................................................... 291
24. Certificate of first talk in Primary (church) ....................................................... 291
25. Certificate of second talk in Primary (church) .................................................... 292
26. Jensen family (silly) ......................................................................................... 296
27. Jensen family (formal) ...................................................................................... 296
28. With Mom in front of Mesa home .................................................................... 297
29. At my desk in 2nd Grade ............................................................................... 298
30. The five Jensen brothers ................................................................................. 300
31. With my brother Joe ....................................................................................... 300
32. Letter from brother Wayne ............................................................................. 301
33. Letter from brother Paul ............................................................................... 302
34. Pretend business card .................................................................................... 305
35. First grade teacher report card comments ................................................... 307
36. Second grade report card ............................................................................... 308
37. Sixth grade report card ................................................................................... 309
38. Sixth grade teacher report card comments .................................................. 310
39. First grade reading grades ............................................................................. 311
40. Seventh grade student I.D. card ................................................................. 314
41. 10th grade student I.D. card ........................................................................ 315
42. Eight-grade report card ................................................................................. 316
43. Ninth-grade report card ................................................................................ 316
44. 10th grade report card .................................................................................. 317
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>11th grade report card</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>12th grade report card (first semester)</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>12th grade report card (second semester)</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Family woodpile</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Blue Mountain Panorama cover</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>High school newspaper cover</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Jordan running picture</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Athlete of the Year plaque</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Athletic medals earned in high school</td>
<td>324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Eagle Scout award</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>12th grade student I.D. Card in Spokane</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Advertisement poster for <em>Chivalry Isn’t Dead</em></td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Missionary Plaque</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>As a Missionary in Alberta</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>First student I.D. at BYU</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Second student I.D. at BYU</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Student I.D. at UVSC</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Jensen Brother’s Shelving flier</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Dressed as Santa Claus at Christmas</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Dressed as Hamlet at Halloween</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Montage of my dramatic side</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>All-American hardware</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68.</td>
<td>In UVSC track uniform</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.</td>
<td>Collegiate track medals</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70.</td>
<td>College graduation picture</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.</td>
<td>College diploma</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.</td>
<td>“Atlanta” card</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.</td>
<td>“92 miles to Atlanta” road sign</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74.</td>
<td>Georgia driver’s license</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75.</td>
<td>Leadership Center Employee I.D</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.</td>
<td><em>Daily Herald</em> press pass</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.</td>
<td>Front cover of my book</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78.</td>
<td>Back cover of my book</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.</td>
<td>Georgia Tech student family member I.D</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.</td>
<td>Fielding student I.D</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81.</td>
<td>Teacher’s I.D</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82.</td>
<td>Canadian social insurance card</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.</td>
<td>My most recent publication</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84.</td>
<td>The Jensen Family, April 2013</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85.</td>
<td>Tucker Joseph Jensen, summer 2013</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.</td>
<td>First journal entry</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87.</td>
<td>Emerson’s home in Concord</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88.</td>
<td>Emerson Hall (Harvard)</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.</td>
<td>Classic OCD cycle</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90.</td>
<td>BYU Comprehensive Clinic therapy session receipt</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Excerpts from handwritten letter to future wife</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Picture from first date</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Robin Hood Date cover letter</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Robin Hood Date instructions letter one, page one</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Robin Hood Date instructions letter one, page two</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Robin Hood Date instructions letter two</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Jordan and Phillip in sword play</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Andrew on horseback</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Ladies on their way to Sherwood</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>One of Robin’s merry men filming the action</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Lady LeiAnn</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Robin Hood</td>
<td>523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Santa and me</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104</td>
<td>Grandma Jensen</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Engagement photo</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Our wedding day in Salt Lake City</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>One side of the Leadership Conference program</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Other side of the Leadership Conference program</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Yard work flier</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Director certificate</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td><em>I Am Sovereign</em> seminar marketing brochure <em>(outside)</em></td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td><em>I Am Sovereign</em> seminar marketing brochure <em>(inside)</em></td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Letter from Senator Hillary Clinton</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
114. Card from Urban Meyer ...................................................................................... 584
115. Letter from Stephen R. Covey’s office ............................................................... 586
116. Substitute teaching name stickers ....................................................................... 600
117. Atlanta Georgia LDS Temple ............................................................................. 603
119. The Greatest Secret in the World (Mandino, 1978, inside cover) ..................... 641
121. The Greatest Secret in the World (Mandino, 1978, p. 52-53) ............................ 643
126. The Greatest Secret in the World (Mandino, 1978, p. 81) ................................. 648
128. Figure 121 repeated ............................................................................................. 653
129. Figure 121 repeated again .................................................................................. 656
130. Two pages from inside my first “Little Black Book” ....................................... 683
131. Two pages from inside notebook #19 ............................................................... 684
132. Vocabulary words recorded on inside cover of notebook #19 ........................... 684
133. Cross-country goal .............................................................................................. 701
134. Positive affirmations in support of cross-country & track goals ...................... 702
135. Written affirmation in support of cross-country goal ....................................... 703
136. State Championship gold medal ........................................................................ 704
137. 1997 track & field goals................................................................. 704
138. 1997 track & field medals............................................................... 705
139. Half-marathon and marathon medals.............................................. 719
140. *Personal Habits Checklist*.............................................................. 720
141. Self-Leadership Daily Task Tracker ............................................... 721
142. Scripture reading tracking sheet...................................................... 733
143. Personal Leadership Project Page 1................................................ 735
144. Personal Leadership Project Page 2................................................ 736
145. Personal Leadership Project Page 3................................................ 737
146. Personal Leadership Project Page 4................................................ 738
147. Personal Leadership Project Page 5................................................ 739
148. Personal Leadership Project Page 6................................................ 740
149. MY 1988 Franklin Day Planner Title Page ..................................... 777
150. Daily task list and appointment schedule........................................ 778
151. Journal Entry: February 3, 1988 .................................................... 779
152. Journal Entry: February 4, 1988 .................................................... 779
155. Journal list of letters written: 1992 ................................................. 782
156. Letters written: 1993 ................................................................. 783
157. My four brothers and me............................................................... 784
158. “Doing” Trigonometry................................................................. 786
159. My “school schedule” as a “senior” in high school ....................... 787
160. “College” class schedule at BYU ................................................................. 788
161. Physics/calculus “notes” copied from my brother’s texts............................... 789
162. More physics/calculus “notes” copied from my brother’s texts ..................... 790
163. Physics graph copied from some homework of one of my brothers .......... 791
164. “Assignment” sheet for “class work” ......................................................... 792
165. A.P. English vocabulary “quiz” ................................................................. 793
166. “Essay” (copied text) on/from Othello ...................................................... 794
167. “Essay” on Hamlet for my A.P. “Inglish” [sic] class .................................. 795
168. Essay on Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* ......................... 796
169. Information on U.S. Presidents for my pretend government course ............ 797
170. More government/history “homework” .................................................... 798
171. Running chart for pretend track team: 1988 .............................................. 801
172. Pretend track meet results: 1988 ............................................................. 802
173. Actual race/time trial results as a 9-12 year old ........................................ 804
174. Journal Entry recounting pretend track meet & basketball game ............... 805
175. Master task list and calendar for May 1988 ............................................. 806
176. Journal entries for April 18, 21, 1988 ....................................................... 807
177. Journal entry account of a track practice at recess .................................... 808
178. Journal entry account of more track team recruits etc ............................. 808
179. Running at “State Track Meet” with older brother Wayne ......................... 809
180. “State track meet” at Hale Elementary School ......................................... 809
181. Eric Driggs (far right) and me and our other three buddies ....................... 810
182. Athletes and cheering section at “State track meet” ................................ 810
184. Me with my new basketball
185. Sideways slam on my original portable hoop, circa 1987-1988
186. Dunking the ball on my home hoop, circa 1988
187. In Joe’s basketball warm-ups, 1989-1990
188. With Christmas-time basketball “booty,” 1989
189. Striking the “Heisman” pose with my brothers Joe & Paul in 1990
191. Page one of pretend basketball schedule and results (BYU) 1990-91
192. Page one of schedule and results of pretend BYU basketball season, 1991-92 Season
193. Pretend NCAA Pre-season Top 25, unknown year
194. Pretend team roster, 1991-92 Season
195. Pretend team autographs, 1990-91 Season
196. Pretend Major NCAA Conferences, 1990-91 Season
197. Pretend NCAA Playoff results, 1990-91 Season
198. Pretend NCAA Playoff results, 1990-91 Season (Page 2)
199. Pretend personalized home arena court design
200. Pretend 1990 Christmas Tournament Bracket
201. Results of First Eight (8) pretend NBA Games, 1992-93 Season
202. Pretend first year NBA statistics
203. My first race number
204. Finishing my first ever 10-kilometer race
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>205.</td>
<td>Posing with my brothers after my first 10k race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>206.</td>
<td>With coach and team trophy after State Race, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>207.</td>
<td>News clipping from local newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208.</td>
<td>Running for Ferris High my senior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>209.</td>
<td>Approaching a finish line as a Ferris Saxon my senior year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>210.</td>
<td>Competing as a college athlete in track &amp; field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211.</td>
<td>News clipping announcing All-American status in college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>212.</td>
<td>Earth’s Gravitational Pull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>213.</td>
<td>Sources of Self-Leadership Gravity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214.</td>
<td>Layers of the Atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215.</td>
<td>A Hierarchy of Self-Leadership Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216.</td>
<td>A Hierarchy of Self-Leadership Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217.</td>
<td>Lower Levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy = Lesser/No Influence on Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>218.</td>
<td>Higher Levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy = Greater Influence on Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219.</td>
<td>Four Steps of Action Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220.</td>
<td>Four Steps to Constructing a Skyscraper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221.</td>
<td>The Self-Action Leadership Model (<em>Four Steps to Successful Self-Leadership Life Creation</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222.</td>
<td>Step One in Skyscraper Construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223.</td>
<td>Step One of SAL Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224.</td>
<td>Five Levels of Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225.</td>
<td>Self-Leadership Daily Task Tracker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226.</td>
<td>Step Two in Skyscraper Construction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
227. Step Two of SAL Model.................................................................................. 1,008
228. Step Three in Skyscraper Construction............................................................ 1,015
229. Step Three of SAL Model................................................................................ 1,016
230. Step Four in Skyscraper Construction ............................................................. 1,025
231. Step Four of SAL Model.................................................................................. 1,026
232. Four Steps to Constructing a Skyscraper......................................................... 1,037
233. The Self-Action Leadership Model (Four Steps to Successful Self-Leadership Life
Creation).......................................................................................................... 1,038
234. Trash left by high school students next to their bus stop......................... 1,044
235. Littered trash collected by my apartment grounds keeper......................... 1,045
236. Another view of trash left by high school students................................. 1,045
237. Sign I made and posted at my neighborhood bus stop................................. 1,046
238. I Am Sovereign poem-poster displayed in my classroom from
    Jan.-May 2010............................................................................................. 1,050
239. I Am Sovereign mantra sign that hung above classroom entrance from
    Jan – May 2010.......................................................................................... 1,050
240. Student example #1....................................................................................... 1,051
241. Student example #2....................................................................................... 1,052
242. Student example #3....................................................................................... 1,053
243. Student example #4....................................................................................... 1,054
244. Student example #5....................................................................................... 1,055
245. A Personal Leadership Pedagogical Triad..................................................... 1,061
PREFACE

Because this work is an Autoethnography, or self-study, the author’s “I” plays a more ubiquitous role than it normally would in a traditional academic dissertation. Chapter Three is an exception to this deviation, and adheres to strict academic standards typical of a scholarly literature review. This is an appropriate departure due to the autoethnographic nature of the work. According to Ellis (2009):

Autoethnographic approaches are flexible, reflexive, and reflective of life as lived; they do not follow a rigid list of rule-based procedures. Often they are multivoiced and include interaction among researchers and participants in the research context as well as stories participants bring to the project. (p. 16)

I have chosen this approach because it is well suited to the objectives of this dissertation, objectives which Ellis (2009) captured when she wrote:

Autoethnography offers the potential to expand scholarship about human experience. At the same time, it can assist us in our pursuit of happiness and living fully; provide companionship and coping strategies for dealing with personal disappointments, traumas, and losses; and help us understand, reframe, and live through collective natural and human-made disasters that increasingly seem to be part of our lives. (p. 16-17)

While Autoethnography remains suspect in some academic circles as a scholarly research method (see Doloriert & Sambrook, 2011; Delamont, 2006, Nash, 2004 [Chapter One] and Holt, 2003), gone are the days of categorical exclusion of narrative-based literary contributions in the academe (see Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, 2005). The concept of “investigating subjectivity” and engaging in “research on lived experience” (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992, title) has been gaining momentum now for over three decades (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 4). This dissertation seeks to build on this momentum by sharing and analyzing my own scholarly personal narrative (SPN) (Nash, 2004) for the
purpose of making a meaningful contribution to conversations surrounding Self-Leadership, Action Research, and Autoethnography.

Unlike some autoethnographers, who dramatically alter literary formatting for creativity’s sake, or to grab attention, or evoke emotion (e.g. Ellis, 2009; Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Bochner & Ellis, 2002b; and Ellis & Bochner, 1996) this work does not differ substantially from a typical academic treatise. For example, I do not utilize fiction or play scripts in the presentation of my data, nor do I intend on supplementing the published text with performance Autoethnography (see Spry, 2011). All autoethnographic data shared is historically accurate according to cited journal entries and/or my best efforts to conscientiously recall precise details from my personal memory.

Because this is an autoethnographic self-study, I have chosen to craft the work by interweaving my own scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004) throughout the entire treatise.² In the process, I have also included samplings of poetry and other literary forms drawn from both my own pen and a wide-range of relevant literature. I have done so to illustrate the influence of a broad array of literature on my thinking as it relates to Self-Leadership.

Note: This work considers Self-Leadership and personal leadership to be synonymous terms. The term, Self-Leadership, however, will be employed primarily throughout this treatise because Self-Leadership is the preferred academic term. Personal leadership—the preferred popular term—will be used only when referring to Self-Leadership as a universal concept employed in a general context. The one exception will be in chapter 13 and elsewhere when I speak of a “Pedagogy of Personal Leadership.”

²The one extended exception to this is the literature reviews conducted in Chapter Three, which follows strict, traditional academic standards of scholarly prose.
wherein I will apply the popular term to emphasize the goal of promoting the ubiquitous, curricular instruction of Self-Leadership to self-leaders everywhere.

**Dissertation Organization:** This dissertation is organized into thirteen chapters. This departure from a traditional five-chapter academic thesis was done intentionally for the sake of organization, clarity, and sectional brevity. Chapter One introduces the study and defines the problem, goals, research question, and methodology. It also introduces two new terms into the literature: *Self-Action Research* (SAR), and *Self-Action Leadership* (SAL). Chapter Two outlines the sixteen variables of Self-Leadership and the ways in which those variables can both limit and benefit self-leaders. Chapter Three reviews the relevant literature for the three primary academic topics addressed in this dissertation: *Self-Leadership*, *Autoethnography*, and *Action Research*. Chapter Four provides an autobiographical summary of my life as a means of introducing, and providing background, contextual data to the autoethnographic “vignettes” (Harper, 2011, p. 55) to follow. Chapters five, six, seven, eight, and nine contain the dissertation’s qualitative data presented in the form of five extended autoethnographic vignettes that constitute my *scholarly personal narrative* (Nash, 2004). Chapter Ten analyzes the combined autoethnographic vignettes within a context of the influence of the sixteen Self-Leadership variables (limitations and benefits) as they have impacted my life’s journey. Chapter 11 introduces the *Self-Action Leadership Theory* in the form of a dozen postulated principles and their concomitant corollaries. Chapter 12 introduces the *Self-Action Leadership Model* with its principles and practices. Finally, Chapter 13 introduces a *Pedagogy of Personal Leadership*, which makes a clarion call for the widespread proliferation of formal Self-Leadership oriented educational offerings in every life arena.
and at every level. Directed to leaders, educators, parents, and anyone else desiring to see the subject of Self-Leadership take its rightful, albeit long-neglected, place among the pantheon of academic and personal pursuits, this chapter calls upon concerned citizens everywhere to support the inclusion of Self-Leadership education in their communities, organizations, schools, homes, and personal lives.
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

In conjunction with reviewing and synthesizing relevant literature on the subjects of Self-Leadership, Autoethnography, and Action Research, this dissertation qualitatively (viz. autoethnographically) chronicles and analyzes the past twenty-five-plus years of my Self-Leadership journey in order to derive sufficient data necessary to organize an original theory and model of Self-Leadership I call Self-Action Leadership (SAL) that may prove applicable to other self-leaders (viz., potentially all human beings). This new theory and model is presented herein as a specific template/toolbox aimed at promoting the proliferation of a general Pedagogy of Personal Leadership throughout the academe as well as educational, government, business, community, and/or familial venues everywhere.

Let us begin by defining the KEY TERMS of this dissertation. These key terms are capitalized for emphasis throughout the 13 chapters.

SELF-LEADERSHIP (S-L): The leadership of self through the exercise of cognitive and behavioral strategies consciously engaged to get intentional results.

SELF-LEADERSHIP EFFICACY (SLE): The efficiency and/or effectiveness of one’s Self-Leadership. Eight levels of S-L efficacy are identified in SAL Theory:

1). Education Stage

2). Beginner’s Stage

3). Practitioner’s Stage

4). Refining Stage

5). Polishing Stage
6). Actualization Stage

7). Leadership Stage

8). Self-Transcendence

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY: the study of one’s person and past, situated in a social context.

ACTION RESEARCH (AR): a four-step cyclical process of identifying and then strategically solving problems.


SELF-ACTION LEADERSHIP (SAL): The strategic, lifelong practice of Self-Action Research aimed at maximizing one’s Self-Leadership Efficacy for the purpose of contributing to the long-term well being of self and others. SAL also serves as the titular nomenclature of the original Self-Action Leadership Theory and Model introduced in this dissertation.

NATURAL LAWS OF ACQUISITION: Natural Laws in the form of consequences that set the price for acquiring Self-Leadership Efficacy and success.

SELF-LEADERSHIP GRAVITY: Internal and external pressure points that influence the poor exercise of one’s Self-Leadership.
SELF-ONENESS: The *intrapersonal* harmonization of all components of one’s nature (i.e., mental, physical, emotional, social, and existential\(^3\)) resulting in personal confidence, inner security, and independence.

PEDAGOGY OF PERSONAL LEADERSHIP: Curriculum-based Self-Leadership knowledge and training.

My own Self-Leadership journey formally began somewhere between the age of seven and eight when I was formally introduced to concepts of self-improvement at Franklin Institute\(^4\) time-management seminar. I also penned my first journal entry at age seven and began using a day planner at age eight. Such concepts and exercises struck an immediate and resonant chord within my mind and heart. As a result, the overarching narrative of my life has since coagulated around an on-going series of journal-aided Self-Action Research projects aimed at reaching higher levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy.

Specifically, this autoethnographic study closely examines the difficulties and challenges I have faced with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and its related depressive symptoms, a difficulty that has onerously perplexed my mental hygiene since age 12. An extended discussion of my experiences with OCD is provided in Chapter Five. I follow this up with additional sharing of other, deep life crucibles to which I faced and then applied Self-Leadership strategies in efforts (often successful) to transcend the obstacles. These additional vignettes will be chronicled in chapters six through nine. To produce the autoethnographic data contained herein, I have drawn on personal journal entries dating back to 1987, and personal memories dating back to 1983.

\(^3\) Aka: spiritual.

\(^4\) The *Franklin Institute* was the forerunner of *Franklin Quest*, which eventually became *FranklinCovey*.
Despite the extraordinary diversity extant among collective humanity, I suggest that, generally speaking, human beings are more alike than we are different. Therefore, since “everyone practices Self-Leadership” (Manz, 1983a, p. 289), whether an individual knows it or not, I suggest the results of this research may be of interest, and perhaps of value, to many others in their own Self-Leadership practice, especially for those who have struggled with OCD or other similar challenges to those specifically addressed in my narrative vignettes.

All human beings are self-leaders; however, not all self-leaders are effective at self-leading (Manz, 1983a). That is the bad news. The good news is that self-leaders can become better at leading themselves. In the words of Manz (1983a), “Effective Self-Leadership can be learned and thus is not restricted to people we describe as ‘self-starters,’ ‘self-directed,’ ‘self-motivated,’ etc. The ideas provided by Self-Leadership … are [therefore] relevant to … anyone...” (p. 289). Self-Leadership, therefore, represents a potentially universal concept.

The concept of Self-Leadership is not meant to insinuate that we as self-leaders can somehow obtain self-omnipotence over various life challenges and adversity. There are numerous variables (limitations and benefits) that determine any self-leader’s potential and results in life. Chapter Two will explicitly address 16 of these variables, and explain how they can act as either limitations or benefits to one’s Self-Leadership. While all self-leaders share a certain existential egalitarianism with each other, all self-leaders do not have equal potential in every life arena particulars. Structural inequality and other forces beyond our control as human beings make success in a given area inherently more difficult to achieve for some self-leaders than others. Self-Leadership
should therefore be viewed \textit{not} as an interpersonal competition or comparison among others, but rather as an \textit{intrapersonal} competition aimed at enhancing the Self-Leadership Efficacy of individuals based on their own Self-Leadership potential.

\textbf{Conceptual Introduction to Self-Leadership}

“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women, merely players. And each man, in his time, plays many parts.”\textsuperscript{5}

Throughout life, we each play a variety of roles. From the initial existential roles we are assigned at birth of human being or citizen, along with son or daughter, or brother or sister, our respective roles usually evolve and multiply over time according to the circumstances and variables constituting our individual lives as constructed by the unique amalgamation of internal and external forces at play both within and beyond our control. Some roles, such as those involved in a chosen profession or service organization, will be one’s responsibility for a finite period of time until someone else replaces them in said role. Other roles, such as the existential roles spoken of above, will last for the measure of one’s lifetime—and perhaps even longer.\textsuperscript{6} In the words of the Immortal Bard,\textsuperscript{7} we do indeed play “many parts” in the metaphorical “play” that unfolds in each of our individual narratives in this world.

Among the relatively few and fixed existential roles we will all play (i.e.: citizen, human being, child of two given parents, etc.), one stands out with particular salience: the role of self-leader. All human beings are self-leaders (Manz, 1983a), and like it or not, as

\textsuperscript{5} Shakespeare’s \textit{As You Like It} Act II Scene vii Lines 142-169.
\textsuperscript{6} Many, including myself, hold religious or other spiritual beliefs inclusive of post-mortal sentience and animation. While scientific validation of an afterlife is not presently available, the point bears mentioning from the simple standpoint that the hope of the same influences many self-leaders throughout the world.
\textsuperscript{7} William Shakespeare
a self-leader, you are stuck with yourself. While there are many things you might be able to change in your life: your friends, your job, your circumstances, your attitude or outlook, your opportunities, even your biology (cosmetically or sexually), there remains a presence, a certain existential essence that is you, that is inescapable. Though you may wish to be someone else, you are and always will be you. Existentially speaking, there is no known method available to change this intransient fact. Because of this, your role as self-leader is uniquely ubiquitous in that unlike the myriad changeable roles you play that involve other people, you are always with yourself, and always will be; there is no escape. While a temporary hiatus from consciousness is possible through somnolence, injury, anesthetics, or other drugs, one cannot escape with finality one’s omnipresent intrapersonal relationship with self until the point of death, and even then, science has yet to prove that death is commensurate with absolute non-existence. As such, one could argue for suicide as a possible solution to this conundrum, yet even suicide may, for many individuals, carry “the dread of something after death, [that] undiscovered country from whose bourn No traveler returns.”8 Fortunately, thoughts of “what[ever] dreams may come, When we have shuffled off this mortal coil”9 tend to “give [most of] us pause … And makes us rather bear those ills we have Than [risk] fly[ing] to others we know not of,”10 thus allowing suicide—for most, thankfully—to “lose the name of action.”11

To illustrate the significance of this relationship-role of self-to-self, consider the number 168. This number represents the hours in a week. Were you to determine the amount of hours you spend each week in a given relationship-role in your life, (e.g.:

---

8 Shakespeare (1992, p. 129 [Hamlet; Act III, Scene 1, Lines 86-87]).
9 Shakespeare (1992, p. 127 [Hamlet; Act III, Scene 1, Lines 74-75]).
10 Shakespeare (1992, p. 127-129 [Hamlet; Act III, Scene 1, Lines 76, 89-90]).
11 Shakespeare (1992, p. 129 [Hamlet; Act III, Scene 1, Line 96]).
employee, employer, volunteer, husband, wife, partner, sibling or other family member, neighbor, friend, et cetera) the assigned number for each relationship-role will most likely vary from week-to-week, month-to-month, and year-to-year, and will almost always be less than 168. Yet the amount of time spent in the relationship-role one has with oneself as a self-leader will consistently, and at all different periods throughout a person’s life, remain static: 24 hours a day, 168 hours a week, and 365.25 days per year, multiplied by the number of years throughout one’s life (Jensen, 2005). Some implicit exceptions exist, such as the time we spend asleep, or if a self-leader were to choose to abdicate their Self-Leadership sovereignty to a substance (i.e., drugs) that temporarily took over a measure of their neural functioning. When viewed quantifiably as measured by time, the relationship we have with ourselves is unquestionably, and preeminently, the most important relationship in life. This point is made not to downgrade the value of other relationships, or to diminish their essential meaning and importance, but simply to emphasize the anomalous omnipresence of self-to-self relationships as compared with interpersonal relationships. The import of relationships with others remains undisputed in this work; however, the self-relationship does and must come first. A real-life example of this truism is perhaps illustrated best when airline stewards and stewardesses dutifully remind passengers what to do in the case of a loss of cabin pressure (loss of oxygen): secure your own mask before assisting others with theirs. How can you help others breathe if you cannot breathe yourself?

By employing the phrase stuck with oneself, I have connoted a potential undesirability to this state of self-ubiquity, and indeed, I have not met any self-leaders who did not face a moment (or perhaps many) in their lives when they did not
particularly like themselves, or who—at one time or another—struggled with unhappiness, depression, or low self-esteem. While this relationship will inevitably provide negative and distasteful moments for everyone (challenge and struggle, doubt and diffidence all seem to be part of the typical Self-Leadership journey), it does not have to be so continuously. Indeed, the way one cares for and develops this *intrapersonal* relationship with oneself may largely determine whether a person’s time spent with oneself resembles a prison or a palace, and whether said experience is primarily hellish or heavenly.

Being a self-leader (or manager) is to serve as chief, captain, president, or CEO\(^\text{12}\) of one’s own life (Drucker, 2010; Jensen, 2005). According to Drucker (2010), applying the metaphor of CEO to Self-Leadership is no mere fancy, but a significant paradigm shift requiring individuals to view and approach the Self-Leadership of their lives in a fundamentally different way: as a chief executive rather than a follower, or subordinate. His reasoning is that the world has changed in significant ways. Twenty-first century knowledge workers possess an increased mobility, opportunity, freedom, variety, and leverage over workers in centuries past. As a result, “companies today aren’t managing their knowledge workers’ careers. … It is up to you to carve out your place in the work world and know when to change course” (p. 3). While such an opportunity certainly provides increased personal autonomy and perhaps a sense of excitement and adventure, the other side of the coin places an onus of responsibility on the knowledge worker to do much more than merely work; one must, like a CEO, also think, plan, design, and then

\(^{12}\text{CEO’s sometimes start out as entrepreneurs. One study (D’Intino, Goldsby, Houghton & Neck, 2007) provide[s] a comprehensive examination of recent research into individual differences in order to better understand the future promise of Self-Leadership as a concept and a research subject for entrepreneurship” (p. 105).}
implement one’s plan by taking strategic action in the direction of realizing one’s vision.

In addition, self-leaders will have to take responsibility for managing their relationships.

These things take time, effort and are not always easy, nor are they accomplished overnight (Drucker, 2010).

In the past, there were fewer knowledge workers and more manual laborers. In the present, and in the future, it is, and will be, the other way around.

Now, most of us, even those with modest endowments, will have to learn to manage ourselves. We will have to learn to develop ourselves. We will have to place ourselves where we can make the greatest contribution. And we will have to stay mentally alert and engaged during a 50-year working life, which means knowing how and when to change the work we do. … The challenges of managing oneself may seem obvious, if not elementary. And the answers may seem self-evident to the point of appearing naïve. But managing oneself requires new and unprecedented things from the individual, and especially from the knowledge worker. … The need to manage oneself is therefore creating a revolution in human affairs. (Drucker, 2010, p. 1, 20)

A crucial component of leading oneself is how we view and deal with problems we face in life, and life presents all self-leaders with a wide assortment of problems.

Self-Leadership “is the basic set of tools we require to solve life’s problems. Without [Self-Leadership] we can solve nothing” (Peck, 1978, p. 15).13 “Problems do not go away. They must be worked through or else they remain, forever a barrier to [our] growth and development…” (p. 30). As self-leaders, the ultimate responsibility to solve our life’s problems lies with us as individuals (Peck, 1978).

We must accept responsibility for a problem before we can solve it. We cannot solve a problem by saying “It’s not my problem.” We cannot solve a problem by hoping someone else will solve it for us. I can solve a problem only when I say “This is my problem and it’s up to me to solve it.” (p. 32)

---

13 Peck uses the term discipline, not Self-Leadership. This, however, is an appropriate substitution since self-discipline is an implicit component of Self-Leadership.
Other metaphors, in addition to Drucker’s CEO example, also aptly describe the unique role of self-leader: captain, pilot, builder, sculptor, designer, architect, engineer, planner, visionary, etc. Poets have often attempted to capture the essence of the Self-Leadership opportunity in verse. For example, consider the following lines of poetry from an erstwhile era:

“All are architects of fate”

“Chisel in hand stood a sculptor boy”

“I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul.”

The concepts of being the CEO of my own life, being an “architect of (my own) fate,” or serving as the “captain of my (own) soul” are thrilling to me. They engender emotions of hope, joy, gratitude, and instill within me an incredible sense of my own existential autonomy freedom. As I have practiced strategic Self-Leadership in my own life, the rewards for doing so have been enormous. It has markedly sustained and/or improved the quality of my life in manifold ways. In short, it has been the road “less traveled by,” which, for me, has “made all the difference.” My pursuit of this work stems from my desire for others to likewise become more effective—and more intentional—sculptors, architects, masters, and captains of their own lives.

Sources of This Study

In the soft sciences, meaning those fields of inquiry where securing empirical exactness is not plausible (or in some cases even desirable), subjects are perhaps best understood when studied holistically by referencing a diverse range of literature that goes beyond a mere empirical and/or academic discussion on the subject. This is particularly true of the Self-Leadership field because it has only existed in the academe for three decades, dating back to 1983 (Manz, 1983a; 1983b). To assume, therefore, that academia is the only source of legitimate data on a topic with roots extending back as far as the etiology of rational human cognitive and behavioral processes would be to ignore thousands of years of viable commentary on the subject.

The earliest literature I have located that specifically addresses concepts of personal leadership (Laird & Laird, 1946) and Self-Leadership (Manz, 1983a, 1983b) hearken back only to a little more than half-a-century ago. As such, a variety of voices from various fields (i.e., religion, philosophy, psychology, history, social science, literature [poetry and prose], and self-help) have all made valuable contributions to contemporary conversations about Self-Leadership. I will therefore draw from a potpourri of sources in my attempt to epistemologically justify any postulates or other claims I make. Said claims will be rooted primarily in the scholarly literature and secondarily in other relevant sources. Self-Leadership scholars accede the plurality of relevant sources in the field, and acquiesce the benefits of studying the field from a variety of vantage points. For example, consider the words of Manz, the father of the
Self-Leadership field,\textsuperscript{18} who has written about his own need and desire to expand his Self-Leadership purview beyond the realms of social science.

My own writing on the topic of Self-Leadership for more than two decades had largely focused on behavioral and cognitive factors. In academia, I had encountered generally accepted boundaries for “legitimate” scholarship; behavior and cognition were the “normal and acceptable” lenses through which to study organizational members. Although I had been trying to study and write about what enables multifaceted, complex human beings in organizations to be personally motivated, self-directed, and continuously growing and developing as persons, I came to realize that I had been only looking at part of the picture. It was as though I had been trying to put together a puzzle but only using some of the pieces. (Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2004, p. 612)

An enthusiastic acolyte of Manz’ method of approaching Self-Leadership in a more holistic manner, I have drawn from a broad and eclectic range of sources to support and defend the arguments I make in defending the Self-Action Leadership theory and model introduced in this dissertation. Nevertheless, the study remains grounded in scholarly literature that has been published within the academe.

**Self-Leadership**

The general state and direction of the collective human condition over time can largely be attributed to the positive and/or negative synergy engendered by the concurrent concatenation of individual \textit{choices} of men, women, and children made around the world throughout the ages. The process of arriving at, and then carrying out said choices, may be described as the human application of the practice of personal, or Self-Leadership. The mode and manner of varying Self-Leadership styles, in concert with the willingness (or lack thereof) of individual self-leaders to invest time and effort in strategic Self-

\textsuperscript{18} In a personal e-mail dated December 9, 2010, I asked Manz who was the father of the S-L field. In a personal e-mail response dated the same day, Manz responded thus: “Hello Jordan, As far as I know I am the first one to use the term and the 1983 book (and a related article or two) are the first publications using Self-Leadership as a concept (when I introduced the concept it was intended to be the first use of the term).”
Leadership planning and practice constitute a major variable in the crafting of individual and collective human narratives and affairs. Nonetheless, Self-Leadership is hardly the only factor determining the results humankind accrues either individually or collectively. Other influential variables (limitations and benefits) include:

1. Forces of Nature
2. Congenital Physical Variables
3. Congenital Familial Variables
4. Genetic & Mimetic Inclinations
5. Initial Opportunities for Education
6. Congenital Social Environment
7. Choices of Others
8. Time
9. Structural Inequality
10. Geopolitics & Economics
11. Good & Bad Luck
12. Suprarational Intervention
13. Hierarchy of Needs
14. Self-Leadership Intelligence & Talent
15. Self-Leadership Desire

These sixteen variables will be explicated in detail in Chapter Two.

Self-Leadership represents a “unique human endowment” (Covey, 1989, p. 70) that separates mankind from the rest of the animal kingdom through the possession of our
capacity for “self-awareness, or the ability to think about [our] very thought processes” (p. 66), to analyze them based on desired results, and then to identify, plan for, and make strategic adjustments based on that analysis. Such an “endowment” is indicative of the potential power for Self-Leadership we each possess as human beings, and illustrates the ubiquitous role it plays in the ongoing narrative of humanity both individually and collectively speaking.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography, or the presentation (Ellis & Bochner, 2006) and/or analysis (Anderson, 2006) of a person’s own scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004) is perhaps an ideal qualitative research method for investigating one’s own Self-Leadership. This is because auto-ethnography literally means self-ethnography, or an ethnographic study of the self. What better way then to study Self-Leadership, or auto-leadership, than to closely examine one’s self- or Autoethnography, which requires the intentional exercise of certain Self-Leadership strategies such as self-observation and self-examination (Neck & Manz, 2010)?

There are two general schools of contemporary autoethnographic thought. The first, evocative Autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2006) is concerned primarily with evoking emotion in the reader for the purpose of communicating a message. According to Ellis (2009), “accomplished autoethnographers do not proclaim how things are or how life should be lived, but instead strive to open up a moral and ethical conversation with readers about the possibilities of living life well [in the hope that] readers continue that conversation with stories of their own” (p. 17). These conversations are started, continued, and/or enhanced through the sharing of evocative autoethnographic narratives
produced from the life experiences of the author (see Ellis & Bochner, 1996; Bochner & Ellis, 2002; Ellis, 2004; and Ellis, 2009 for extended examples of evocative autoethnographic texts).

Anderson (2006) promotes another version of Autoethnography, which he calls *analytic Autoethnography*. This school moves beyond mere evocation in order to “contribute to a spiraling refinement, elaboration, extension, and revision of theoretical understanding” (p. 388) in order to make an explicit scholarly contribution through the sharing and subsequent analysis of autoethnographic data. It does this by conducting *analytic Autoethnography*, which Anderson (2006) defines as:

Ethnographic work in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in the researcher’s published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena. (p. 375)

While I do desire my autoethnographic data to grab the attention of and evoke emotions in my readers, I am primarily interested in making a scholarly contribution based on the data analysis. Moreover, while I am hopeful the data and analysis (SAL Theory & Model) will “open up a moral conversation with readers about the possibility of living life well” (Ellis, 2009, p. 17) and inspire “readers [to] continue [the] conversation” (p. 17), my main goal in employing Autoethnography is to engage in “reflexive self-awareness”¹⁹ (Muncey, 2010, p. 16) in order to analyze my own self-narrative for the purpose of making an original contribution to Self-Leadership theory in hopes of benefitting other self-leaders. I therefore utilize elements of *evocative Autoethnography* (Ellis & Bochner, 2006) in an effort to present an explicitly *analytical Autoethnography* (Anderson, 2006), for the purpose of presenting an extended treatise.

¹⁹ Muncey’s (2010) complete statement reads: “Reflexive self awareness is integral to what it is to be human” (p. 16).
that is intentionally pedagogical (Denzin, 2006). Denzin (2006) explains that “some [autoethnographers] get quite bold and go global” (p. 422) whereby, among other things, they “want to expand the reach of analytic ethnography into their version of reflexive Autoethnography” (p. 422.). Such is a good description of my intentions.

Autoethnography potentially wields a textual power that transcends the typical academic thesis. This power arises in its narrative capacity to be more memorable than traditional scholarly vernacular, which tends to be more textually sterile. Consider the following anecdote from a career scholar.

I have been a college professor for over three-and-a-half decades in a professional school. If I had to guess, I’d say that I’ve read tens of thousands of students’ papers since I first started teaching in higher education in 1968. Truth be told, and not wanting to offend anyone, I remember almost nothing of what I’ve read, unless the work was done in the last few years; or, more honestly, in the last few months. … Yet here’s the vital exception: I do tend to remember the scholarly writing of my students that combines both narrative and personal elements. Did I just say that I remember it? This is too weak. I meant that I thrive on it. I can’t imagine not reading personal narrative writing at this particular time in my career. (Nash, 2004, p. 1-2)

While being memorable does not guarantee something will be meaningful, it is fair to say that a memorable text is likely to create more meaning for a reader than one that is lackluster or boring. In a world as bombarded with blasé information as ours is, most of which exits our brains nearly as fast as it enters, is there not a place for narrative-based scholarly writing with the capacity for being both memorable and meaningful? I, like Nash (2004), believe there is.

In this study, Autoethnography is positioned as the qualitative researcher’s method of accomplishing what the self-leader might likewise achieve when engaging in the practice of self-awareness (Neck & Manz, 2010, Goleman, 1995, Covey, 1989). The process of self-examining one’s own Autoethnography will almost certainly expand any
self-leader’s awareness of self; it has definitely expanded my own. Neck & Manz (2010) explain that, “by observing our own behavior and its causes (for example, why we behave in desirable or undesirable ways), we are provided with the necessary information to manage ourselves effectively” (p. 17). Thus, Autoethnography can inform Self-Leadership, and vice versa. A detailed literature review on Autoethnography is provided in Chapter Three.

**Action Research**

If Autoethnography provides the impetus toward self-reflection, or the study of one’s Self-Leadership, a vehicle is then needed to execute a given plan derived from that reflection. This vehicle is Action Research, or by deduction, Self-Action Research, which I define as Action Research applied to the self, or to one’s quest for Self-Leadership Efficacy.

Action Research is a process of identifying a problem, planning a solution, acting on one’s plan, observing the results compared to your original plans and goal(s), and then revisiting your initial plan to make adjustments for new action based on your research discoveries (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997, p. 25). Self-Action Research involves precisely the same process, except as applies specifically to the self, or one’s Self-Leadership Efficacy. The power of Action Research and Self-Action Research lies in the word *action*. Action Research (and Self-Action Research) are proactive research approaches that emphasizes *doing*, thus empowering us to move away from mere theory and begin to engage in an active praxis to better understand a problem and achieve desired goals. Once self-leaders examine their own Autoethnography (i.e., personal history, journal, narrative, or memories), they can then develop an action-oriented plan aimed at altering their Self-
Leadership in a manner that enhances their welfare and increases their Self-Leadership Efficacy over time. They can then can put their plans into action and continue the process over and again as needed. This, in turn, may positively affect the happiness, joy, satisfaction, peace, wealth, and overall quality of life a self-leader experiences.

Action Research is uniquely suited to Self-Leadership practice because of this action-oriented emphasis. Self-Leadership planning is meaningless without Self-Leadership action. Moreover, improved Self-Leadership practice usually occurs through a combination of education and an enhanced discovery and understanding of oneself over time, and it takes action (cognitive and behavioral) to acquire both. Hence, Action Research, and action in general, supplies a valuable vehicle for Self-Leadership development.

Autoethnography, Self-Leadership, and Action Research each possess unique elements of scholarly and/or personal praxes that are powerfully related to each other wherein each constituent member synergistically informs and magnifies the others thereby sharpening the tools they offer self-leaders. This makes them a quintessential triumvirate uniquely qualified to assist self-leaders in the development of Self-Leadership aptitudes, the acquisition of Self-Leadership abilities, the improvement of Self-Leadership practice, and the enhancement of Self-Leadership Efficacy.

Research Problem

The problem of Self-Leadership is that no self-leader is perfect (intrapersonally or interpersonally), and we all have problems rooted in both internal and external sources. It was Peck (1978), who memorably stated that, “Problems do not go away. They must be worked through or else they remain, forever a barrier to [our] growth and
development” (p. 30). One of the problems with problems, however, is that “the process of confronting and solving problems is a painful one” (p. 16). As a result,

Many, so many, seek to avoid the pain of their problems by saying to themselves: “This problem was caused me by other people, or by social circumstances beyond my control, and therefore it is up to other people or society to solve this problem for me. It is not really my personal problem.” (p. 33)

Peck continues:

Fearing the pain involved, almost all of us, to a greater or lesser degree, attempt to avoid problems. We procrastinate, hoping that they will go away. We ignore them, forget them, pretend they do not exist. We even take drugs to assist us in ignoring them, so that by deadening ourselves to the pain we can forget the problems that caused the pain. We attempt to skirt around problems rather than meet them head on. We attempt to get out of them rather than suffer through them. (p. 16)

Problems are like facts, and as John Adams famously remarked while defending the British soldiers in the Boston Massacre affair in 1770: “Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.” The Self-Leadership problem here is two-fold. First, as self-leaders, we all struggle with recognizing and then facing up to the facts surrounding our individual problems and Self-Leadership deficiencies. Second, even if we do recognize and accept the reality of the problems we face, and the ways in which our own thoughts, speech, and behavior are part of the problem, we often lack the knowledge, skills and tools, or worse—the will—to apply knowledge and use skills to solve our problems. The Arbinger Institute (2000) calls the first problem self-deception, and suggests it is “a problem at the heart of the human sciences” (p. 9). Self-deception refers to “the inability to see that one has a problem” (p. 16). According to Arbinger, self deception is “a germ that we all carry to one extent or another, a germ that kills

---

20 See URL: http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/3235.html
leadership, a germ that causes a multitude of ‘people problems,’” (p. 19) and that “of all
the problems in organizations [and, I would add, in individuals], it’s the most common—
and the most damaging” (p. 16). Herein lies the research problem at hand, a problem
that arises not because we as human beings have problems, but because we often cannot
see that we have a problem in the first place (Arbinger, 2000). The second problem is an
outgrowth of the first, although the two are not always mutually inclusive. Persons can
know that they are their biggest problem, yet still fail to do anything about it, for one of
three reasons:

1) A lack of knowledge regarding what to do

2) A lack of will to actually do

3) Some other external constraint beyond their immediate control.

Individuals facing the third problem (external constraint beyond their control)
may be legitimately stuck, at least until someone else helps them get unstuck. For those
facing the first and/or second problem, however, Peck (1978), explains that, the
“tendency to avoid problems and the emotional suffering inherent in them is the primary
basis of all human mental illness” (p. 17). He goes even further to emphasize that, “since
most of us have this tendency to a greater or lesser degree, most of us are mentally ill to a
greater or lesser degree, lacking complete mental health” (p. 17). Such a statement is
provocative; it may even be offensive to those prone to affixing negative stigmas to
mental illness, or others who may be deeply mired in the morass of their own cognitive
distortions about life and themselves. Nevertheless, Peck’s assertion is technically
accurate based simply on his own definition of mental illness: “[the] tendency to avoid
problems and the emotional suffering inherent in them” (p. 17). To enhance one’s Self-
Leadership, it becomes essential to see things as objectively—as they really are—as possible, and not merely as one would wish they would be, or even worse, as one may have deluded oneself to believe they are, when in actuality they are not. Efficacious self-leaders must face up to the facts—the reality—of their problems if they are ever to solve them. In this regard, we can all learn an ironic\textsuperscript{21} lesson from the Fictional schoolmaster Thomas Gradgrind, who declared in Dickens’ (2008) \emph{Hard Times}: “‘NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else…. Stick to Facts, sir!’” (p. 1). As a holistic approach to life in general, Gradgrind’s categorically empirical approach to life is clearly out-of-balance. Nevertheless, viewed one-dimensionally, his irrevocable commitment to verifiable realities does represent an essential characteristic of efficacious Self-Leadership. Of course, there is more to it than that. Obviously, “\textit{life is bigger than logic}” (Schumacher, 1977, p. 123), facts, data, and empirical objectivity. Indeed, if we rely only on reason and empiricism, Autoethnography as a research methodology possesses little scholarly legitimacy. If we are ever going to make any meaningful progress in approaching the “‘unfathomable depth[s]’” (Roubiczek, 1964, p. 2)\textsuperscript{22} of knowledge and reality as it relates to the World, the Universe, and ourselves, we must find a virtuous mean (Aristotle, 2002) of balance between pure logic and visceral sentience. In other words, we must employ facts when facts are clearly categorical, but we must compliment those facts with a common sense hewn out of a wisdom-based, and

\textsuperscript{21} The irony is that “THOMAS GRADGRIND, sir; A man of realities; A man of facts and calculations” (Dickens, 2008, p. 3) is not the kind of one-dimensional, cold-hearted character I suggest we become; however, when it comes to identifying Self-Leadership deficiencies and accurately assessing problems, we can all benefit from being more committed to “realities” (p. 3), and less distracted by “irrelevant fancies, and other absurdities that have no existence” (p. 140).

\textsuperscript{22} Quoting Werner Heisenberg’s \textit{Philosphic Problems of Nuclear Science}, London 1952, p. 93 (as referenced in Roubiczek, 1964, p. 185).
sometimes viscerally influenced, analysis of life’s qualitative elements. For one without the other, no matter how effectively measured or managed, produces an incomplete and ultimately an insufficient model for human effectiveness. Nevertheless, since we start with self-awareness, let us also start with facts.

One of the biggest problems we face as self-leaders is a lack of self-knowledge, or self-awareness. This problem is incurred by a failure to self-observe, self-examine, self-troubleshoot, self-goal set, et cetera. Socrates taught that a self-leader should know oneself (Avnon, 1995). Yet, as Ouspensky (1974) articulates:

*Man does not know himself.* He does not know his own limitations and his own possibilities. He does not even know to how great an extent he does not know himself … [and] he has all sorts of wrong ideas about himself. (p. 11-12)

Manz (1983a) also commented on the problem when he averred that: “not everyone is an effective self-leader” (p. 289). This is not necessarily the result of some people being more talented self-leaders than others, although in part it might be, but more likely is because “managing one’s inner life is not easy … For many of us, it’s our most difficult challenge” (Goleman, 1995, p. 158). Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2010) explain why self-management can be so difficult:

Making change last requires practice…. It takes doing and redoing, over and over, to break old neural habits. A [self-] leader must rehearse a new behavior until it becomes automatic—that is, until he’s mastered it at the level of implicit learning. Only then will the new wiring replace the old. (p. 174)

I suggest the majority of long-term problems humankind has faced, currently faces, or will yet face—individually or collectively—result primarily from Self-Leadership deficiencies and/or ignorance. From abuse, violence, and other criminal behavior to dropping out of school and/or failing to secure and/or maintain gainful employment; from self-neglect and lack of vision to enumerable troubles with
communication and relationships, there are no shortage of problems that can either arise from, or are exacerbated by, a lack of Self-Leadership. Manifold statistics from a myriad of life arenas could be provided to explicate such problems. Because this dissertation focuses on Self-Leadership as applied generally to any potential life arena, addressing specific societal problems and/or statistics is beyond the scope of this paper. As an autoethnographic treatise, the focus will be on my own personal problems, particularly my struggle with OCD.

Research Goals

My research goal has been to autoethnographically analyze my experiences learning to effectively deal with obsessive compulsive disorder and other personal challenges in order to make Self-Leadership explicitly pedagogic so that other self-leaders might benefit from what I have learned, and then apply that knowledge in their own tailor-made efforts to confront and transcend their own life challenges through Self-Action Research. I have strived to accomplish this through the design of an original Self-Leadership theory and model that is universally applicable, or at least potentially so. Because “effective Self-Leadership can be learned” (Manz, 1983a, p. 289), and since “everyone practices Self-Leadership” [p. 289], all findings put forth in this dissertation are intended to apply potentially to all human beings, and perhaps especially to children, teenagers, and young adults.

23 I also rely on basic interview data from members of my immediate family who have been the closest observers of my struggles with obsessive-compulsive disorder.
Self-Leadership and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) are closely related topics (Neck & Manz, 2010), and according to Goleman (1995), “those … who lack self-control … suffer a moral deficiency” since “the ability to control impulse is the base of will and character” (p. xii). Therefore, the active promotion of an informal (self-help) and formal (organizational) pedagogy that includes topics such as emotional intelligence and Self-Leadership constitutes, according to Goleman, a “pressing moral imperative” (p. xii) for all of us. I argue that this “moral imperative” is, even more “pressing” insofar as it relates to children and adolescents. Again in the words of Goleman (1995): “Childhood and adolescence are critical windows of opportunity for setting down the essential … habits that will govern our lives” (p. xiii). Said Goleman (1995): “I … foresee a day when education will routinely include inculcating essential human competencies such as self-awareness, self-control, and empathy, and the arts of listening, resolving conflicts, and cooperation” (p. xiv). It is my intention for this dissertation to be a vocal exponent of a Pedagogy of Personal Leadership that can be delivered in schools (at all levels), and in organizations (of all kinds) everywhere if creative leaders of those organizations are willing to make it a high enough priority, and if community mores will evolve sufficiently to support, embrace, and/or eventually demand it. The pedagogy of which I speak is presented in this dissertation’s final chapter (Chapter 13).
Research Question

My research question is: what principles and strategies have I successfully learned and applied in my own Self-Leadership journey that could be included in an original theory and model for Self-Leadership application that has a high probability of empowering other determined and proactive self-leaders to reach higher levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy themselves? Such a theory and model ought to provide a clear, coherent, easy to understand, inspirational, memorable, and sequential approach to the individual practice of effective and holistic Self-Leadership in one’s life.

The Twenty-First Century Self-Leadership Opportunity

A unique and unprecedented opportunity awaits self-leaders of the twenty-first century. First, although Self-Leadership has been around as long as mankind, it has only recently begun to be seriously studied at the university level (see Manz, 1983a; 1983b). Furthermore, the variety of opportunities available in the twenty-first century postmodern world is greater than at any other time in the history of mankind. This is due to the securing and subsequent proliferation of individual rights and freedoms over the past several centuries in addition to the unprecedented technological progress that has thrust mankind into the age of information in recent decades. This progress has initiated an erosion of traditional systems of caste and class in many developed societies so as to increasingly herald new opportunities and merit-based paradigms that reward ambition alloyed with effort. This same progress has increased the leverage of the individual, or self-leader. Moreover, the advent of the information age and its concomitant burgeoning of the knowledge worker population have further created organizational opportunities—and even obligations—to an increased percentage of the population to practice Self-
Leadership at work (Drucker, 2010; Covey, 2004). While differing circumstances and variables of individual self-leader’s lives play significant roles in the journey through life one will take, it can be argued that self-leaders, generally speaking, have never had as much opportunity to exercise Self-Leadership in organizational settings as they do in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Moreover, as the global society trends deeper into the information age, it appears unlikely that we will see this trend atrophy much, if any, in decades to come. The opportunity, therefore, and potential of individual self-leaders to plan and then create their own metaphorical worlds according to conscious design has never been greater. Through the conscious exercise of Self-Leadership, self-leaders can choose to take consistent action toward bettering themselves and their circumstances—no matter what said circumstances happened to be when their Self-Leadership journey began—as long as they have the opportunity and drive to learn the principles and strategies of Self-Leadership, the creativity and motivation to draw up principle-centered plans, and the will to take action based on those principled plans.

The Greater Good

This work is based on the general mathematical assumption that every self-leader either contributes to, or detracts from, the overall greater good of humankind through their thoughts, words, and actions, and that beings privileged enough to grace the Planet with their existence and physical presence carry an irrevocable existential responsibility to contribute to and promote the general welfare of her citizens, including oneself. Because this duty does not represent an externally enforced categorical imperative, men and women are ultimately free to choose their own thoughts, speech, and actions in life, all of which have a profound impact in determining the pathway a self-leader takes in
life, the ultimate *kind* of self-leader an individual decides to *become*, and the impact and/or influence one has (or does not have) on other self-leaders individually or collectively speaking. Even in extreme situations involving insidious examples of external control, such as residing in a Nazi concentration camp, self-leaders still possess “the last of the human freedoms—to choose [their] own attitude[s] in any given set of circumstances, to choose [their] own way” (Frankl, 2006, p. 66). The fact that self-leaders *can choose*, and “do choose” (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 8) is a fundamental verity undergirding this present discourse surrounding Self-Leadership.

If a given self-leader fails to contribute to the greater good of humankind, or even worse, undermines it through their actions, they usually represent a negative, or perhaps an evil, entity and may be justifiably viewed as an undesirable net subtraction from the overall well being of mankind. Therefore, a goal of this work is to contribute to the awareness and enhancement of individual self-leaders everywhere with the goal of enhancing collective Self-Leadership Efficacy²⁴ and the well being of mankind throughout the world.

**A Pedagogy of Personal Leadership**

Pedagogy of Personal Leadership was defined earlier as *curriculum-based Self-Leadership knowledge and training*. Promoting Pedagogies of Personal Leadership is a primary purpose of this dissertation. In his seminal work, Manz (1983a) made the significant statement that, “Effective Self-Leadership can be learned” (p. 289); therefore, Self-Leadership must be taught early, and it must be taught often if self-leaders are going to continually rise in their Self-Leadership Efficacy. Earlier, I quoted Goleman (1995)

²⁴ This term will be formally defined later in the next section of this chapter.
who implicated the importance of explicitly teaching skills such as “self-awareness” and “self-control” (p. xiv). Far from being a lone voice in the wilderness on the matter, Goleman is just one of many in an ever growing choir voicing a clarion call for leadership, and/or character, and/or life-skill education. Another such voice is Zenger (of Zenger and Folkman, 2002):

The old paradigm of separating core academic curriculum from leadership, character, and life-skill education in America’s schools is gradually beginning to shift. The time is coming when classes in leadership will be equally as important as those in mathematics, biology, or English; and from a career standpoint, possibly more important.²⁵

I share the vision that Manz, Goleman, Zenger, and others are promoting. My own work (Jensen, 2005; 2007) has consistently aimed at contributing to this vision; this work is no different. I am of the conviction that Self-Leadership, and specifically Self-Leadership as introduced in the new knowledge presented herein as the SAL Theory and Model represent one of the most important single subject that schoolchildren, adolescents, and adults alike can study. Why? Because it undergirds a self-leader’s long-term success in virtually every other life arena. Furthermore, unlike many academic subjects that are taken once or twice in school and then rarely (if ever) applied practically in one’s real world on-the-job training or performance, Self-Leadership is a ubiquitously essential ingredient in achieving success in any and all subjects, as well as every real-life task, responsibility, and career path.

The pedagogical reality of Self-Leadership is that while some of it may be self-evident and intuitive, and some self-leaders may naturally be more predisposed toward effectively practicing it than others, much of it must also be taught and/or self-taught if it is to be properly and effectively learned, and it must be learned before it can be practiced.

²⁵ Jensen (2005, back cover).
Not an Empirical Study

Schumacher (1977) differentiates between the *instructional sciences* (p.105) and the *descriptive sciences* (p. 107). Instructional science represents what is sometimes referred to as the hard sciences of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and other scientific fields where *proof* of theories, models, and classifications are mathematically attainable. Descriptive sciences, on the other hand, represent what might be referred to as the soft sciences of philosophy, theology, leadership, management, and self-help where empirical *proof* of the principles is not always accessible. According to Schumacher (1977), it is impossible to scientifically *prove* so-called truisms that exist in the descriptive sciences.

What … is the nature of *proof* in the descriptive sciences? The answer is inescapable: there can be classifications, observed regularities, speculations, theorems of different grades of plausibility, but there can never be *proof*. Scientific proof can exist only in instructional sciences…. [Descriptive] theories can never be “scientifically proved.” (p. 107, 110)

In acquiescing this point, Schumacher (1977) does not desire to diminish the importance of the descriptive sciences, but merely to keep them in perspective. In fact, he lauds the value of both experience\(^{26}\) and “all traditional wisdom” (p. 131) to be found in the descriptive sciences and positions them as a necessity in “developing our higher faculties” (p. 131).

All traditional wisdom, of which both Dante and Shakespeare are outstanding representatives, transcends ordinary, calculating logic and defines ‘The Good’ as that which helps us to become truly human by developing our higher faculties—which are conditional on, and also part of, self-awareness. (p. 131)

\(^{26}\) Schumacher (1977) paraphrases Roubiczek (1964) when he stated: “The main concern of existentialism … is that experience has to be admitted as evidence, which implies that without experience, there is no evidence” (p. 126).
Schumacher (1977) also suggests that, “[the] truth or untruth [of a descriptive theory] rests not on scientific proof but on right judgment, a power of the human mind which transcends mere logic just as the computer programmer’s mind transcends the computer” (p. 110).

This study is concerned with descriptive rather than instructional sciences (e.g., Self-Leadership, Autoethnography, Action Research, emotional intelligence, et cetera). As such, there can be no empirical proof that the theory and model presented herein represent scientifically true, good, or correct knowledge. As such, nomenclature such as believe, suggest, hypothesize, assert, postulate, and convinced of will often be used in place of is, fact, true, and/or truth. In this work, I provide “classifications, observed regularities, speculations” (Schumacher, 1977, p. 107), and eventually a comprehensive theory and model for the holistic Self-Leadership exercise of self-leaders everywhere. While I personally feel certain of the general soundness of the information presented in the SAL Theory and Model (based on my own experiences and internal convictions), I do not, and cannot, provide categorical mathematical proof of its absolute veracity because “The variables cannot be sufficiently controlled for scientific proof” (Peck, 1978, p. 20). As such, readers must ultimately make an internal, visceral decision regarding the worth of this material, by applying “right judgment, [that] power of the human mind which transcends mere logic just as the computer programmer’s mind transcends the computer” (Schumacher, 1977, p. 110).

---

27 However, I do provide some empirical/quantitative data within a context of the qualitative/autoethnographic data presented in the vignette chapters. Such quantitative data reflects actual measurements of my own Self-Leadership practice.
Self-Leadership: A Divergent Problem

Schumacher (1977) identifies two types of problems, generally speaking, that human beings face. He labels these two problems as convergent and divergent (see Chapter 10: Two Types of Problems, p. 120-136). He explains that convergent problems can ultimately be solved scientifically, or empirically. Divergent problems, on the other hand, cannot be solved by logic alone, and are therefore viewed by some as being unsolvable, at least from a scientific and/or purely empirical standpoint. Such problems create paradoxes. When it comes to understanding and/or solving these paradoxical, divergent problems, Schumacher tells us: “Logic does not help us because it insists that if a thing is true its opposite cannot be true at the same time” (p. 123). According to Schumacher, divergent problems do “not yield to ordinary, ‘straight-line’ logic; [they] demonstrate that life is bigger than logic” (p. 123).

According to Schumacher (1977), convergent problems “tend … to become increasingly precise, until finally they can be written down in the form of an instruction [or truism]” (p. 125). This ends the problem and therefore makes it dead because “a solved problem is a dead problem” (p. 125). Convergent problems can be found in the hard sciences (e.g. mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering, and computer science) and “relate to the dead aspect[s] of the Universe, where manipulation can proceed without let or hindrance and where man can make himself ‘master and possessor’” (p. 125).

Divergent problems, on the other hand, are inherently more complex because they involve “the subtle, higher forces … [of] life, consciousness, and self-awareness” (Schumacher, 1977, p. 125). Such “higher levels of being” (p. 125) invite “element[s] of
freedom and inner experience” (p. 125) into our lives. These two elements represent largely unquantifiable, yet undisputed realities of our life’s journey. Said Schumacher, “

Divergent problems offend the logical mind, which wishes to remove tension by coming down on one side or the other, but they provoke, stimulate, and sharpen the higher human faculties, without which man is nothing but a clever animal. A refusal to accept the divergency of divergent problems causes these higher faculties to remain dormant and to wither away, and when this happens, the “clever animal” is more likely than not to destroy itself.

Man’s life can thus be seen and understood as a succession of divergent problems which must be inevitably encountered and have to be coped with in some way. They are refractory to mere logic and discursive reason, and constitute, so to speak a strain-and-stretch apparatus to develop the Whole Man, and that means to develop man’s supralogical faculties. All traditional cultures have seen life as a school and have recognized, in one way or another, the essentiality of this teaching force. (p. 127-128)

Second only to the currently scientifically unanswerable questions surrounding the existence (or not) of Deity and other theological and astronomical mysteries, I purport that Self-Leadership, especially as it relates to questions of character and morality, represents the most significant problem of divergence we will ever face as human beings. It represents a divergent problem because it is living and perpetual, and always will be as long as we remain in this world under our current state of consciousness. Moreover, because we presently lack the scientific capacity to empirically quantify certain aspects of the human experience, we will, of necessity, be required to exercise faith to a certain degree in the higher faculties of emotions, the viscera, and the spirit as guided by unseen (although held by many to be real) Forces. Such Forces may work in conjunction with the collective dogmas, literature, and traditions that the authors of wisdom texts (both religious and secular-philosophical), from a variety of religions and cultures, have set forth and acclaimed throughout the ages. Such things invite self-leaders to exercise their
“higher levels of being” as they struggle to comprehend issues that truly are larger than logic.

A Self-Leadership Paradox

Part of what makes Self-Leadership a divergent problem is the paradox found in the following two seemingly contradictory statements: 1) What is true for one is true for all, and 2) What is true for one is true for no one else. Certain principles of Self-Leadership apply generally to all self-leaders. Specific applications of general principles, however, may vary quite significantly from one self-leader to another based on the singular uniqueness of each self-leader and the original set of Self-Leadership variables that make up an individual self-leader’s world. I suggest, therefore, that while the new knowledge presented in this dissertation may be universally applicable to every self-leader generally speaking, the specifics of how, when, where, why, and to what degree a given self-leader applies a general principle to his or her life will vary greatly depending on the unique variables and/or constraints based on opportunity, personality, strengths, weaknesses, circumstances, timing, personal preferences, etc.

The Need for Self-Leadership

Self-Leadership is a universal phenomenon. If you are a living, breathing human being, you are a self-leader. The problem, as Manz (1983a) succinctly summarized is that while “Everyone practices Self-Leadership, … not everyone is an effective self-leader” (p. 289), and ineffective Self-Leadership leads to undesirable results for individuals practicing their own Self-Leadership. Self-Leadership, therefore, is also a universal and ubiquitous problem in that we all struggle with it to varying degrees. No
one is a perfect self-leader. All of us, therefore, have either needs and/or desires to improve in our Self-Leadership, hence the need for its ongoing instruction and repetition of that instruction.

Another need for Self-Leadership stems from the need for leadership generally speaking. Neck and Manz (2010) state that, “if we ever hope to be effective leaders of others, we need first to be able to lead ourselves effectively” (p. 1). Thus, Self-Leadership Efficacy can lead to team leadership efficacy, and Self-Leadership problems can lead to team leadership problems. This latter point presents a significant problem that is perhaps best captured by Clawson (2008) who wrote that, “one of the biggest leadership issues is the inability of people – even and especially managers and executives – to lead themselves” (p. 175).

Rubin and Schoenefeld (2009) have identified another Self-Leadership problem existing among children. According to these researchers, “neither educators nor parents seem to intentionally provide children with the opportunity to be involved in, exercise, and learn the Self-Leadership skills of individual and collective decision-making” (p. 7). They argue that while children still need leadership guidance and direction from adults in their lives, these adults should also take the time and effort necessary to explicitly teach decision-making skills to their children and then provide opportunities for them to put those skills into use.

Children need to be provided with the tools required for becoming their own leaders: an understanding of the parameters to be applied in decision-making and the social problem-solving skills needed to make healthy choices for themselves and others. … [as] Martin Brokenleg once said: “Every time you make a decision for a person that he or she can make him or herself, you make that person weak’ (1995). Surely, this is not what we want for our children.” (p. 11)
This brings us to the subject of character education. Many voices either support, provide a reasoning for, or an explanation of, the explicit teaching of character education in schools (see Salls, 2007, Prestwich, 2004, Edgington, 2002, Kristol, 2002, Greenawalt, 1996; Lickona, 1991, Peters, 1923) in an effort to try and empower young people to not only self-lead effectively, but to self-lead with certain character philosophies or traits in mind. While arguments abound regarding how to best provide a character-based pedagogy, most, if not all scholars in the field accede the existence of at least some basic need to provide character-based instruction to children and teenagers. In the words of King, M.L., Jr. (1947), that august civil rights leader of the 1960s, “We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate.”

Finally, the world in 2013 is, in many regards, facing troubled times both economically and politically. Moreover, many others also argue that the world is falling increasingly into moral disarray. Nearly 45 years ago, Sayers (1969) wrote the following about the troubles of modern society:

Futility; lack of a living faith; the drift into loose morality, greedy consumption, financial irresponsibility, and uncontrolled bad temper; a self-opinionated and obstinate individualism; violence, sterility, and lack of reverence for life and property including one’s own; the exploitation of sex, the debasing of language by advertisement and propaganda, the commercialising [sic] of religion, the pandering to superstition and the conditioning of people’s minds by mass-hysteria and “spell-binding” of all kinds, venality and string-pulling in public affairs, hypocrisy, dishonesty in material things, intellectual dishonesty, the fomenting of discord (class against class, nation against nation) for what one can get out of it, the falsification and destruction of all the means of communication; the exploitation of the lowest and stupidest mass-emotions; treachery even to the fundamentals of kinship, country, the chosen friend, and the sworn allegiance:

---

28 Page number unavailable.
these are the all-too-recognisable [sic] stages that lead to the cold death of society and the extinguishing of all civilised [sic] relations. (p. 114)

I argue these problems have only deepened since Sayers wrote about them almost a half-a-century-ago. What is the answer to these problems? The argument of this treatise is that collective, macro, external problems can and will only be improved to the degree that individuals look within themselves for individual, micro, internal solutions. In the words of Mohandas Gandhi: “You must be the change you wish to see in the world” (Jensen, 2005, p. 54); and in the words of Lewis (2001): “Nothing but the courage and unselfishness of individuals is ever going to make any system work properly” (p. 73). “Yet people go on clamoring for ‘solutions’ and become angry when they are told that the restoration of society must come from within and cannot come from without” (Schumacher, 1977, p. 138). My argument is that positive and necessary structural, systemic, and organizational (external changes) can, and will, only occur as individual self-leaders make harmonious, corresponding internal changes. As individuals bring about positive changes within their own thoughts, behavior, and character, these micro individual changes will serve to positively impact organizations, systems, and structures by a factor of that individual’s place, position, and influence in the organization, therefore promoting a degree of macro collective change in the system by virtue of the actions of the individual member of that system. Just as capable team leaders are usually capable self-leaders first, collective, external change is more likely to follow individual, internal changes made by individual members of a system. As an ancient American war captain once noted: “the inward vessel shall be cleansed first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also.”

Is Self-Leadership Self-Evident?

Neubert & Wu (2006) have written that, “The importance of Self-Leadership … is self-evident” (p. 360), and Drucker (2010) has stated: “The challenges of managing oneself may seem obvious, if not elementary” (p. 20). I do not disagree with these sentiments. The argument that Self-Leadership theory largely represents a scholarly recapitulation of self-governing common sense is reasonable, and this work does not ignore the inherent nomological underpinnings of the concept. Based on this view, then, what need is there for this work? There is great need, and the need is twofold. First, Self-Leadership must be learned (via instruction, trial and error, or both), and according to Manz (1983a), “effective Self-Leadership can be learned and … is not restricted to people we describe as ‘self-starters,’ ‘self-directed,’ ‘self-motivated,’ etc.” (p. 289). Second, one of life’s great self-evident realities is that common sense is not always common practice. Moreover, one might argue somewhat convincingly that in 2013, common sense is not even particularly common anymore, must less practiced. Herein lies the great irony of Self-Leadership theory: its relative simplicity of comprehension utterly belies its bedeviling difficulty in real-life practice. Moreover, this deceptive intellectual facileness all too often leads us to individually and/or collectively ignore, or neglect to properly review its essential assertions. Such laissez-faire attitudes often lead to Self-Leadership deficiencies that account for manifold preventable human ills. To further illustrate this irony, consider again Drucker’s (2010) statement, but this time in context.

The challenges of managing oneself may seem obvious, if not elementary. And the answers may seem self-evident to the point of appearing naïve. But managing oneself requires new and unprecedented things from the individual, and especially
from the knowledge worker. In effect, managing oneself demands that each knowledge worker think and behave like a chief executive officer. (p. 20)

Many would probably agree that the chief-executive-officering anything is usually not an easy or simplistic undertaking; serving effectively as CEO of oneself is no exception. One scholar (Clawson, 2008), who is nearing the end of a full and rich academic career in leadership and management studies has stated his belief that “one of the biggest leadership issues is the inability of people – even and especially managers and executives – to lead themselves” (p. 175). Many people out there, and in the words of Clawson (2008) “especially managers and executives” (p. 175) comprehend what Self-Leadership is, but this fact does not always mean they are practicing what they know. Furthermore, no matter how mature and developed, there is always room to improve one’s Self-Leadership.

In a similar vein, Pearce (2007) described two consequences of leaders who lack Self-Leadership: “Clearly, if leaders are not competent self-leaders, their capacity for managing stress and influencing others effectively, is, at best, diminished” (p. 357). Finally, Topper (2009) acknowledged why Self-Leadership development is essential to leadership by identifying a key source of self-motivation.

Many leaders are put into positions of power often before they have learned the art of Self-Leadership. Leaders do not motivate others. Motivation is a personal thing and must come from within. What leaders do is help others tap into things they care about and help them to move forward in achieving their goals. (p. 561)

Somewhere in my youth, a teacher taught me the principle that “repetition is the key to reception.” It is not good enough to learn what Self-Leadership is; it is not even good enough to learn it and then do it. We must learn it, do it, and then continue to review (relearn) it over and over again to avoid its future neglect. The self-leaders I
know who have come nearest to mastering their own Self-Leadership are the ones who consistently nurture their Self-Leadership through study, action, and ongoing self-observation and self-examination (Neck & Manz, 2010) in preparation to act again and again and again in a continuing journey of self-improvement and self-refinement.

**What Has Already Been Developed?**

Much has been written on the topic of Self-Leadership since the early 1980s when Manz (1983a; 1983b) first introduced the term. In the intervening space of time, a growing number of research papers have been published, including multiple empirical studies (e.g. Georgianna, 2007; Houghton, Bonham & Neck, and Singh, 2004; Houghton & Neck, 2002; Neck & Manz, 1996; Manz & Sims, 1987). Preceding these empirical studies and other writings came “the seminal academic work on Self-Leadership” (Neck & Houghton, 2006) completed by Manz (1986), whereby he introduced the first academic theory of self leadership, and in so doing “laid the basic theoretical foundations of Self-Leadership and presented the basic Self-Leadership strategies” (Houghton & Neck, 2006, p. 273). This paper led to the development of *A Comprehensive Self-Leadership Framework* to be included in all future revisions (see Manz & Neck, 1999; Neck and Manz, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2012) of Manz’ original Self-Leadership textbook (see Manz, 1983b). This framework is reprinted and discussed further in Chapter Three. Other, lesser known, models that attempt to describe specific components of Self-Leadership will also be discussed in Chapter Three.
What is Still Missing?

As a relatively nascent field, many opportunities remain to contribute to extant scholarly conversations and/or begin new ones about Self-Leadership. The purpose of this dissertation is to begin a new conversation about Self-Leadership as it relates to Autoethnography and Action Research by introducing the *Self-Action Leadership* Theory and Model. To date, Self-Leadership has not been explicitly investigated via either of these approaches.

Research Methodology

This dissertation primarily utilizes an analytic autoethnographic (Anderson, 2006) research method, although various elements of evocative Autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2006), such as poetry, are also employed. It is among the first extended, published examples of this kind of qualitative research. Other examples of either explicit and/or implicit analytic Autoethnography include Pong, 2012; Anderson, 2011; Carrico, 2011; Whelan, 2011; Griffin, 2010; and Rimando, 2010.\(^{30}\)

Qualitative data will be shared throughout this dissertation (excepting the literature reviews in Chapter Three) in the form of autoethnographic vignettes (Harper, 2011, p. 55) from my life. Additional qualitative data collected from several interviews with other research subjects will also be shared. These subjects consist of specific members of my immediate family. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain information on their perspectives of my progress in effectively managing obsessive-compulsive disorder over time since first contracting its clinical symptoms in the mid 1990s.

\(^{30}\) Additional examples beyond these listed may exist; these are just the ones I was able to identify in my research.
When Anderson (2006) first introduced the concept of analytic Autoethnography, his work was quickly criticized by Ellis and Bochner (2006), who expressed their disappointment “that [he] didn’t show us … at least one extended example … [of] what this new form of Autoethnography would look like” (p. 432). Later, Anderson did provide an example later on in the form of an academic paper (see Anderson, 2011) that detailed his experiences with skydiving in order to comment more broadly on the challenge of properly balancing “serious leisure” (title) with work and family priorities and obligations.

This study incorporates a fluid methodological approach to Autoethnography. In so doing, it draws from several scholars’ takes on the burgeoning qualitative science/art. On the surface, this study employs a basic autoethnographic research design that loosely and flexibly follows the process outlined by Chang (2008) where I collect data, analyze it, and report findings. On a deeper level, my writing primarily represents analytic Autoethnography in the spirit of Anderson (2011, 2006). Peripherally, or loosely, speaking, I also incorporate elements of evocative Autoethnography in the spirit of Ellis and Bochner (2006) from the standpoint that my mixed use of poetry and prose is crafted in a manner that seeks to grab the attention of, as well as to elicit emotion from, the reader. This incorporative concatenation, or potpourri approach is undertaken in order to stay true to Ellis’ (2009) conception of the autoethnographic method.

Autoethnographic approaches are flexible, reflexive, and reflective of life as lived; they do not follow a rigid list of rule-based procedures. Often they are multivoiced and include interaction among researchers and participants in the research context as well as stories participants bring to the project. (p. 16)

Instead of following a “rigid list of rule-based procedures” (p. 16), I flexibly apply Autoethnography as it has been defined and presented by multiple authors in a
primarily analytic (Anderson, 2006) approach. The analytic approach is “committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena” (p. 375). The “broader social phenomena” this treatise addresses includes Self-Leadership, Autoethnography, and Action Research (in that order).

Ellis and Bochner (2006) would argue that such an approach waters down my story.

If you turn a story into a story analyzed, as [Anderson] wants to do, you sacrifice the story at the altar of traditional sociological rigor. You transform the story into another language, the language of generalization and analysis, and thus you lose the very qualities that make a story a story. (p. 440)

I disagree with their assertion. I do not believe that a good story is sacrificed by applying a meaningful analysis, or by philosophically musing over it, or even by literary mining to unearth moral lessons. To the contrary, I claim that it actually enhances it. As a student of Self-Leadership theory, I have found some of the greatest lessons on the subject are taught in stories, poems, drama, and the cinema. Some parts of a good story may even evince implicit didacticism or make a moral judgment. For example, in Hugo’s (1964) Les Misérables, the Bishop tells Jean Valjean: “If you are leaving that sorrowful place (the galleys/prison) with hate and anger against men, you are worthy of compassion; if you leave it with good will, gentleness, and peace, you are better than any of us” (p. 16). Others, like Shelley’s (1963/2000) Frankenstein, Hawthorn’s (1986) The Scarlet Letter, or Lee’s (1960) To Kill a Mockingbird, are strewn with philosophical musings about character and/or morality. In some instances, a moral imperative or philosophical musing may even rise to eventually transcend the greater work of art from which it is derived. For example, consider one of the most famous couplets in the collective canon of poetic verse: “for of all sad words of tongue or pen / The saddest are
these: ‘It might have been!’” (Cook, 1958/1997, p. 149). Many have heard this couplet repeated before, but far fewer know that it is merely two lines extracted from a much longer narrative poem—*Maud Muller*—that has largely been forgotten. Indeed, many more people would recognize this two-line gem than would possess knowledge of the story of Maud Muller, or even of Whittier for that matter—as august a poet as he was in his day. There seems to be something in such musings that resonates not only among collective humanity, but betwixt different generations as well. Otherwise why would such lines create such an intergenerational stir so as to be empowered with such remarkable remembrance? With these examples in mind, I suggest that an analysis of my own story, however detailed it might become, need not diminish, much less “sacrifice the story” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006).

Autoethnographic research qualifies as being analytic (Anderson, 2006) by meeting three general criterion.

*Analytic Autoethnography* refers to ethnographic work in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in the researcher’s published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena. (p. 375)

Anderson expands on this summary by presenting five specific criteria for Autoethnography to qualify as being explicitly analytic. These criteria are as follows:

(1) Complete member researcher (CMR) status.

(2) Analytic reflexivity.

(3) Narrative visibility of the researcher’s self.

(4) Dialogue with informants beyond the self.

(5) Commitment to theoretical analysis (p. 378).
Criterion one, “complete member researcher (CMR) status” (Anderson, 2006, p. 378) means that I, as the researcher, am “a complete member in the social world [or in this case, personal world] under study” (p. 379). Moreover, I bring the added benefit of having been “in the [research] setting or experience for extended periods of time” (p. 380), 25-plus years to be precise.

According to Anderson (2006), criterion two, analytic reflexivity,

Involves an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and informants. It entails self-conscious introspection guided by a desire to better understand both self and others through examining one’s actions and perceptions in reference to and dialogue with those of others. (p. 382)

One of the ways in which I exercise analytic reflexivity is to employ, from time to time, throughout my narrative the expression, “in hindsight.” Because Autoethnography involves an on-going analysis of one’s personal story based on past and present experiences and a growing knowledge of one’s self and the world-at-large, an important part of the data analysis involves my present insight reflecting back towards past events, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, et cetera to see what I might be able to learn from holistically synergizing my collective experiences with my own (hopefully) growing wisdom about what those experiences have to teach.

Criterion three, “narrative visibility of the researcher’s self” (Anderson, 2006, p. 378) means that unlike traditional ethnographers, who remain largely invisible in the text, autoethnographers are highly recognizable in the narratives shared (Anderson, 2006).

According to Anderson (2006),

Autoethnographers should illustrate analytic insights through recounting their own experiences and thoughts as well as those of others. Furthermore, they should openly discuss changes in their beliefs and relationships over the course of fieldwork, thus vividly revealing themselves as people grappling with issues
relevant to membership and participation in fluid rather than static social worlds. (p. 384)

Criterion four, “dialogue with informants beyond the self” (Anderson, 2006, p. 378) enables analytic autoethnographers to avoid “the potential for self-absorption” (p. 385). This criterion represents a key departure from evocative Autoethnography. In the words of Anderson (2006), “Unlike evocative Autoethnography, which seeks narrative fidelity only to the researcher’s subjective experience, analytic Autoethnography is grounded in self-experience but reaches beyond it as well” (p. 386).

The fifth and final criterion of analytic Autoethnography, “commitment to theoretical analysis” (Anderson, 2006, p. 378). In Anderson’s own words,

The final characteristic of analytic Autoethnography is its commitment to an analytic agenda. The purpose of analytic [auto]ethnography is not simply to document personal experience, to provide an ‘insider’s perspective,’ or to evoke emotional resonance with the reader. Rather, the defining characteristic of analytic social science is to use empirical data to gain insight into some broader set of social phenomenon than those provided by the data themselves. This data-transcending goal has been a central warrant for traditional social science research. (p. 386-387)

The study presented in this dissertation maintains a commitment to all five of these elements, and is therefore put forth as an authentic and extended example of analytic Autoethnography. Criterion one (1) and three (3) will be met throughout the dissertation with the exception of the literature reviews in Chapter Three. Criterion four will be met in Chapter Nine. Criterion five will be met in chapters one, two, 10, 11, and 12.

I have purposely chosen to employ analytic Autoethnography primarily and evocative Autoethnography secondarily because I stand with Anderson (2006) in his assessment that “evocative or emotional Autoethnography” (p. 374) lacks certain
components that could potentially empower Autoethnography as a legitimate qualitative research method that “fit[s] productively in other traditions of social inquiry” (p. 374). Furthermore, I desire to “contribute to a spiraling refinement, elaboration, extension, and revision of theoretical understanding” (p. 388) in the field of Self-Leadership, Autoethnography, and Action Research. While I do desire to evoke emotion in readers by sharing my story, and while I am likewise hopeful that the narrative promotes productive, independent thought in individual self-leaders about how it might apply to their own life, I also desire to make explicit what I believe the narrative means, not only to myself, but potentially to others as well.

Autoethnographic data in this study was collected from three primary sources: personal journals, personal memories, and “success recorder[s]” (Mandino, 1978, 1981, p. 26). In addition to providing an analysis of this combined qualitative data, a progressive, concomitant analysis of related, nomologically-based literature (scholarly, popular, and religious) will also be synthetically applied throughout. These combined processes were undertaken for the purpose of creating an autoethnographic-based theory and normative model of Self-Leadership execution. One-question interviews will also be conducted with immediate family members for the purpose of deciphering the perspectives of others who are familiar with my battle and progress with obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The Veracity of My Vignettes

Any time a writer engages in composing narrative non-fiction that is autobiographical in nature, readers are apt to question the storyteller’s integrity to events as they objectively occurred. Is the person exaggerating or embellishing to maximize
narrative’s capacity to evoke, or simply to drive a point home more firmly? If so, do such deviations maintain the integrity of the essence of what really occurred, or is the author merely “spinning a yarn,” or telling a “tall tale” to achieve some targeted purpose?

Ellis (2004) admits that Autoethnography can bear certain similarities to fiction. Moreover, she welcomes the blurring of the two genres. She does, however, differentiate between “accuracy and truth in writing” (p. 123). For Ellis, accuracy refers to precision in retelling the facts of what actually happened, and in the order and manner that they occurred. Truth, on the other hand, refers more to capturing the genuine essence or meaning to be found within an experience, or set of experiences, with the recognition that the writer “might use composites or change some identifying information. Or [one] might collapse events to write a more engaging story, which might be more truthful in a narrative sense though not in an historical one” (p. 125).

I believe that there is a time, place, and manner for blurring facts with fiction in Autoethnography. For me personally, however, this dissertation is not the time, place, or manner to do so with my own scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004). As such, I wish for any readers of this treatise to understand that I have sought for both accuracy and truth in the composition of each autoethnographical vignette shared in this work. While Ellis (2004) suggests that exercising a creative, even fictional, flair to one’s autoethnographic chronicling can produce stories that are more “useful…” (p. 126) and “therapeutic” (p. 127) than they might be otherwise, I feel strongly that the greatest holistic benefits from my narrative will be gleaned as readers come to trust the factual veracity of my stories—even in the particulars. The details about my life that are shared herein really happened, and I have attempted to record them with my keyboard as
objectively as a video camera might have at the time of their actual occurrence. I have not exaggerated or embellished facts, numbers, statistics, or anything else in my narrative vignettes.

In making this claim for integrated objectivity, I acknowledge the potential of the Rashomon Effect to influence inadvertent narrative subjectivity. I am not perfect, nor is my memory. Nevertheless, I have done my best to avoid the potential impacts of this effect on the presentation of my autoethnographic data. Fortunately, much of what I share is backed up (validated) in writing from my personal journals, penned at or near the time at which they occurred. Nevertheless, I further acknowledge the potential impacts of the Rashomon Effect on my original journal entries as well. In summary, I am human, and my memory is also human; nevertheless, I affirm that I have, to the best of my ability, detailed events as accurately (objectively) as I am humanly capable of doing.

Accompanying Interviews

The fourth research criteria of analytic Autoethnography (Anderson, 2006) is “dialogue with informants beyond the self” (p. 378). To meet this criterion, I interviewed members of my immediate family to discover their perspectives on my obsessive-compulsive disorder, as well as the progress I have made in learning to effectively manage it. These interviews consisted of only one (and the same) question. The question was: How far has Jordan come in his battle with OCD—and his life in general—since first being clinically diagnosed in 1997? The purpose of this question is to obtain a second-hand perspective on my personal progress in my ongoing battle with obsessive-compulsive disorder. This will compliment my own autoethnographic self-appraisal of my progress. I posed this question to nine different members of my family: my father,
my mother, three of my brothers, one of my sisters-in-law, my older sister and her husband, and my younger sister. I quoted their words verbatim as I received them.31

**A Nomological Study**

Furtner, Rauthmann, and Sachse (2011) explain that Self-Leadership represents a “relatively new and rarely empirically investigated construct … [that] should be integrated within a nomological network” (p. 369). While fully and formally situating or integrating Self-Leadership itself “within a nomological network” (p. 369) is probably beyond the scope of this present work, new knowledge about Self-Leadership presented herein does represent an autoethnographically derived nomological construct that claims to provide potential benefits to other self-leaders in similar ways that I myself have derived benefit.

**Epistemological Justification**

New knowledge presented in this dissertation is not *new* in the sense that I am the first research scholar to ever broach the information topically and generally speaking. Rather, such *new knowledge* represents an original packaging and/or recapitulation of *age-old* concepts that a wide array of spiritualists, religionists, theologians, scientists, scholars, researchers, leaders, managers, as well as a great diversity of lay men and women have grappled with, theoretically and practically speaking, for as long as sentient beings have possessed leadership capacity of self.

The epistemological justification for this so-called *new knowledge* is three-fold and is presented in this section as primary, secondary, and tertiary evidence. First, the

---

31 Exceptions include minor revisions involving spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar that do not compromise the integrity of the original content.
primary evidence is presented herein as authoethnographically-based data backed by my personal testimonial that the *new knowledge* as presented herein *works* when applied over time based on my life’s positive past, and on-going, experiences with it. By employing the term *works*, I mean to say that applying the principles undergirding the theory and model over time has been, I believe, the primary causal force behind my realization of several key long-term goals and objectives in my life that I have desired to achieve. Moreover, they seem to continue to work wherever and whenever I diligently apply them over time. The inherent premise behind this argument relies on the fundamental concept that there is a certain wisdom-based value that comes from experience that merits scholarly consideration. Furthermore, because I did not invent these principles myself, I have merely packaged them together in an original manner, I can testify that the principles themselves, as I learned them from manifold other teachers throughout my life’s journey, do indeed *work* in a generic sense. The bottom line is that it has *worked* for me in obtaining *what* and becoming *whom* I have strived to obtain and become.

While this testimonial based validity cannot be proven empirically or scientifically, it remains my personal testimony, or in other words, a deeply internal and visceral (or spiritual) sense (experientially supported) that I hold to be true. Personal testimonies are unique in that they cannot be empirically verified or disputed; therefore, the veracity of a testimonial, or lack thereof, must be individually tested for applicability by anyone seeking to test its validity.

The secondary epistemological justification for this so-called *new knowledge* is found in some specific quantitative data that is imbedded in the overall qualitative data presented in my autoethnographic vignettes. This quantitative data comes from Self-
Action Research projects conducted on my own Self-Leadership over the course of my life. This empirical data supports arguments otherwise supported by qualitative data and personal testimonials.

Finally, tertiary epistemological justification for this so-called new knowledge is rooted in certain nomologically-based, relevant literary evidence that topically corroborates the implied truth and value that is purported to exist in the principles contained in the theory and model presented in this work. This literature includes sources that are both scholarly and non-academic.

**Self-Leadership: A Transcendent Motivator**

Self-Leadership has the capacity to become a transcendent motivator in the life of a self-leader. An adequate understanding of its capacity may empower self-leaders with a growing vision of their potential to realize their goals in life, as well as to motivate them to take consistent action aimed at achieving those goals. When self-leaders truly understand the potential power and freedom that exists in their freely-granted, existential opportunity to self-lead, it is possible that this desire to self-lead toward targeted objectives, driven by the desire to actually achieve those objectives, may eventually supersede most other human motivations. When this desire is combined with authentic human love, meaning the desire to contribute to the greater good of one’s fellows, it can become a force capable of engendering positive change among constituents of humanity both individually and/or collectively.
**The Catalyst: Education**

Manz (1983a) made it clear that “effective Self-Leadership can be learned and thus is not restricted to people we describe as ‘self-starters,’ ‘self-directed,’ ‘self-motivated,’ etc…. [and is therefore] relevant to .. anyone…” (p. 289). Nevertheless, the potential energy of a self-leader must first be ignited by the torch of knowledge if that energy is to become kinetic, thereby making Self-Leadership real in one’s lives. Thus, Self-Leadership must be taught, and must become a higher priority of educators. Self-Leadership instruction that is explicit, effective, and repetitive, becomes a key catalyst in developing efficacious Self-Leadership. The importance, therefore, of establishing pedagogies of personal leadership at all levels, and in all arenas, of learning, both formal and informal, becomes self-evident. Self-Leadership, as with any other meaningful, relevant knowledge, must be taught early, often, and effectively. In the words of Packer (1975), “We must teach and teach well, and teach permanently” (p. 9).

**My Personal Profile**

In light of this extended discussion of Self-Leadership situated contextually betwixt my own autoethnographic, or self-study, it bears examining my personal profile in terms of what Self-Leadership variables (limitations and benefits) have influenced my life for good or ill. I am a middle-class turned upper-middle class, white male who has enjoyed a lot of built in structural advantages in my life. While I empathize with those classes of persons who have been structurally less fortunate than I have been, I cannot say I understand first-hand how it feels to be personally disowned, disenfranchised, or otherwise discriminated against in ways that demeaned my race, religion, culture, et cetera. My life’s primary crucible has come in dealing with a mental disorder: obsessive-
compulsive disorder, the symptoms of which first became severe at age 12. My secondary challenges have arisen as a by-product of normal adolescent and young adult adversity amalgamated with OCD-symptoms to produce pathological insecurity and a lack of emotional and/or intelligence.

I started out in life after graduating from college with very little capital to my name. I initially incurred a large debt trying (and mostly failing) to get my own business off the ground. I had a safety net in the form of family, extended family, and Church community that helped me get back on my feet when I was unable to make ends meet myself. I eventually got my career off the ground, got married, and over time, with the help of my wife, have been able to get out of debt, become self-sufficient, pay for my doctoral degree without going into further debt, and am currently pursuing my doctorate degree, writing this dissertation, and working part-time as a professional seminar facilitator. As for luck, I would consider myself an average recipient of its capricious selections.

I Am A Mormon

I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, often referred to as just The (mainstream)\(^{32}\) Mormon Church, and have been all my life.\(^{33}\) Founded in 1820 by the Church’s first Prophet-President, Joseph Smith, Jr., in Upstate New York, the LDS Church is now a major American religious denomination with nearly 15 million members worldwide, more than half of which reside outside of the United States. I have

\(^{32}\) The term mainstream is used here to differentiate the main body of Latter-Day Saints from splinter fundamentalist groups, some of which also refer to themselves colloquially as “Mormons.”
\(^{33}\) A person cannot become an official (baptized) Mormon until at least age eight; however, as my immediate family members were all active Mormons, I, since my birth, was also.
been an active, full-tithe-paying,34 full participating, and full-serving35 member of the Church my entire life. I have spent upwards of 20,000 hours in Church-related activities. I (and my wife) have also paid over $70,000 of tithing and other offerings to the LDS Church. The implicit and explicit education and training I have received in communications, human relations, service-work, and leadership could easily be measured in tens of thousands (and perhaps even hundreds of thousands) of dollars worth of tuition and/or internship/practicum had I sought for similar education and training in a university or professional arena. Such a close affiliation with my Church has obviously influenced my thoughts, speech, and actions as a self-leader.

As this is an academic treatise, it bears noting that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has upheld controversial policies throughout the course of its history such as denying full church membership to persons of color prior to 1978, and the practice of polygamy from the 1840s until the early 1890s. I myself am a descendant of polygamist marriages. My maternal, second-great grandfather, Joseph F. Smith (also the sixth prophet-president of the Church), had five wives and 43 children. I am descended from his third wife, Edna Lambson. Another example, less august than Smith, was my paternal fourth-great grandfather, John D. Lee, who was executed for his role in the tragic Mountain Meadows Massacre in Southern Utah in 1857. I descend from Lee through his second wife, Nancy Bean. In all, Lee had 19 wives and 56 children.

---

34 Faithful Mormons pay 10% of their income as tithing to the Church.
35 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is led and operated by a lay, non-paid, clergy and congregation. All local church operations are led and run by non-paid, local members who accept “callings” to fill various responsibilities ranging from the simplest of operational duties to the much higher administrative leadership roles and responsibilities of a bishop, stake president, or relief society (women) president, et cetera.
Because Mormonism plays a strong role in my life story, it will surface from time-to-time as a part of this Autoethnography. However, I will limit my reflections to my own perceptions about this religion and how it has helped shape my personal character and identity, as well as how it has influenced my management of OCD and other life challenges. Although there is a significant body of “anti-Mormon” literature with which I personally take issue, my scholarly goal is not to defend Mormonism or promote it, as the academic requirements for doing so are beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has profoundly impacted my life and thinking, and in my view, this influence has been markedly positive. Much of my passion for Self-Leadership and education in general has come from the Church’s continual efforts to instill qualities in its members such as self-reliance, personal responsibility, hard work, discipline, and attending proactively to the needs of others. I am currently an active member of my church, as I have been my entire life. I am proud of my Church, and am honored to have my name among its roll of active members.

Due to the autoethnographic nature of this treatise, I make many references to God, as I believe a Higher Power has played an important role in my life. In so doing, I consistently utilize the traditional pronoun “He” to describe God. I do this to maintain consistency with the LDS’ theological beliefs that prayer is directed to one’s Heavenly Father.
Neutralizing Narcissism

An inherent danger of Autoethnography as a research method is the tendency for the author’s work to become narcissistic. This danger is compounded by the fact that this dissertation represents an autoethnographic study done within a context of Self-Leadership theory, which, with its focus on self-cognitions and behavior, has been linked to narcissism (Furtner, Rauthmann, & Sachse, 2011). As I am conducting an autoethnographic study of my own Self-Leadership, I must remain aware of this as the potential for narcissism rises precipitously through the combination of Autoethnography and Self-Leadership. For narcissistic purveyors of themselves to engage in Autoethnography for the sake of mere ego gratification because they simply cannot stop gazing at their own reflection does no good and offers no service to anyone, including themselves, as the mythological death of Narcissus attests. I believe the best way to avoid this trap is to run material through a self-designed narcissist’s test involving two basic questions. 1). “Is every shared detail of a story relevant to the story itself and its intended message?” and 2). “Does the shared story directly support the overall purpose of teaching and/or inspiring others in their own Self-Leadership journeys?” Does it promote a Pedagogy of Personal Leadership that others can potentially apply to their own life challenges and journey? If my material can consistently answer “yes” to both of these questions, then I believe I can pass the narcissist’s test and avoid this ever present, potential pitfall of personal narrative writing and Autoethnography.

---

36 This point was raised many times by my dissertation committee chair and Fielding doctoral mentor, Rodney Beaulieu, Ph.D.
37 A reference to the greek hunter Narcissus who fell in love with his own reflection in a pool of water, and then, refusing to leave the image of his love, eventually died in the very spot.
The Potential Power of Self-Leadership

The potential power of Self-Leadership stems from the fact that Self-Leadership power (i.e. Self-Leadership action) can be engaged at virtually any time at any place by anyone, and the engagement of that power can be chosen regardless of external constraints that may be adversely influencing a given self-leader at the time. In other words, you, me, and almost everybody else in this world can choose to consciously self-lead regardless of the external variables in your/my/our lives.

According to Goleman (1995), some people subscribe to [the] narrow view … that our destiny in life is largely fixed.... That argument ignores the more challenging question: What can we change that will help our children fare better in life? What factors are at play, for example, when people of a high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well? I would argue that the difference quite often lies in the abilities called … self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself…. Our genetic heritage endows each of us with a series of emotional set points that determines our temperament. But the brain circuitry involved is extraordinary malleable; temperament is not destiny. (p. xi-xii, xiii)

In a related vein, Shenk (2010) argues that,

Individual differences in talent and intelligence are not predetermined by genes; they develop over time. Genetic differences do play an important role, but genes do not determine complex traits on their own. Rather, genes and the environment interact with each other in a dynamic process that we can never fully control, but that we can strongly influence. No two people will ever have exactly the same potential, but very few of us actually come to know our own true limits. Speaking broadly, limitations in achievement are not due to inadequate genetic assets, but to our ability, so far, to tap into what we already have. (p. 3)

I suggest further that just as our emotional intelligence is not a matter of fixed “brain circuitry” (p. xiii), our Self-Leadership is likewise “extraordinary malleable” (p. xiii). Herein lies the remarkable opportunity that Life sets before all of us as self-leaders. The question is not whether we possess potential Self-Leadership power, the question is
whether or not we will choose to capitalize on our potential to purposefully use that power.

**The Beauty of Self-Leadership**

My passion for Self-Leadership stems from the personal and relational success I believe has been made possible in part by my own effective Self-Leadership. Self-Leadership, mixed with Suprarational intervention, or Grace, whatever one chooses to believe grace is, can lead to remarkably positive (desirable) events and states of being in one’s life, at least it has in mine. It allows us as human beings to not only change, but to create things that were hitherto uncreated, and to become better than we ever were before. Such things are, in my mind, beautiful! I have been fortunate enough to experience many beautiful things in my life. Among such experiences, few can match or surpass the external beauty and internal satisfaction and fulfillment resulting from genuine Self-Leadership achievements, which are usually an outgrowth of overcoming oneself. I am far from perfect in the exercise of my own Self-Leadership. Nevertheless, the extraordinary progress I have made over the course of the past quarter century, and the blessings and opportunities that have come into my life as a result of that success, has illuminated for me in a very personal way both the power, the miracle, and the beauty of personal leadership. It has worked wonders for me in my life, and I have observed it work wonders in the lives of others. I am confident that in some way, it can work wonders in the lives of anyone who takes on the greatest challenge life has to offer: the challenge of one’s own Self-Leadership.
The Miracle of Self-Leadership

In my view, a remarkable component of Self-Leadership is found in a statement attributed to both Plutarch (46-120) and Otto Rank (1884-1939). The statement proclaims: “What you become inwardly changes your outer reality.” In essence, this statement claims that internal self-changes can actually lead to external circumstantial changes. In other words, if we want to change other people, things, and/or circumstances in our lives, the Self-Leadership approach is not to focus on changing those externalities, which are beyond our control, but rather to focus on one’s own self-improvement, for the improvement of self, over time, will lead one to naturally transcend negative things, relationships, and circumstances. These external changes do not always happen literally (e.g., a person who was initially bothersome to a self-leader may not have changed, or may even get worse over time), but for the self-leader at hand, literal external changes can occur in their world as they rise in their Self-Leadership Efficacy. Such changes are evidenced either by a heightened capacity to deal with a given challenge (or difficult person) or in the form of an opportunity (e.g., promotion, transfer, etc.) that changes the nature of one’s relationships (or entirely eliminates it) with certain persons. All of the above is possible when one begins to authentically rise in their Self-Leadership Efficacy. Such miracles do not happen overnight, but for self-leaders who are both persistent consistent in their Self-Leadership efforts, miracles will occur. I know because I’ve experienced many such miracles as I have risen in my own Self-Leadership Efficacy over the past 25 years. Persons and/or situations that used to intimidate me do not anymore. Tasks that once seemed exceedingly daunting are now completed, or near-completed goals. Relationships that were once perpetually beyond my reach are now a living reality
in my everyday life. Opportunities that were once mere wishes and daydreams are now beginning to obtain lifelike animation. My influence, which started out so small, seems to be perpetually increasing each day that passes, and the ripples seem to be growing larger over time. To me, such developments are miracles, and their cause was not derived from any attempts of mine to alter externalities, but rather in my diligent quest to alter the internalities of my own mind, heart, and spirit in ways that led to authentic self-improvement, self-discipline, and self-control, all of which has made possible an ongoing rise in my Self-Leadership Efficacy.

Because self-leaders cannot control anyone but themselves, paradigms that support changing things, people, or the world at large from the outside may (and in my experience usually do) lead to disappointment, discouragement, disillusion, and failure. Because self-leaders can control themselves, and because they can direct their own Self-Leadership over time, paradigms that support internal, Self-Leadership oriented changes within oneself tends to not only change a person in profound ways, including in many regards their experience of external realities, but such internal changes also dramatically expands an individual’s capacity for external influence of other people, things, organizations, systems, et cetera. Though a self-leader cannot ultimately control another self-leader, one does possess the potential to influence others to change themselves through the compelling example of one’s own Self-Leadership. The implication of this truism is that the best way to change externalities in the outside world is to alter internalities residing in one’s inside world. In the words of Gandhi, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” In other words, perhaps the very best way to make the world a better place is to strive to make your world a better place. We are all citizens
of Planet Earth’s gargantuan macro system we call humanity. I purport that each individual, micro self-improvement made by individual self-leaders has a corresponding, positive impact (however small) on the larger, collective systems of which we all play a part (e.g., family, community, organization, state, nation, and World). As you *become* a better self-leader, the world-at-large is going to be a better place by a factor of whatever micro, individual self-changes you have disciplined yourself to make, and no one can fully foretell the potentially endless ripples of positive influence such actions may precipitate in the lives of others.

**The Paragon of Personal Pursuits**

From an existential standpoint, I hold that Self-Leadership represents *the* single most significant single topic that anyone can undertake to study or practice. This is so from the simple standpoint that it is *the only thing* that any of us can really control. Moreover, it is an absolutely universal and essential component of human existence. No one is exempt from it, and no one can escape its existentially imposed responsibility. We can deny it, shun it, shirk it, and exercise it poorly if we choose, but it’s reality and place in our lives is incontrovertible, and the consequences will be what they will be. We can choose how we will self-lead, but in the long run, we cannot choose the existentially determined consequences of our choices because consequences are a fundamental, irrevocable outgrowth of Natural Law. We simply cannot get away from it, and the single greatest existential question of our lives, and our age (or any age) is: *what will we choose to do with it.*
CHAPTER TWO

Research Variables

Self-Leadership Research Variables
(Limitations & Benefits)

As I indicated in Chapter One, Self-Leadership is not an omnipotent force. It does not represent an automatic panacea or cure-all for the many ails that beset humankind both individually and collectively. Many variables, both internal and external, exist that influence one’s exercise of Self-Leadership in either a limiting or beneficial way. Neck and Manz (2010) address this point in speaking specifically of external variables:

The world we live in does influence what we do with ourselves on a day-to-day basis and can largely shape our ultimate destiny in life (p. 7). We are subject to constraints … (and) limitations in our situations … and in the roles in which we find ourselves…. External influences … are … important…. We function within a complex system of influence—involving ourselves, our behavior, and our world. (p. 10)

What Neck and Manz (2010) do not offer, and what other Self-Leadership scholars have not yet contributed to the body of literature is a comprehensive list of exactly what these “external influences” are beyond Neck and Manz’ (2010) general triad of “ourselves, our behavior, and our world” (p. 10). The purpose of this chapter is to fill this gap in the literature by providing a quasi-comprehensive list of both internal and external variables that could potentially affect an individual’s application of Self-Leadership.

Because the Self-Leadership literature (to date) does not yet explicitly identify such a list, my method of compilation involved the consultation of three bodies of collective data. The first involved the thoughtful consideration of a quarter century of
personal reading on the subject of Self-Leadership, or any subject related in any way to Self-Leadership, as well as to the potential variables (limitations and benefits) that exist to impact an individual’s exercise of Self-Leadership. The second involved the thoughtful consideration of the entirety of the experiences others, whom I have either known or read about, have had with life and Self-Leadership. The third involved the equally thoughtful consideration of the entirety of my own experiences with life and Self-Leadership.

While I occasionally cite the work of others to help clarify a point I am making, the material contained in this chapter is not based on the work of any specific author beyond myself. Rather, it represents the totality of my own integrated thinking on the subject to date, as influenced by the sources and experiences mentioned above.

The result is a list of 16 Self-Leadership variables that either limit or benefit an individual’s exercise of Self-Leadership. While my goal has been to identify all such potential forces, I accede the possibility of an inadvertent omission. Future research may reveal a need to expand the list beyond these original 16. These 16 Self-Leadership variables introduced in this dissertation are as follows:

(1) Forces of Nature
(2) Congenital Physical Variables
(3) Congenital Familial Environment
(4) Genetic and Mimetic Inclinations
(5) Initial Opportunities for Education
(6) Congenital Social Environment
(7) Choices of Others
Self-Leadership variables can and do limit Self-Leadership (S-L) potential. On the other hand, these same variables can also benefit or enhance S-L potential depending on the unique combination of a person’s circumstances and choices in life; it goes both ways. Every self-leader has a unique formula of S-L variables operating in his or her life, and no two self-leaders possess the exact same life formula. Moreover, no self-leader’s formula remains static from day-to-day (or even moment-to-moment) because every S-L variable is subject to change based on a combination of externally occurring realities beyond a self-leader’s control and a self-leader’s own choices. The singularity of each self-leader’s unique formula (combination) of Self-Leadership variables is what makes all self-leaders individuals: different, distinct, and unique.

**A Paradigm Shift Regarding Competition.**

Understanding the absolute uniqueness of every self-leader paves the way for a significant paradigm shift regarding competition. When viewed strictly through the lens of Self-Leadership, the concept of *fair* interpersonal competition is negated because there
are no true “apples to apples” comparisons between various self-leaders. This is because no two self-leaders possess precisely the same Self-Leadership variable formula. This point offers an opportunity for a significant societal paradigm shift since traditional Occidental mores (especially in the United States) place commercial and other premiums on interpersonal competition with the winning (or top tier) performer(s) being placed on a cultural pedestal that may offer momentary glory, and/or media attention, and is often accompanied by increases in financial and material wealth.

Since every self-leader possesses an original and unique Self-Leadership variable formula, no two self-leaders perform in precise uniformity to each other. As a result, the only true form of fair competition is intrapersonal competition with oneself, not interpersonal competition with other self-leaders.

Instead of pitting self-leaders against each other to see who is the biggest, the strongest, the fastest, the most attractive, the most intelligent, the most talented, et cetera, Self-Leadership theory promotes an intrapersonal paradigm whereby the only legitimate competition is against one’s own prior personal performances, with one’s own Self-Leadership potential serving as the measuring stick for optimal performance. The goal of intrapersonal competition is not to see who is “the best,” but rather to seize the existential opportunity and challenge we all have to become our personal “best” compared only and always to our former best performance in any given life arena. It is not possible to become better than one’s best. Maximizing personal potential, therefore, might well be considered the sumnum bonum of Self-Leadership achievement. One of the challenges that life hold’s out to all self-leaders is to strive for and/or attain one’s best in terms of effort, performance, education, attitude, achievement, et cetera. I argue further that it is
not common for self-leaders to perform at their best. Self-leaders often fall short of their potential best; I know I do. Self-Leadership shortcomings provide self-leaders the opportunity and possibility to compete with themselves in an effort to improve their own Self-Leadership.

By drawing a clear distinction between interpersonal competition and intrapersonal competition, self-leaders can stop focusing primarily on competing with or “beating” other self-leaders. Instead, they can consistently focus their energy and efforts primarily on maximizing their own Self-Leadership capacity. By so doing, their focus remains targeted on their own performance and potential, thereby eliminating wasted time and energy spent focusing on what they lack, and minimizing the anxiety that may accompany any counterproductive foci on others’ abilities. This is not to suggest that interpersonal competition is always ineffective and/or inappropriate. As a former competitive athlete at the high school and collegiate level, I know from first hand experience that competition with others has its place in our lives and can provide many opportunities to learn and grow personally, and to provide much entertainment collectively. Furthermore, I hold that interpersonal competition can aid in bolstering Self-Leadership Efficacy, and vice versa, because of the ways in which competition of both varieties can motivate one to greater levels of personal excellence. The point is not to exclude interpersonal competition, but to keep it in perspective.38 For example, as a young man, I spent much more time playing basketball by myself than I did with others. However, the time I spent practicing by myself did wonders toward making me more

---

38 A reader taken with this concept may find additional insight by investigating Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954).
skilled and competitive when I engaged in an actual basketball game with other real players.

Engaging an *intrapersonal* paradigm of competition can make “losing” to others easier to deal with because it places interpersonal “wins” and “losses” in an *intrapersonal* perspective. Considering there is usually only one first place “winner” in interpersonal competitions, second place on down is often relegated to “loser” status. For example, years ago I saw someone wearing a t-shirt with the following words emblazoned on the front: “Second place is the first loser.” Such a paradigm denigrates the effort and performances of all but first place. Shifting to an *intrapersonal* Self-Leadership perspective allows one to achieve success despite any or all comparisons to other people’s performances. To illustrate, I share an experience from my own former days as an interpersonally competitive athlete.

As a high school runner, I won many races. As a collegiate runner, I did not win many races; however, the three best races of my entire running career were run in college, and I did not “win” any of the three. They are “my best” races for two reasons, the first of which was qualitative (subjective) and the second of which was quantitative (objective). First, I knew these races were my best ever because I possessed the self-knowledge that in these particular races, I expended a “total effort.” In track and field jargon, we referred to “total efforts” as *leaving it all on the track*. Second, I recorded personal best times in all three races; I had never ran faster than I had in those races. As a result of shifting my own paradigm regarding competition, I have come to see these races as greater achievements than any of the races I won back in high school, including the State Championship race—a cherished personal achievement.
Viewing ourselves as being primarily in competition with others instead of competing primarily with ourselves can lead to gross cognitive distortions. For example, as a 24-year old recent college graduate, I became somewhat obsessively fixated for a time that I was in competition with Dr. Stephen R. Covey and Anthony (“Tony”) Robbins to see who could be the most compelling, effective, powerful, successful, and influential self-help guru in the world. The problem was that I was a 24-year old recent college graduate trying to compare myself to individuals who had been working at life, on themselves, and in their chosen fields for literally decades longer than I had. Dr. Covey was a 73-year old Ph.D., father of nine, co-founder of a major corporation, and author of a book that had sold 15 million copies, been translated into 30-plus languages, and had managed to insert a dozen or so new words or phrases into the English language. Tony Robbins was a 45-year old mid-career cultural icon who had been a best-selling speaker and/or author since I was about seven. Obviously, these were not fair comparisons, yet I, influenced in large part by my OCD, harbored for some time the absurd notion that we were legitimate competitors and that I just needed to catch up to them so that I could eventually pass them up in this pathological race to the top that I had arrogantly and jejunely concocted in my own head. What a ridiculously naïve notion! It is a little bit embarrassing to admit that I actually harbored such a puerile position for a period of time, but the truth is that I did. Fortunately, I have since come to see things more as they really are, and have thankfully relinquished my participation in such self-inflicted cognitive distortions regarding interpersonal competition that were not only unrealistic, but unnecessary and counterproductive to my own personal naturally occurring growth and development. My mental hygiene, and life in general, have been so much improved since
doing so. While I admire what Stephen Covey and Tony Robbins have achieved in their respective careers, I also realize that the purpose of my life is not to compete with and beat them. Moreover, even if I were to someday beat them by virtue of some quantifiable metric (e.g., book sales), how could I rationally claim to have “won” when my work has been influenced by, and to some extent is built upon, their own considerable contributions to the field? I now realize that my purpose is not to beat others in my field, but to learn from them in an effort to maximize my own personal potential to contribute meaningfully to the lives of others.

Self-Leadership Research Variables (Limitations & Benefits) Explicated

Having introduced the 16 variables influencing our exercise of Self-Leadership and discussed the intrapersonal paradigm shift, I now proceed to explicate each variable in detail. In so doing, I provide sub-sections for each variable that address (1) limitations of each variable, (2) benefits of each variable, and (3) real life examples of each. For some variables, I combine limitations and benefits together, and/or the real-life examples together, and in some cases for the real-life examples, I provide autoethnographic vignette from my own life in an effort to personally illustrate how these variables have both limited and/or benefited my own Self-Leadership journey.

Variable One (1): Forces of Nature

Forces of nature refer to naturally occurring physical forces in our world and the Universe (e.g. weather, natural disasters, gravity, solar power, et cetera).
Limitations.

Mother Nature is powerful beyond human comprehension. The entire nuclear arsenal of the United States Military is no match for the power Mother Nature wields both above and below her surface (Jensen, R.B., 2011). It seems mankind is routinely reminded and humbled by such power, and our utter inability to control it. When Mother Nature strikes hard, the only value Self-Leadership holds is in the art of preparation, coping, and rebuilding (that is if you is still alive to rebuild following a natural disaster).

Real world example of limitations: Japan Tsunami Victims.

A poignant reminder of that power visited the people of Japan on March 11, 2011. On this day, one of the most severe earthquakes (9.0 on the Richter Scale) (U.S. Geological Survey, 2011b) ever recorded struck off the coast of the Japanese Archipelago. The quake triggered a tsunami that wreaked utter destruction in its wake, killing or wounding thousands of people. Over five months later, a much smaller earthquake (5.8) with an epicenter located in Virginia (USA) reverberated throughout a large section of the Northeastern United States. Despite causing billions of dollars of damage, the mere 5.8 Virginia quake (U.S. Geological Survey, 2011a) was less than 1/60,000ths (Press. A. Aug. 23, 2011) as powerful as the catastrophic 9.0 quake near Japan, which produced far more devastating results, including 15,776 deaths, 4,225 missing persons, 5,929 injured persons, 115,057 properties sustaining a “total collapse,” 160,920 properties sustaining a “half collapse,” and 557,692 total “partially damaged” properties. In addition, 3,559 roads, 77 bridges, and 29 railways were damaged (National Policy Agency of Japan, 2011). Unfortunately, there is nothing the Japanese could have done to stop that “force of nature” from wreaking its destructive course. Such an event
provides a heartrending illustration of mankind’s Self-Leadership limitations and relative powerlessness in the wake of a seemingly omnipotent variable. While self-leaders are powerless before Forces of Nature, they are *not* powerless to take steps to prepare for such calamities as well as to regroup, rebound, and rebuild after the disaster has occurred, or the storm has passed.

**Benefits.**

There are enormous benefits to living in some areas of the world compared to other areas. Depending on weather patterns, seismic activity, coastal proximity, and other variables, some self-leaders live in areas that are more likely to be negatively impacted by Forces of Nature, while some self-leaders live in areas that present a lower risk of running afoul of or otherwise bumping up against adverse Forces of Nature.

**Real world examples of benefits: From my life.**

To date, I have resided in five different time zones in North America. I have lived in five different States of the United States and two different Provinces of Canada. I have also had nearly 40 different mailing addresses. In the process of these living adventures, I have experienced some diverse geography in my various “hometowns.” With diversity in geography comes variations in degree of risk based on the potential for natural disasters to occur. Some places (e.g. Monticello, UT) possess very little risk. Other places (Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA) possess greater risk, with threats of hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes. Depending on where I have lived, I have enjoyed many of the benefits that come with peace of mind knowing that the threat of a given natural disaster is small. I have also lived in some very warm places (Mesa, AZ; Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA) and in some very cold places (Edmonton, AB; Spokane, WA; Monticello, UT; St.
John’s, NL). A personal activity I enjoy is distance running. This activity holistically benefits my health. The weather in Mesa, Houston, and Atlanta is much more conducive to outdoor training in the winter time than it is in Edmonton, Spokane, Monticello, or St. John’s. In some cases, for safety’s sake, jogging outside, especially long runs, becomes difficult, if not untenable, in locations with cold winter weather. This has a tendency to negatively impact my training goals. It does not mean I am stuck. As a self-leader, I can creatively design alternative workouts that can be done indoors, but nevertheless, there are undoubtedly benefits to living in areas of the world where the weather cooperates with one’s fitness goals.

**Variable Two (2). Congenital Physical Variables**

Congenital physical variables refer to a person’s natural genetic makeup.

**Limitations.**

Congenital disorders and other physical conditions outside a person’s control will serve as a variable that influences one’s Self-Leadership journey. Often, a person is limited in what they can do about birth defects or other congenital disorders they were born with. No amount of positive thinking will wish away Down’s Syndrome, Autism, or Cancer.

**Real world examples of limitations.**

Everyone has dealt with physical limitations that inhibit athletic success in a given sport. For example, professional jockeys are never going to be world champion weightlifters, and world champion weightlifters are never going to ride in the Kentucky Derby. Furthermore, most of us will never become a professional athlete or world
champion in any sport, no matter how hard we may try for the simple reason that we lack the natural capacity and ability in our basic, genetic makeup; our talents lie in other areas.

**Benefits.**

Some self-leaders are born with certain physical traits that open up doors of opportunity to be successful, and in some cases, highly successful, in a given field. Such persons are born with a genetic code that portends greatness (at least potentially so) in a field where success calls for an outlying physique. For example, professional athletes, whether they are tall, strong, weighty and/or quick (e.g., football, basketball, baseball, weight lifting, et cetera) or whether they are short, slight, light and/or speedy (e.g., distance runner or jockey), often possess a genetic code that is several standard deviations from the average human physical makeup. Such genetic combinations make such persons outliers (Gladwell, 2008) in a physical sense, and generally qualify them for opportunities that would not be available to the rest of us. Whether such persons actually become highly successful in a field for which they are physically suited may depend a great deal on other variables (especially variables 13, 14 and 15; intelligence, desire, and will). Nevertheless, from day one, their congenital physical makeup unquestionably gives them a benefit over others less physically endowed.

**Real world example of benefits: Kobe Bryant.**

Kobe Bryant is generally considered to be one of the best professional basketball players in the world, and among the best player of all time as well. He has won five World Championships playing for the Los Angeles Lakers. He has also won the league’s most valuable player award (2007-2008), and is currently ranked fifth on the NBA’s list
of career scoring leaders. This ranking puts him ahead of NBA greats such as Hakeem Olajuwon (9th), Oscar Robertson (10th), and Larry Bird (28th). While Kobe Bryant has exercised much Self-Leadership (he is well known for his work ethic) to accomplish these impressive feats, the fact remains that he is unusually gifted congenitally with the kinds of physical variables that encourage success on the basketball floor. For example, he is 6’6” tall and weighs #205 pounds. He wears a size 14 shoe, and has unusually long fingers, which is helpful in handling the ball. These congenital benefits represent a significant variable in the ultimate results he gets as a self-leader on the basketball court.

Variable Three (3): Congenital Familial Environment

I include the term “congenital” to the variable of one’s familial environment to emphasize that in discussing this variable, I am referring to the home into which a self-leader is born, and not the home that a self-leader might create for him or herself later on as an adult self-leader. The homes (or lack thereof) and family units (or lack thereof) that self-leaders are born into in this world vary greatly. The type of home and family unit a self-leader is welcomed (or not welcomed) into at birth can have a profound, and often a lasting, effect on a self-leader’s health, happiness, emotional intelligence, education, and long-term direction and success (or lack thereof) in their life. In my estimation, this variable is usually one of the most significant influences on a self-leader’s life. A person starting off with many familial disadvantages is likely to find it much more difficult to obtain S-L efficacy over time than a person starting off with many familial advantages, regardless of how strong their intellect, desire, or will might be. There are, of course,

39 See stats available at NBA.com.
40 I recently viewed an imprint of his hand at Downtown Disney in Orlando, Florida. What impressed me most about seeing his handprint was not so much the size of his hand, but the unusual length of his fingers.
numerous exceptions to this generalization. Examples do exist of individuals who were born into difficult, or even terrible familial situations, but who managed to eventually escape cycles of negativity, abuse, or self-destructive and/or addictive behaviors through Self-Leadership and positive associations with peers, teachers, counselors, colleagues, neighbors, and others who provided mentoring and support through the process of transcending their congenital familial demons. Such escapes allow them to create a different, better lifestyle for their own children. Nevertheless, I suggest that such persons are more often the exception than the rule. As the old saying goes: the apple doesn’t fall very far from the tree. One should never underestimate, or take lightly, the importance, and weight of duty and responsibility that lies on the shoulders of the trees (parents). When parents neglect this duty and responsibility, it often wreaks havoc in the lives of the children, and many never fully recover.

Limitations.

Every family situation, no matter how seemingly ideal, has its limitations. At best, no family is perfect. All parents pass on certain habits, biases, attitudes, and perspectives that are flawed, and all siblings have their moments when they are not particularly considerate of the needs of family members, or are flat out uncaring. In severely dysfunctional families, all sorts of abuse may exist, including mental and psychological, emotional, spiritual, physical, and sexual. All forms of abuse are likely to limit the exercise of efficacious Self-Leadership on the part of family members in the short-run, and often in the longer run as well. This is not to say that abuse and other negative experiences cannot eventually be overcome, but such things make life so much more difficult than it otherwise would be.
Real world examples of limitations.

Virtually everyone has crossed paths with someone who grew up with a troubled, unsupportive, and in severe cases, even an abusive home life, which caused either immediate and/or ongoing challenges for that person. I have met many such persons. All too often as a public high school teacher, I worked with students who faced such circumstances. As a full-time, ninth-grade English teacher, I taught five English classes. Four of my classes were “on-level” courses, which was the designation for students who were generally considered “average.” (However, there were many examples of either above average, or below average students in my “on-level” courses). Otherwise, above-average students (as measured by test performance, teacher referral, or self-designation\textsuperscript{41}) would enroll in “K-level” classes, which referred to advanced-level courses on the same subject. My K-level students were, with very few exceptions, smarter, better behaved, more mature, and better at writing than their L-level counterparts. The percentage of classroom management or discipline issues I faced in my K-level classes was only a fraction of what I faced in my L-level classes. My K-level students were more likely to complete in-class assignments, do their homework, take an active interest in their grade, and score A’s and B’s than were L-level students. There are many assumptions that can be made as to why this was the case, but there is one thing that I know. The parents of K-level students, in general, took a more proactive interest and role in their child’s education. They were more likely to contact me if their child missed class. They were more likely to be available and supportive when I called home regarding their student. Finally, on the “back-to-school-night,” the highest percentage of parental attendance was,

\textsuperscript{41} Any student motivated to push themselves academically could enroll in a K-level class; however, if they did not keep their grades up once they were in the class, they would be relegated back to an L-level class.
not surprisingly, in my K-level class. While any one of these differences could have been a coincidence, I view it as unlikely that these combined patterns occurred for reasons entirely unrelated to parenting. The fact was that the average parent of a K-level student was more interested and involved in their child’s education than was the average parent of an L-level student. It is a basic, nomological truism that Parental involvement, support, care, concern, help, and love benefits a child. This self-evident fact stands brazenly on its own two feet with or without empirical research to back it up. There is no doubt in my mind that one of the primary causes of many of my L-level student’s lack of educational ambition and success was the lack of involvement and/or care on the part of their parents. Moreover, my “L-level” students who faced the most pressing personal issues (e.g., mental, emotional, or even physical hygiene) were the students whose parents were either insufficiently involved or absent, unsupportive, or potentially even abusive.

**Benefits.**

In my view, in-tact, non-abusive, and loving families that include two-parents, including a male father and female mother, who are reasonably physically and mentally healthy, independent, financially secure, capable of providing nurturing discipline, and are mutually committed to each other and their children, combined with older sibling(s) (if applicable) who are kind, considerate, accepting, and loving towards younger siblings,

---

42 I acknowledge that my personal viewpoint in this regard is biased toward heterosexual unions bonded by legal marriage contracts. This bias’ influence extends to my own opinions and decisions about marriage, my family background, the cultural mores of the communities where I grew up, and the influence of my Church. I recognize that some, and perhaps many readers, including dissertation committee members may disagree with my opinion on this matter. In offering this viewpoint, I do not mean to imply that homosexual parental situations cannot offer a loving and supportive home life for children. They can. Moreover, I hold that a loving and supportive homosexual parental situation would be far better than a hateful and/or abusive heterosexual one. My position is simply this: if proper love, support, and caring exists in both theoretical situations, a heterosexual parental unit would be preferable to a homosexual one.
represents the ideal parental and familial situation for a child to enter the World. This is not to say that such a scenario is the *only* possible circumstance in which children may receive love, support, and help. Obviously, life’s many realities do not always afford every child with this ideal parental situation. Nevertheless, I view it as beneficial to at least identify and promote a picture of an ideal as a starting point.

**Real world examples of benefits.**

Some self-leaders are very fortunate to be born in an ideal, or at least a near-ideal familial situation. I was an example of someone unusually blessed in this regard. I was born into a middle-upper-middle class family with both a Mom and Dad who not only wanted me to be born, but were very loving and supportive once I was born. They were also, for the most part, tender and affectionate towards each other, and mostly got along peacefully and congenially for the first three-fourths of their marriage.\(^{43}\) I also had the benefit of having five older siblings and one younger sister who, for the most part, treated me very well, and with whom I got along with an unusual congeniality.\(^{44}\) Finally, my family lived in a remote, rural part of Southeastern Utah that possessed many environmental and social factors that were conducive to maintaining a well-functioning family unit, or at least that is the way I view it. I also had two paternal grandparents that lived about a mile away, and an aunt and uncle (with five first cousins) that lived right across the street from me that had a similar familial situation. As cousins, we basically had two homes growing up, and both homes were basically very positive environments to

\(^{43}\) My parents eventually divorced after 37 years of marriage due to various issues on both sides; however, their union was fairly strong and healthy for the first 25-30 years, as my six siblings and I can attest. For the most part, my father cared deeply for my mother, and was openly affectionate toward her around us children.

\(^{44}\) The one exception was my relationship with my younger sister Jessie; the two of us often quarreled like cats and dogs growing up, and while we love and respect each other as adults, we would both admit that to this day, we are not exactly “bosom-buddies.”
spend my time. Beyond that, I had a maternal grandmother, ten additional aunts and uncles, and over 30 other first and/or second cousins with whom I was familiar with and that, for the most part, exerted a positive influence on my life. Our family (immediate and extended) was not without its problems, but all things considered, I would be lying if I said I was born into a situation that was anything other than quasi-idyllic.

This home and family life growing up (and even as an adult) has benefitted my life, and continues to benefit my life, in countless ways. While part of me likes to highlight my own independence and individuality apart from my family and upbringing (most of my immediate and extended family live in the Western United States) a result of living for many years in multiple locations far removed from them distance wise (i.e., Alberta, Georgia, Texas, Newfoundland, and Texas again), I cannot deny the influence my family has, and continues to exert in my life. Most of that influence, I would say, has been, and is, tremendously positive.

There is almost always an exception to every rule in the social and/or linguistic sciences. As such, it bears noting that it is not particularly uncommon for an individual self-leader to stray (sometimes wildly) from the mores of their family upbringing. President John Adams’ (2nd President of the United States) family provides an example in the contrast between the lives of elder son John Quincy (who became the 6th President of the United States) and younger son Charles (who died at age 30 of issues related to alcoholism). While it is not a perfect example, and some scholars are apt to point to purported parental lapses on the part of John Adams himself as contributing to his tenuous relationship with Charles and therefore his eventual demise, it does illustrate the general truism that individuals are not ultimately bound by the culture or compunctions

45 See McCullough (2001).
of their familial upbringing. A child eventually grows up and must choose his or her own path. While the influence of one’s upbringing (for good or ill; and usually some of both) is undeniable—even well into one’s adult years for many—it does not categorically condemn one to the tentacles of that upbringing.

**Variable Four (4): Genetic Predispositions and Mimetic Inclinations**

Manz & Neck (2010) emphasize that “we function within a complex system of influence” (p. 10), and that “many influences affect our daily living” (p. 7). While they do not specifically discuss the influence of parents or DNA, they do mention the concept of “behavioral predispositions” (p. 9). In referring to genetic predispositions, I refer to physical and/or other genetic based traits and/or inclinations. Examples include skin, hair and eye color, personality inclinations and congenital physical conditions (or diseases); and intellectual, talent, athletic, and other potential. By mimetic inclinations, I refer to personality traits, habits, paradigms, and attitudes that are strongly influenced by the visible examples of those closest to us growing up (i.e., parents, siblings, extended family, neighbors, teachers, et cetera). All such genetic and/or mimetic variables influence an individual’s exercise of Self-Leadership.

**Limitations.**

Genetic limitations arise in the form of physical and/or other disabilities rooted in our progenitor-scripted and passed along deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). Examples include Down’s Syndrome, autism, organ defects, and other congenital physical, mental, and/or other disorders. Mimetic limitations, on the other hand, are natural tendencies that

---

46 For more information on social learning theory, Bandura’s (1977) work may be a worthwhile place to start.
are learned and developed by observing the behavior of those nearest to us as well as the
variety of interactions in relationships with other people, and particularly with parents,
siblings, and/or extended family members or caregivers. One example would be
imitating the attitudes, words, and actions of others we associate with in our youth,
especially those in our own family. Christian scripture may refer to mimetic tendencies
passed on from father to son to grandson, et cetera when it states: “I the Lord thy God …
visit … the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth
generation.”

This scripture may suggest that the rooting out of deeply imbedded
intergenerational mimetic tendencies does not usually occur easily or quickly. It takes
time, and sometimes a lot of time, to the tune of several generations.

Consider the following theoretical statements that serve to illustrated examples of
perceived genetic and/or mimetic limitations:

- “I know, I know, that temper of mine; you know I get it from my Mom’s side of
  the family.”
- “My father was an alcoholic, my grandfather was an alcoholic, and my great-
grandfather was an alcoholic; what do you expect!”
- “Like it or not, I’ve turned into my parents!”
- “Grandma would turn over in her grave if she knew I still haven’t kicked
  the gambling bug that grandpa passed on to me.”

Some genetic predispositions, like Down’s Syndrome and other physical or
mental congenital disorders and defects, cannot be overcome; they can only be managed,
and the management thereof may require enormous investments of time and/or other
resources provided by others such as family members, generous benefactors, and/or
government assistance, as well as professional help from medical specialists and other
care givers. In this case, a victim’s capacity for Self-Leadership will be greatly

diminished, if not entirely absent. In such cases, the person’s Self-Leadership autonomy is largely, if not entirely, ceded to others.

On the other hand, some genetic and/or mimetic predispositions, such as bad habits, addictions, and a lack of emotional intelligence can be largely managed and/or overcome by an individual self-leader who proactively commits to effectively combating personal weaknesses and deficiencies. While external support, aid, and care may be required as part of a treatment program for dealing with such predispositions and bad habits, individuals retain the primary autonomy for their own improvement, or lack thereof.

**Benefits.**

When we closely examine the other side of the genetic and mimetic coin, we are apt to discover a list of tendencies or inclinations derived from our parents that are quite positive. For example, consider the last time you heard someone say something like:

- “Would you look at him go! I’ll bet he’s even faster than his dad was at his age.”
- “So I heard that Carla got accepted to MIT. That’s fantastic! She seems to be just a ‘chip off the ole’ block.”
- “I’m sure glad I take after Mom’s side of the family when it comes to organizational skills.”
- “Your son is outstanding with people. I guess the apple didn’t fall very far from the tree.”
- “Maria’s daughter Elena is absolutely stunning. I can see where she got that gorgeous hair and flawless skin.”
It might seem that negative genetic and mimetic inclinations (limitations) get more attention than positive ones (benefits), and perhaps they do. Nevertheless, positive genetic and mimetic tendencies can be as real and salient as negative ones.

**Real world examples of limitations and benefits: From my life.**

Like it or not, we are all greatly influenced by genetic and mimetic forces at play based on our family trees. I sometimes catch myself (and sometimes I do not catch myself) thinking, saying, and/or doing things in the manner my mother or father would have thought, said, or done. Sometimes this unconscious, scripted mimicry represents a thought, word, or action I desire to replicate and graft into my character; sometimes it does not. My parents are not perfect; no parents are. I have learned much about what I want (and do not want) in my life from observing the way they have lived, and do live, their lives. Nevertheless, in this treatise, I have decided to avoid publishing explicit examples that frame my parent’s behavior in a negative light. I do this for three very specific reasons. First, any description of my parent’s faults, failings, or shortcomings might be colored by human subjectivity that is apt to creep into the analysis. Second, despite any and/or all of my parent’s imperfections, in the final analysis, I honor them for the much good they have done in their lives, and for the countless ways in which they have loved and cared for me in an ongoing effort to consistently affirm my worth as a human being, and as their son. The truth is that my parents were both good and kind to me. They have been enormously supportive of me in all of my life goals and endeavors; indeed, they have been the greatest cheerleaders I have had in this world. They have continually loved, supported, and encouraged me in my life—a blessing for which I will always be deeply grateful. The third reason is that the purpose of this work is not to
highlight my perceptions of others’ weaknesses, but to place the spotlight on my own weaknesses, as well as the knowledge, principles, tools, and strategies I have employed to successfully manage and/or overcome my personal shortcomings. Placing others’ weaknesses (or my perception of those weaknesses) on display would deviate from this focused purpose.

Nevertheless, for the sake of illustration, I do share some of the neutral and/or positive examples of genetic and/or mimetic based influences my parents (and or other ancestors) have had on my life. For example, consider my educational and career preferences. My undergraduate degree was in English, although I considered majoring in drama before I settled on English. After graduation, I became an entrepreneur and substitute teacher before becoming a professional seminar facilitator, then a full-time teacher, and then back teaching professional seminars. I also pursued and earned a doctorate in Education. My greatest professional skills are in speaking, teaching, writing, and organizing.

Now consider my parent’s background. My mother majored in drama before switching majors to elementary education, in which she eventually earned a Bachelor’s Degree. My father majored in English and got a Master’s Degree in communications. My maternal grandfather was a college professor of speech and drama. He even revised (co-authored) a book on the *Fundamentals of Speech* (see Woolbert & Smith, 1934). As a professional orator, some of my cherished possessions are some audio recordings of my grandfather professionally reading stories, poems, and other texts. Such tangible evidence, in conjunction with family anecdotes, reveals his mastery of language. One
writer (Stockwell, *unknown date*) referred to him as “a superior speaker” (p. 12). It all sounds rather familiar, does it not?

I have observed many other genetic and/or mimetic inclinations that seem to have been passed on (intentionally or not, and consciously or not) to me. For example, my interest in family history, and history in general, and my conscientiousness toward personal responsibility must have come in part from my paternal grandmother. She spent prodigious amounts of time doing genealogy and family history work. She was also one of the most clean, orderly, and organized persons I have ever met. In fact, she was as logistically prepared to pass away as anyone I have ever known, which made the task of attending to post-mortem details and logistics extremely simple and convenient for her posterity.

Another example is my sensitivity towards matters relating to conscience, moral circumspection, and spiritual and religious matters (including various superstitions), which were certainly influenced in large part by my mother. My Mother is also an extremely optimistic woman of great refinement and integrity who has a tremendous capacity for communication. I believe I possess certain natural inclinations in line with these strengths of hers.

My love of, and penchant for, teaching, speaking, facilitating, and writing seems quite natural when one considers how many examples and mentors in these fields I have been exposed to on both sides of my family. My Mom had a degree to teach, has been a substitute teacher, and raised seven kids (if that’s not the purest form of teaching, I do not know what is). My Dad was also a teacher, as were three of my grandparents and five of my siblings (or siblings-in-law). My Dad was also an entrepreneur who loves to travel,
has a salient passion for education, and a pronounced curiosity for all sorts of things, especially construction-related projects. Moreover, his capacity for and interest in asking questions is commensurate to his many curiosities. He also has inclinations toward global thinking, and is a natural visionary. In near lockstep to my Dad, I possess all of these characteristics. Thus we see that any temptation we might have to blame our progenitors for the genetic and mimetic tendencies we gleaned from them, we may likewise have many reasons to thank them as well, and since effective self-leaders avoid blaming anyway, that is but one more reason to focus on the positive characteristics that our parents passed on to us, either consciously, or not.

One experience demonstrated how a mimetic influence passed on to my Dad from his Dad (my Grandfather) was then, in turn, passed on to me. As a young boy scout on a weeklong camping trip to earn merit badges, I fell prey to a devastating bout of homesickness. I was on the verge of tears nearly every moment those first few days. About the third or fourth day, my Dad came up to the camp to spend a couple of nights in our camp as part of his leadership responsibilities with the Boy Scouts in my Church. That first afternoon when we had a few moments alone, we went hiking off by ourselves up a riverbed. Once I knew we were completely alone, I relinquished the emotional wall I had been guarding so vigilantly in front of my fellow scouts and our leaders, and began to sob uncontrollably. I poured out my heart to Dad about how terribly homesick I was and how miserable the camp experience had been for me up to that point. The tenderness of his loving response remains, to this day, one of the sweetest and most cherished moments of my life. He did not judge me, but rather showed unconditional love, thus providing the depth of comfort I so desperately yearned for and needed at that moment.
He explained that I could come home early with him if I wanted to. Nevertheless, rather than encourage me to take the easy way out, he instead told me a story from his own life in an effort to teach me a principle of character. In relating his story, he described to me how he, as a much younger man, had become disenchanted with his college experience to the point that he decided to pack his belonging in his car and drive back home. His intention was to quit school and return to his hometown to help his father tend the local grocery store whereby he could establish a career for himself in the grocery business. Pleased with his plan, he was understandably chagrined when, upon arriving at home, his Dad pulled him aside and told him lovingly—but firmly—that he was to keep his bags packed and head right back up to school. He explained the opportunities my father would miss out on in life if he, like his Dad, failed to obtain a college education. His plan now foiled, my Dad had little choice but to obey and go back to school. At the time he told this story to me, Dad held both a Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree, and was engaged in professional work that required a college education. He never regretted following his own father’s counsel. Though I was just eleven years old, the lesson Dad desired me to learn was clear: *real men do not quit halfway through a worthy and important task, no matter the difficulty; quitting exposes weakness and cowardice.* My father did not make the decision for me that day, but I knew what he expected of me, and I knew I did not want to be a coward and have to live with the self-knowledge that I quit when the going gets rough. For the preservation of my own self-respect, and out of a desire to bolster the respect my father had for me, I knew what I had to do. I had to resolve on my own that I would see that scouting trip through, and I did. I was no quitter, and I wanted to make Dad proud. The next day, Dad went home by himself and I saw that scout camp through,
and I’ll forever be grateful I did. Interestingly enough, the last three days went much better than the first three; I was more of a man for the lesson my Dad had taught me, and I was starting to get used to the challenges of Scout Camp. The lesson emblazoned on my mind, heart, and character at that moment in time set a positive precedent for enduring difficult challenges from that point on in my life. I never forgot the lesson, and it helped me repeatedly through difficulties of a far greater magnitude, such as serving a two-year mission for my church over one thousand miles away from my family, wading through the seemingly endless obstacles to finding a compatible marriage partner, and completing the arduous and time-consuming requirements to become a Doctor of Education.

**Variable Five (5): Initial Opportunities for Education**

**Limitations & Benefits.**

Depending on where self-leaders are born, who their parents are, and what resources their parents have available to invest in their children’s education, both formally and informally speaking, some persons will inevitably have more, and better, initial opportunities to obtain education than others. An example of this reality can be seen in the decision of many financially privileged parents to enroll their students in private schooling in an effort to maximize their children’s educational opportunities, as well as to avoid any challenges (real or perceived) to realizing their educational objectives that might exist in the public school system.

Opportunities for informal education also vary greatly depending on who one’s parents are. Some parents are more passionate about, and proactive in, teaching their
children at home and beyond the home than are others. As a result, some students may enter kindergarten already knowing how to read because they have been learning at home from mom, dad, or a family member or friend. Household rules regarding the use of technology, whether or not a family eats together, and the time a child spends with his or her mom and dad, and how well educated mom and dad are themselves will all serve as variables in the quality and quantity of informal education a child receives initially beyond their own, independent pursuit of knowledge as an adult.

**Real world example of limitations & benefits: From my life.**

To illustrate the potential limitations and/or benefits of initial opportunities for education, consider the respective situations of my friend, Dr. Bruce Jackson, and me. Dr. Jackson has four advanced degrees, two of which are from prestigious urban Universities, one in the Midwest and one in the Northeastern United States, and he is currently at Harvard pursuing his fifth advanced diploma. I, on the other hand, prior to the completion of this dissertation, had only one degree, an undergraduate Bachelor’s diploma from a relatively unknown State University in Utah (Utah Valley University). I am currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Fielding Graduate University, which, while it is a quality institution in the eyes of many, it probably does not qualify as being particularly prestigious in the eyes of the collective academe, and is far from being ubiquitously recognizable. Yet I have come to discover that quality and prestige do not always cohabitate in the academe; moreover, my own experiences lead me to believe that the quality of one’s education is based more on a self-leader’s effective use of available resources than an institution’s availability of resources or portion of prestige. Both

---

48 Information shared with the permission of Dr. Jackson.
Jackson and I are passionate about Self-Leadership, and have made great efforts in our lives to enhance our education and to sharpen our Self-Leadership skills. The difference is that we have pursued different (formal and informal) educational pathways due perhaps in part to our differing access to the resources required to procure such. Dr. Jackson’s father was a millionaire. His mother provided him the opportunity to take private, professional tennis lessons, and his parents and grandparents were collectively willing to finance any formal and/or informal educational opportunities Bruce was willing to pursue. To Jackson’s credit, he made wise use of his access to these resources, and has, as a result, become highly educated in conjunction to acquiring multiple degrees. He has also spent time studying in Europe. I once felt an itch to study abroad in England, but cast off the idea in part because I did not have ready access to the necessary funds. My father was a middle-class renaissance man who was primarily a middle-school English teacher. He raised seven kids and did not have a lot of extra cash lying around. In fact, an aunt of mine ended up paying for a sizable portion of my undergraduate tuition, despite the fact that tuition at Utah Valley University was, on the spectrum of higher educational affordability, extremely cheap. Even if I had desired to pursue further higher education, I would have had to arrange a plan to pay for it, which most likely would have involved student loans, which, unlike Dr. Jackson, I would have had to work to pay back. When I finally did choose to pursue to increase my formal education by enrolling at Fielding Graduate University, I did not do so until after my wife and I could afford to pay the tuition. Over time, through the exercise of Self-Leadership, I am confident that I am capable of earning enough money to pursue as much further formal education as I desire, if I were to want it, but it would take time and effort. On the other hand, Dr. Jackson is
well positioned to make choices in the present that I am currently not positioned to make. For example, last year, Jackson took time off to travel around the world with his family for six months. They visited dozens of countries and scores of cities on a journey that was remarkably educational for him, his wife and their children. While I may someday have the freedom to make a decision to embark on an opportunity like that, I presently lack the freedom and means to do so.

**Variable Six (6): Congenital Social Environment**

Typically an outgrowth and extension of one’s familial environment, one’s social environment also serves as a significant variable of one’s exercise of Self-Leadership. A self-leader’s social environment consists of the micro (friends, neighbors, classmates, strangers) and macro (culture) milieu with whom they associate. The media sources a self-leader chooses to consume also play an important role in their social environment.

**Limitations and benefits.**

The kind of neighborhood one lives in, the kind of school one attends, the kind of friends one associates with, the larger culture one resides amidst, and the media one chooses to consume, all play an influential role in the development of one’s character and Self-Leadership Efficacy. Some of these environs tend to limit educational and other, productive and positive opportunities a self-leader has access to; others tend to expand them. As self-leaders we all have a tendency to become, over time, like those we spend the most time with educationally, professionally, socially, and in our families.
Real world examples of limitations: From my life.

For the most part, I have been unusually blessed with a positive social environment. I have also made many conscious, self-led decisions in my life to surround myself with people who provided positive social interactions and associations. Nevertheless, some of the places I have lived have presented limited opportunities for diverse racial and ethnic fraternization due simply to geographically influenced racial homogeneity. For example, 11 of my growing up years were spent in Monticello, Utah, which is not a very racially diverse place. The only significant ethnic/racial diversity I experienced was among Hispanic Americans and Navajo Indians. To my knowledge, there were no African American residents in our town of approximately 1,800 persons. I may have at least seen a Black person in passing at some point, but if so, I cannot recall it. Throughout the entire county, Africans (or African Americans), Asians (of all kinds), other Hispanics (besides Mexican-Americans), and even Caucasian Europeans were sparsely represented, if they were represented at all. This presented a limitation for me as a self-leader growing up because I was unfamiliar with many races and cultures outside of my own. Furthermore, even though I grew up around some Latinos and Navajos, I cannot say I ever spent enough time with anyone from either race to really come to understand their culture. Although Caucasians in San Juan County often went to school and/or worked with Latinos and/or Navajos, the three races did not fraternize much socially, at least collectively speaking. Outwardly, everyone was reasonably congenial towards one another, and individually speaking, there were certainly examples of interracial friendships, and the occasionally interracial marriage was not unheard of. But
collectively speaking, the fraternization of the races was usually kept to occasional events of a civic, public, educational, or work nature.

Most of the whites were Mormons; most of the Latinos were Catholic; as for the Navajos, I’m not even entirely sure how those who were religious chose to worship; perhaps many of them practiced religion according to traditional Native American beliefs. Sadly, I was never really given (nor did I actively seek out) an opportunity to find out. Furthermore, to my (and our) discredit and shame, I confess that I, members of my family, friends of mine, and other white people in the community were sometimes guilty of cracking racially prejudiced jokes at the expense of the Latinos and/or the Navajos, and I imagine the Latinos and Navajos probably had their jokes for us whites as well.

Sometimes I felt justified for joking about, or otherwise reinforcing negative racial stereotypes because of events I would either observe or hear about. For example, I was bullied by some Latino students in junior high school, which influenced me to feel victimized, and therefore justified in hurling negative epithets toward my perpetrators behind their backs to my friends and family. Another time, a drunk and disoriented Navajo man entered the home of my grandparents (most folks did not lock their doors in Monticello when I was growing up) whereupon he found my Grandma’s bed and proceeded to nestle in for a nap while they were away from the house. What an unexpected surprise awaited her when she returned home that evening! Understandably, it nearly scared her to death to find the uninvited intruder reposing in her private sleeping space. Fortunately, the man was not violent, but had merely slipped in for a snooze while
in a presumably inebriated state. Such an incident understandably reinforced, but did not justify pervasive community stereotypes.

**Real world examples of benefits: From my life.**

When I moved to Mesa, Arizona at age seven, my family still lived in a suburb of Phoenix that, like Monticello, was also predominantly white. It was, however, much more diverse than Monticello. In Mesa, I had the opportunity to become friends with a much more racially eclectic circle of friends. While my family and I were guilty of occasionally poking fun vocally at ethnic cultures other than our own, my parents ultimately taught me by precept and example that we were not existentially any better than persons of other races just because we were white, and they were very supportive of my making friends with persons of all races, cultures, and religions. In fact, three of my best friends in elementary school consisted of an African American boy, an Iranian boy, and a Laotian boy, and only one of them (the Laotian boy) was a Mormon. Such a diverse circle of friends would not have been possible at the same period of time in Monticello. I spent many hours playing with these friends, and came to appreciate the benefits of expanding my circle of associates outside of my own race, culture, and religion. My opportunities for associating socially with a diverse group of individuals has continued to expand throughout my life, as I have now lived in seven different States and Provinces of the U.S. and Canada, and worked in 47 States and seven Provinces. These traveling and living experiences have provided numerous benefits to me in terms of my social interactions with a variety of people representing a variety of races, cultures, and religions. Doing so has greatly bolstered my education of the world around me. It has enriched my life and my relationships.
Variable Seven (7): Choices of Others

Limitations.

There are only three things that we have control over as self-leaders: our thoughts, our speech, and our actions (Jensen, 2005). Everything else: where we were born, who are parents are, forces of nature (such as the weather), and most notably, the thoughts, speech, and actions of others we do not have control over. We can influence some things beyond our control (e.g. other people’s thoughts, speech, and actions), but we cannot control them outright.

Sometimes bad things happen to good people because of the poor choices that others make. The Earth’s population passed the seven billion mark a few years ago (2011). That means for every person on Earth, there are over seven billion other people they cannot control. Therefore, the choices of others will always be a variable in our lives that may limit and/or benefit our Self-Leadership potential. On the other hand, because we do have the potential to influence the thoughts, speech, and actions of others, there is much we can do as self-leaders to develop harmonious relationships with those around us in order to avoid as much as possible the likelihood that others will make choices that will hurt or otherwise act detrimentally toward our own world. Nevertheless, even the best self-leaders are hurt at times by the speech or actions of others. Bad things do happen to good people, and this fact must be taken into account as a potential limitation to Self-Leadership.
**Real world example of limitations: From my life.**

There are countless real world examples of poor decisions made by someone that ends up harming others. You do not need to have been alive for very long to experience such an occurrence. From drunk driving and drug abuse to marital infidelity, dishonesty, violence, abuse, structural inequality, racial and/or other hate motivated crimes, and other deeds motivated by jealousy, anger, and bitterness, other people’s actions can limit our freedoms as self-leaders. A couple autoethnographic illustrations from my life will serve to highlight this point. I share two brief vignettes; in the first, I am guilty of causing harm to someone else beyond his control; in the second, a peer’s actions (which I could not control) caused mental and emotional distress to me.

*The high dive.*

As an imperfect human being, I have made choices from time to time that have negatively impacted others against their will. The following vignette describes such an instance from my past, which, I might add, I am not very proud of. When I was eight or nine years old, my Mom went back to university to get her Bachelor’s degree. To accommodate her pursuit of this goal, our family temporarily moved into on-campus housing during the summer months. We did this for five consecutive summers. The first summer, my two sisters and I were enrolled in a day-program for kids of summer school moms and dads. The program included all sorts of activities like sports, arts and crafts, field trips, and opportunities to go swimming. One day, while swimming, I got too hyper on the high dive at the deep end of the pool and thoughtlessly flung myself off of a three-meter (9.84 feet) diving board without first checking below to see if all other swimmers had cleared out of the way. To my horror, I beheld, after it was too late, another boy my
age looking up at me with an equal, if not surpassing, look of terror on his own petrified face. He let out a scream as we both braced for the inevitable impact. It was not long before my feet, legs, and body crashed into his stomach, violently shoving him under the water. Although the collision was not pleasant for me, it was clear which of us had the short end of the stick in the situation. Unsurprisingly, my ears were soon pierced with anguished shrieks of pain as they bellowed forth from this poor boy once he had resurfaced. Apologetic as I was, and as bad as I felt, there was nothing I could do to change the pain my foolish behavior had inflicted on that boy. Fortunately it was not a serious accident and the event probably caused as much anger in the boy as it did actual physical pain; nonetheless, the fact remained: my actions (which the boy could not control) harmed the boy against his will.

*Bob the bully.*

In eighth grade, I was bullied by a small handful of my peers. My primary antagonist—a bully named Bob—particularly frightened and intimidated me. Bob would push and shove me, glance menacingly in my direction if he was near, and verbally ridicule. He even gave me an unflattering nickname that relegated me to “nerd” status. Bob was in my first period class, so predictably, I dreaded going to that class. As I contemplated my options for ameliorating the situation, I considered trying the “old school” approach of punching Bob in the nose to see if he would get scared off and stop harassing me. The difficulty with that approach was that I was a tall, lanky cross-country-runner-type who carried a mere 100 pounds on a smaller-than-average frame. As such, I was more of a “flighter” than a “fighter.” Moreover, having never punched

---

49 Name changed.
anyone in the nose in my entire life, garnering the courage to actually see my plan through was a dubious proposition. My bullying dilemma went on for several weeks and months.\textsuperscript{50} I had no direct control over Bob’s speech or actions toward me, both of which induced no paltry portion of fear and misery. As a self-leader, there was nothing I could do to directly\textsuperscript{51} control Bob.

\textbf{Benefits.}

On the flip side, the choices of others can dramatically benefit our lives as well, regardless of what we may do as a self-leader. On a macro scale, all the marvelous devices, tools, machines, and gadgets we have available to us in our post-modern world of information and technology have come about, in most cases, without any input or

\textsuperscript{50} I cannot remember the precise timeline of the bullying experience. All I know for sure is it began and ended during my eighth grade year.

\textsuperscript{51} This did not leave me powerless, however, as well directed Self-Leadership action could have an indirect impact on convincing Bob to stop tormenting me. Thankfully, a conscious Self-Leadership action did serve to set in motion a series of events that eventually remedied my middle school malaise. My course of action: I tattled to my parents! My Dad, not one to take nonsense from anybody, decided to take matters into his own hands by going to talk the matter over with school administrators. I solidified my Self-Leadership’s decision by supporting my Dad’s intentions. Soon thereafter, Bob showed up on our doorstep one day after school. He knocked on our door and someone let him in. I was called for. Surprised (and somewhat terrified) to see Bob there inside \textit{my} house. Standing at the top of the stairs in our split-level home, I looked down on Bob as he looked up at me to offer a pathetic and obviously forced, albeit encouragingly subdued, apology and a verbal commitment to not “mess with me no more.” From that point on, the quality of my little 8\textsuperscript{th} grade life and world was positively transformed overnight. My problem was solved in part because I was willing to exercise the Self-Leadership willingness to seek help to a problem I had been unable to solve on my own. The rest was taken care of by a parent who cared. In my decision to “tattle”, I was, of course, taking a risk. Bob and his malevolent middle school milieu would now likely talk behind my back about what a nasty little “nark” I was, and I would have to put up with any potential social falling from grace that might have ensued there from. In the final analysis, however, I just didn’t care! As a self-leader, I identified an elimination of the bullying to have far greater value than the risk of any social ridicule I might invite as a result of my course of action. Moreover, by avoiding a physical fight, I saved myself from potential disciplinary action from the school, not to mention my physical safety! It was a powerful lesson for me then, and continues to be a powerful lesson for me now in the art of Self-Leadership and not taking \textit{crap} from anyone. I realized that while I cannot control the actions of others, I can choose to take action myself so as to strongly influence the behavior of others. By so doing, I learned that I might have to take risks (in this case the risk was “tattling” and any fallout that tattling might cause). I also learned that Self-Leadership provides me with options and opportunity to mold my world into the kind of place I want it to be regardless of the choices of those around me. Finally, I learned I do not have relegate myself to the being a “victim” if someone is mistreating me or being unfair, dishonest, or unethical; there are always steps I can choose to take as a self-leader to stand up for myself and my rights. This does not mean I can always solve all my problems right away, or in precisely the way I would like, but it does mean I am not powerless to try and find solutions.
contribution on our part. They exist because of the productive actions of others to invent, innovate, organize, build, package, transport, sell, et cetera. On a micro scale, virtually everyone can remember a time when someone did something to benefit one’s life in some way.

Real world example of benefits: From my life.

On a macro scale, I do not even have to leave my office where I am currently writing to see dozens of examples of benefits to my own journey as a self-leader because of the positive choices of others. From the remarkable computer I am typing on to the amazing printer that can make my words tangible; from the heater that keeps me warm from the tall snowdrifts outside my window to the veritable library of books surrounding my desk and office, there are, in truth, very few tangible objects that we use or enjoy in this life that we had much of anything to do with creating. While we may have worked hard to earn the money necessary to purchase these items, it was the hard work (choices) of others that made the items for us to be able to buy.

On a micro scale, I think back to all the choices of others in relationship with me that have positively benefitted me over the years, and have therefore productively influenced my Self-Leadership; such instances are many and varied. From parents who loved and supported me, to older siblings who praised and believed in my potential; from lenders who backed my education and entrepreneurial endeavors to teachers and mentors who were there for me to answer questions, instruct, and otherwise support me, I have been perpetually and greatly blessed by the positive choices that others have made, both generally and specifically.
Variable Eight (8): Time

Limitations & benefits of time, and examples.

Time is obviously a critical Self-Leadership variable that restricts men and women in at least three prominent ways. The first is the finite nature of time; none of us have unlimited amounts of it in this life. The second is the absolute egalitarianism of time as it relates to all human beings on a daily basis. This means that all self-leaders (rich or poor, strong or weak, healthy or sick, sophisticated or homespun, influential or lost in the shuffle) have 24 hours each day to spend—not a minute less, and not a minute more—and all self-leaders must spend every last second. There is no saving (or borrowing) time from one day to spend at a later date. The third variable of time involves when a person was born and lived on the Earth. When a person lived, lives, or will live on the Earth determines, to a certain extent, the kind of life a person will live, and what opportunities will, or will not, be available to that person.

Moreover, time, when viewed as a medium through which work can be accomplished, represents an essential variable required in any and all Self-Leadership application. Without time, we cannot think, speak, or act in this world. The more time at our disposal, the more opportunity we have for action, and the greater our potential for success (or failure), and achievement (or lack thereof). Some self-leaders have more free time available to them in their lives than others, and some self-leaders to do not live for as long a time as other self-leaders. Some self-leaders’ time is considered by some to be “cut short” by “premature deaths.” Time is perhaps the quintessential Self-Leadership variable because of its variability; none of us know how much time we have in this life. Whether a self-leader lives to be 10 or 100 makes a big difference in his or her Self-
Leadership potential. On the flipside, the way a person self-leads may have a great influence on how long that person does live. For example, self-leaders who choose to avoid tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs may, by virtue of their self-led decision to avoid such substances, live longer than self-leader who chooses to use and/or abuse them.

Another aspect of time as a Self-Leadership variable involves the reality that developing Self-Leadership Efficacy requires effort over time. Obtaining higher levels of S-L efficacy does not happen overnight. Advancing from one level on Self-Leadership Efficacy to another may require months, years, decades, or even a lifetime for a given self-leader to accomplish. Moreover, the amount of time it takes one self-leader to advance from a given level to another may vary greatly from another self-leader facing different circumstances (S-L variables) in their life. The amount of time required for a given self-leader to advance from one level to the next will therefore be contingent on the unique interplay of all the S-L variables applicable to that particular self-leader.

**Variable Nine (9): Structural Inequality & Diversity**

Structural inequities still exist today in the United States and throughout the world as a result of racist choices of oppressive persons in positions of power. Such choices limit members of oppressed classes in ways that prevent them from taking advantage of opportunities that are available to others simply because of the color of their skin, their religion, or their ethnicity. For example, Pager (2003) points out that while incarcerated persons, generally speaking, struggle to find gainful employment after their release from prison, the challenge becomes even greater for black men as compared to white men because of “the stigma of minority status and criminal record” (p. 939).
This is especially true in situational and short-term based scenarios. While some oppressed person so prejudiced against might be able to creatively and proactively utilize their Self-Leadership to find alternate avenues to still pursue and accomplish some of their goals in the long-run, achieving those goals will almost certainly take longer and prove more difficult than it would be for those in non-oppressed classes; and in some cases, those in oppressed classes may be unable to accomplish some things no matter how effective their Self-Leadership proves to be. Structural forces in our society can produce limitations for the traditionally oppressed. There are no direct benefits of structural inequality.

Limitations.

Structural inequality exists in the United States for a variety of different groups of people based on race, sex, religion, and many other demographic variables. Structural inequities affecting the African American community have perhaps been the longest lasting and most visible in the nation’s history. From slavery, to disenfranchisement and Jim Crow segregation, to the stubborn intergenerational racism that lingers still today, inequitable structures continue to place some obstacles in the pathways of African Americans and other communities, groups, and individuals of color that usually do not exist for Caucasians. This structural inequality often limits the potential of those affected.

Real world examples of limitations: Frederick Douglass & Abraham Lincoln.

In my view, two of the more prominent examples of effective Self-Leadership from American history come from the lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.
Both men rose to remarkable heights within the limits and constraints of the structurally unequal social and political systems within which they resided. They were also contemporaries, born within 10 years of each other in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Both were born into humble and obscure circumstances, Douglass into slavery, and Lincoln into what amounted to the impecunious life of a frontier backwoodsman. Yet both rose to remarkable heights, largely attributable to their own indomitable will to succeed and the effective exercise of visionary Self-Leadership over extended periods of time. Lincoln’s rise to the presidency was a poignant indicator that the structural inequality that existed between the haves and the have-nots among white classes of monarchial Europe had substantially eroded in the United States. Douglass’s parallel rise to prominence in his own subjugated social universe, and to some extent in Lincoln’s as well,52 was indicative of the crumbling system of forced servitude in America, something that ironically, much of Europe and Latin American had already taken the lead on.53

The accomplishments of both men have gone down in history, and the power of Self-Leadership is evident in their respective journeys. For example, both became educated with limited resources, and both worked their way up in a society that did not cater to their socioeconomic class. Nevertheless, other variables beyond Self-Leadership ultimately limited their respective opportunities at various times. Lincoln’s early years were lived out in particularly Spartan-like conditions. These economic constraints and

---

52 Douglass eventually became a well-educated and skilled orator who lent his influential voice to the abolitionist movement. He also paid three visits to President Lincoln’s, once of which (in August 1864) was at the President’s personal invitation (The Lincoln Institute, 2002-2013).

53 The most notable of which was the world power at the time, Great Britain, which outlawed the slave trade in 1807, two years before Lincoln was even born. It was then officially abolished as a practice in 1833, when Lincoln was still a young man in his mid-twenties.
the concomitant demands inherent to helping support his family through the rigorous labors of frontier life forced him to acquire most of his education on his own. This he did, eventually becoming a lawyer. His personal narrative includes failed attempts at endeavors in both business and politics. Yet, as a dark horse candidate in the 1860 Republican Primary, Lincoln came from behind to secure the nomination and eventually the presidency after having lost his own bid for the Senate a mere two years previously. Popular culture has painted Lincoln as the man who succeeded because he never gave up, and historical facts lend a degree of credence to the mythical narrative.

Douglass, on the other hand, became an influential author, speaker, and thinker in the abolitionist movement of the mid-eighteenth century, but never became president, or anything near unto it in the “white” hierarchical structures of the time. The reason he did not attain more formal titular prominence in his life was not for a lack of ambition or Self-Leadership, but rather because the existing structural inequality of his day simply forbade his pursuit of it. This is a lucid example of the meaning and effects of structural inequality in a political and social system.

One hundred years after Lincoln’s issue of the Emancipation Proclamation, Dr. Martin Luther King gave his famous I Have a Dream Speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. It had been nearly a century since the death of Lincoln and nearly seven decades since Douglass’s passing, yet America was still gripped by the vice of racial inequality, although some noteworthy progress had been made. Two years prior to King, Jr.’s deliverance of his immortal speech, a baby boy was born in Honolulu, Hawaii; his name was Barack Obama. Forty-five years after King’s speech, Obama was sworn in as the first Black President of the United States. Through the exercise of a
lifetime of Self-Leadership initiatives on his own part, and the part of his mom, grandparents, teachers, and others, he was able to accomplish what structural inequality had made impossible for men like Frederick Douglass and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Self-Leadership is powerful, and it carries with it the potential to bring about great achievement and success on the part of anyone who diligently studies and practices it. Nonetheless, however successful a person might prove to be as an individual self-leader, they still may face external limitations due to structural inequities. Lincoln and Douglass were both great self-leaders, but Douglass was categorically denied many of the social and political opportunities that were available to Lincoln because of that inequality.

**Variable Ten: Geopolitics and Economics**

**Limitations & Benefits.**

Geopolitics and economics (macro & micro) both play a significant role in the advantages/disadvantages and opportunities/lack thereof that are available to self-leaders in a given location. In some corners of the world, economic disadvantages are a by-product of political oppression (Freire, 2006). In many underdeveloped countries, economic adversity is more difficult to overcome than in areas such as the United States and other developed nations where “the poor” may not even be considered poor in locales where abject poverty wields a ubiquitous hand. The concept of *The American Dream*, which promotes the opportunity for an individual to eventually surpass the standard of living enjoyed by one’s parents through education, hard work, and ambition, might be the standard of Self-Leadership in countries where such a dream is reasonably attainable by the average self-leader. In other countries where average self-leaders are routinely
subjugated beneath the yoke of political, economic, and/or cultural bondage, and especially when societal mores support that yoke, it will be much more difficult for individual self-leaders to rise in life regardless of their ambition, drive, or dreams. That is not to say they cannot rise, but doing so will prove more difficult, and possibly much more so.

As a former motivational speaker to young audiences (high school and college-aged students), I would often speak of the enormous potential the students had in the United States—a country I consider to be a land of great opportunity to those willing to work hard and play by the rules. I would generally flank my comments with a follow-up statement explaining that I would temper my enthusiasm were I speaking to a similar group of students in an undeveloped country where personal freedom was a fledgling reality at best. Geopolitical and economic realities cannot merely be ignored. Self-leaders must work within a framework of those realities, and/or strive to influence positive change therein.

If I were to speak to a group of minority students on the South Side of Chicago, or in some of the rougher public schools of Los Angeles, California, I would likewise approach my audiences with an understanding of the unique socioeconomic challenges faced by such an audience. My message would be a little different than it would be for a group of affluent White students in Fairfax County, Virginia, or Northeast Cobb County, Georgia. The former minority students simply do not have the same access to resources, and therefore opportunities, starting out in life as the latter affluent students do. That is not to say that minority students from poor socioeconomic demographics could not eventually utilize Self-Leadership to transcend challenging situations into which they
may have been born, even to the point of joining their affluent counterparts (many people
have done just that); it is merely to acknowledge that it is not always an even playing
field.

Real world example of limitations and benefits: From my life.

I have never personally experienced what might be referred to as real poverty,
hunger, thirst, warfare, abuse, or intergenerational structural inequality, so I cannot relate
fully to those who have, such as Freire (2006) or Douglass (2003). However, I have had
difficult experiences (economically and otherwise) that have humbled me and provided a
great deal of valuable personal instruction. All told, my life experiences have not placed
me among the least advantaged of the Earth’s populace (economically speaking), nor has
it placed me among the most advantaged. My experiences lie somewhere in the middle,
and are farther to one side or the other depending on whose experiences you are
comparing mine to. While you as the reader will naturally compare my experiences to
your own, and that of others, recognize that regardless of the seeming validity of
comparisons of this manner, “the ‘size’ of human suffering is absolutely relative”
(Frankl, 2006, p. 44), and therefore any proposed accuracy in comparing two different
self-leader’s difficulties in life will prove a dubious endeavor.

Growing up in the middle class economically sometimes limited me in the short
run. While I never was in want for the necessities of life, and while my mother and father
provided a comfortable home for us to live in, we did reside in the middle class where
financial stresses are often a reality. Over time, I grew sensitive to the fear that at some
point, there might not be enough money. My Grandmother Smith (1907-1992) owned
several thousand books, and stored them all in her house. I adored her home library, and
spent many cherished hours perusing those blessed shelves of books. One day when I was just a boy, Grandmother suggested I read a particular short story called *The Rocking Horse Winner* (Lawrence, 1969). The story made an impression on me, and many times throughout my growing up years I felt as though in some small way, I could relate to the story’s protagonist, a boy named Paul, who, in my mind’s eye, must have been about my age. The narrator of the story described how Paul’s house “came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: There *must* be more money! There *must* be more money!” (p. 10). His mother, a woman who might well represent the antithesis of an effective self-leader, was cold, vain, unloving, and selfish. She was also foolish in her expenditures, and as the story relates, indirectly drives her adoring son to his death in a childlike effort to quench her insatiable clamoring for more and more money. While my parents were a far cry from the likes of this heartless woman, their were times when things got a little tight financially in my home that I would hear them say and/or see them do things that would fuel my fear of running out of money. Such instances led me to sense that my home also harbored tacit whisperings that there “must be more money!” (p. 10). Partly resulting from this, I grew up dreaming about how I might procure for myself and my future family enough money so as to never have to stress or worry in the way my parents often seemed to, or to at least work with my future wife to create a culture in our home that shields our future family from unnecessary financial stress—something that, even if it does exist, I came to believe belongs squarely in the heads, hearts, and on the shoulders of the adult caregivers in the home.

Because of the economic limitations of my family upbringing, there were certain limits placed on me as a young man, and there still are limits to my opportunities because
I am still climbing up my own economic ladder of success as a young man, husband, and father. As I illustrated in variable five (*initial opportunities for education*), I had and have more limitations than my good friend, Dr. Bruce Jackson, because as a child, and now as an adult, I do not yet have the same economic leverage he possesses. That does not mean that I am incapable as a self-leader of someday that changing that, but it does present a reality of temporary limitations. As my wife and I have become increasingly financially secure since getting married nearly five years ago, we have seen our opportunities increase, and I anticipate our opportunities will continue to rise in some proportion to our economic well-being. Simply stated, economic well-being creates Self-Leadership benefits; economic scarcity creates Self-Leadership limitations. They magic bullet, however, is not necessarily economic well being itself, but the Self-Leadership required to pursue and sustain economic well-being. Thus there is hope for almost every self-leader, especially in countries where geopolitics, and economic and personal freedoms are readily accessible.

**Variable 11: Good & Bad Luck**

*Limitations & benefits.*

“Good luck” refers to securing prosperity, circumstances, or opportunities for oneself that cannot be legitimately linked to consciously engaged charitable actions of others, conscious personal endeavors, hard work, and/or sacrifice over time. “Bad luck” refers to misfortune, accident or loss, failure, and difficulties, which arise by no fault of the individual whom it strikes. Luck involves the good and the bad stuff in life that seemingly arises by caprice rather than an identifiable cause. It refers to the windfalls
and shortfalls of life that seemingly have no connection to any tangible effort or
investment on our part. It seems as though such things occur out of sheer coincidence
and utter randomness. Some life events occur without any clear, scientific explanation
regarding cause. When such things happen, they are usually attributed to “good” or
“bad” luck. On occasion, good, or bad, luck strikes all of us.

**Real world example of limitations: From my life.**

I, like most people, have been unlucky on many occasions. One experience
illustrates the nature of bad luck in life, and the pain that can stem from it. My birthday
is in August. I was nearly six years old when I began kindergarten. For the rest of my
primary and secondary education, I was always old for my grade. This fact held some
perks, or so I thought. My ninth grade year, I discovered that students who were old for
their grade, could take drivers education the last quarter of their ninth grade year. This
would enable them to get their drivers license right when they turned 16. I was thrilled at
the prospect of being one of the first students in my class to get my drivers license. One
day, as a 15 year old ninth grader, I went to see the driver’s education teacher so I could
get signed up for the 4th quarter driver’s ed. class. To my deep and poignant
disappointment, he informed me that the State of Utah had recently made a change to
their driver’s education policy whereby 9th graders were no longer allowed to take drivers
education, no exceptions. Passing drivers education was a prerequisite for obtaining
one’s drivers license. I was deeply disappointed and quite upset at this most unwelcome
news. Not only would I have to wait an entire summer for the first quarter of my
sophomore year to arrive so I could take drivers education, but I would also have to wait
more than two months after my 16th birthday until I could obtain my drivers license and
legally drive on my own. What terrible luck! Students just one grade above me had already taken advantage of the erstwhile 9th grade rule, and it seemed I was being unfairly punished just because I turned 16 in 1995 instead of 1994 or earlier. I was so angry that I stormed out of the school and “sloughed” my next class, something I did not do a lot of in high school. I just didn’t care. I had to get away and allow myself to calm down after hearing this horrible news of terrible luck for which I was powerless to change.

*Real world example of benefits: From my life.*

Throughout my life, I have not been particularly “lucky” when it comes to winning board or card games, winning prize drawings, winning the girl, or otherwise being the recipient of inexplicable windfalls. On occasion, I have won a door prize drawing or have otherwise been visibly “luckier” than those around me, but usually not in any way beyond the causal caprice of luck’s typical arbitrariness. In general, my luck, or lack thereof, appears to be utterly random and indicative of any other average person’s luck. My wife, on the other hand, tends to be a lot luckier than average, or so it often seems. In the vignette to follow, I present an example of what I mean.

I was 28 years old and was dating the woman who would eventually become my wife. It was around Christmas time and her company had invited her and a guest to attend the organization’s year-end holiday party. Part of the evening’s activities included some gambling games (not involving real money) whereby couple’s could score points in competition for some handsome prizes that would be awarded to the top three point earners for the evening. That same night, we had an important church meeting to attend. While we were disappointed at the prospect of arriving late to the work party festivities, we both felt that living true to our deepest-held spiritual values required we make the
important church meeting a higher priority than attending the entire work party. We were both a bit disappointed by the scheduling conflict, but nonetheless decided to attend the church meeting and show up to the party late.

When we arrived at the party, we were divvied the same number of poker chips that others had started out with nearly two hours beforehand. We figured our chances to win with such a late start were slim. Undaunted, we proceeded to the blackjack table. In the few minutes we had left, both of us got hot with the kind of luck my wife seemed unusually privy to. I mean we got really lucky, and before our luck ran out, time was called and the games were closed. Therefore, we had no opportunity to lose the chips we had secured on our lucky streak. As a result, we ended up taking second place overall, and won an automobile Global Positioning System (GPS) device that retailed for over four hundred dollars, a gift that proved very useful in my work, which involved a lot of travel. It seemed as though most of the other couples who had been working to bolster their hand for a couple hours or more had been victims of unlucky streaks whereby they lost much of what they had won and/or what they originally started the games with. We, on the other hand, experienced just enough luck at just the right time to come away with the prized we had hoped to win.

**Variable 12: Suprarational Intervention**

Suprarational intervention refers to assistance or aid from a Power beyond that which can be scientifically explicated. Including the concept of divine assistance as a Self-Leadership variable is tricky for a couple of reasons. First, some people do not believe in the reality of divine or omnipotent beings. In fact, some readers may
passionately believe in the non-existence of such a being(s). Second, even those who do believe in some form of Deity inevitably run into the secular burden of scientific proof.

Proof or no proof, ethnographic, and by default, autoethnographic, studies must take into account the influence that the spiritual beliefs surrounding Deity often have on the lives of individuals and societies around the globe. While it is true that science has thus far been unable to categorically prove, or disprove, the existence or non-existence of a God-figure, a study of Self-Leadership would be incomplete without broaching the subject for the simple fact that many self-leaders do believe in God. Their personal narrative will therefore be inevitably influenced by their spiritual and/or religious beliefs.

Because Suprarational intervention cannot be scientifically validated, its role in the lives of self-leaders is interpreted according to each self-leader’s religious and/or spiritual persuasions. As such, the ways and means by which Suprarational intervention plays a causal role and Force in human affairs will be viewed quite differently from self-leader to self-leader, especially since some self-leaders choose to disbelieve in the existence of Suprarational intervention. It should be noted that belief or disbelief in Suprarational intervention is insufficient evidence to scientifically prove or disprove its existence, or lack thereof.

Regardless of Whom, or What one chooses to believe Suprarational intervention, or Grace, actually is, I wish to emphasize that it has been my personal experience that Suprarational intervention, at least as I interpret it in my own life, tends to flow over time in proportion to one’s own investment of personal effort in labor and time. In Franklin’s (1999) words, “God helps them that help themselves” (p. 8). Predicting the timing of Grace’s interventions is a tricky business. Sometimes It seems painfully absent despite
one’s best efforts to elicit it over extended periods of time. On the other hand, It sometimes seems to flow freely when one feels undeserving of It’s beneficence. In the moment, the timing of Suprarational intervention often appears arbitrary, although hindsight usually provides insight into the *whys* behind Its seemingly capricious timing. Over time, It may seem to flow with increasing regularity and abundance, especially as one reaches higher levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy. On the other hand, persons reaching the highest levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy may reflect back and muse that Its greatest influence and power was in fact at work in their lives at the very moments when It appeared to be the least engaged, or perhaps even entirely absent.

**Perceived limitations & benefits.**

It is important to make clear that in speaking about the limitations and benefits of Suprarational intervention, I refer to limitations and benefits that arise due to certain *beliefs* in that aid, and not the limitations and benefits of the aid itself. I speak, therefore, of *perceived* limitations and benefits rather than *actual* limitations and benefits. This is appropriate in an academic treatise since *actual* limitations or benefits stemming from the aid of a Higher Power cannot be scientifically proven or measured just as the existence of a Higher Power cannot be scientifically validated or verified. Nevertheless, countless individuals around the Globe attribute various life occurrences and other spiritually experienced phenomena to Suprarational intervention. Such aid is often perceived as being obtained through faith, prayer, obedience to supposed divinely appointed laws, or other means of communication and/or relationship with deified Being(s).

Over the course of my life as a believer in a Higher Power, my beliefs about Suprarational intervention have not remained static. While I *believe* that God is an
unchangeable being, I know for a fact that my beliefs about God have evolved throughout my life. My experiences throughout this growing process suggest to me that some erstwhile beliefs I held about God actually negatively limited my Self-Leadership capacity, while other, different beliefs have positively benefited the same. In the following vignettes, I share what I consider to be some of the limitations of former beliefs I held about God in conjunction with sharing some of the benefits I believe I have reaped as those beliefs have evolved.

**Real world examples of perceived limitations.**

In discussing limitations of Suprarational intervention, I do not mean to suggest that a Higher Power does or does not have limitations. Rather, my focus is on the limitations that certain beliefs about a Higher Power have placed on my own Self-Leadership Efficacy.

As a teenager with obsessive-compulsive disorder, my views of God were heavily influenced by irrational (as I view them now) views of how God worked. These views, in hindsight (in my own view), were often unhelpfully superstitious. As a result, I often feared, ruminated, and obsessed over the potential punishments God would surely invoke upon me for something or other I had thought, said, or did, even though, as I would find out later, many of my thoughts were a result of involuntary OCD symptoms. On more than one occasion, I felt like perhaps I was surely going to be damned to hell as a result of my thoughts or behavior, or at least have some other sort of curse or punishment placed upon me. I, no doubt, am not the first religious person to have struggled with the fear of what God might do to me for thoughts or actions that were out of line with His
commandments. It is a real fear, and in my experience, it places spiritual and/or psychological limitations on whoever is harboring the fear.

Individuals are not the only entities limited by irrational fears about the impending punishments of a Higher Power. One must only study history carefully to see the enormity of limitations that arise from certain beliefs about God. The extent of subjugation, oppression, bloodshed, and (I would argue) even evil, that has arisen in the name of God, religion, spirituality, and faith is significant and understandably troubling to any rationally minded person.

**Real world examples of perceived benefits.**

As with the rest of this discussion about Suprarational intervention, the entire subject involves scientifically non-provable elements; therefore, the benefits spoken of in this section are posed as resultant from my particular beliefs in those elements rather than any scientific claim that those elements actually exist. As a believer in my personal accountability to a Higher Power for the way I live my life, I have also reaped many benefits. Moreover, over time, my beliefs about God have evolved significantly. While I still believe in God and in my personal accountability to Him for my thoughts, speech, and actions in this life, and while I still believe He reserves mortal and post-mortal punishments for those who defy His will, I no longer harbor the superstitious fears about God that I held as a young man. Moreover, my beliefs about God today focus more on His love, compassion, mercy, and concern for me as His son. I no longer see God as an angry Being out to punish me, but as the consummate Figure of pure love, or charity, who “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in
him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”\textsuperscript{54} and whose consummate “work and …
glory [is] to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.”\textsuperscript{55} While I do believe
God will hold me (and others) accountable for my (and their) choices, I believe that His
doing so is a result of His binding commitment to consistency as part of His undeviating
adherence to Natural Law and His limitless capacity for pure love towards His children
(us), and not because He is out to thrust me headlong into a literal furnace of fire and
brimstone. I believe further that His grand design is to do everything in His power to
guide me toward the blessings and rewards of compliance with Natural Laws (both
physical and spiritual) and to avoid the negative natural consequences of disregarding the
same. I believe that altering my beliefs about God over time in this manner has led to my
receipt of many benefits and blessings in my life. I believe further that one of these
benefits/blessings has been an increased personal qualification for the Suprarational
intervention and aid in my life that I believe God is liberally willing and eager to grant to
me, but for which I must qualify to obtain fuller measures of access thereto.

In the past, what I now view as faulty views of God seemed to have drastically
limited me. In the present, what I view as more mature views of God—views that are
better aligned with the scriptural and theological underpinnings of my denominational
persuasions—have seemed to invite enormous benefits, blessings, and even advantages in
my life. From peace of mind to a wonderful marriage; from greater material prosperity to
a simplified lifestyle and experience, I attribute most of the good things in my life to the
blessings of a Higher Power I choose to exercise faith in, blessings that I believe are
contingent on a concurrent rational acceptance of natural physical laws and a spiritual,

faith-based acquiescence to the existence of God as well as a pursuit of an active relationship with Him and a commitment to honor His laws.

To quote Franklin (1999) again: “God helps those who help themselves.” I am convinced of the truth of Franklin’s words, and therefore, believe God’s blessings in most cases are an amplification of one’s own Self-Leadership effort. Peace of mind, a wonderful marriage, greater material prosperity, and a simplified existence were not free gifts from God to me; I had to do my part, and my part required years, even decades of hard work, careful planning, focused effort, and determined persistence as I waded through many heart rending and sometimes heart breaking trials. Nevertheless, I do believe God amplified my own personal efforts with multiple mercies all along the way.

I am far from being a lone voice in the wilderness on the facet of faith in a Higher Power. Douglass (2003) believed in God. Moreover, he was convinced, even after he learned to read and otherwise became educated, that God was to thank for opening the door of opportunity for him to move to Baltimore where so many other opportunities eventually developed for him. In his narrative, he confesses his belief in God even while acknowledging that to do so may not curry favor among certain circles. As a self-leader, he felt duty-bound to do so to uphold his own self-integrity.

I have ever regarded it (my moving to Baltimore) as the first plain manifestation of that kind providence which has ever attended me, and marked my life with so many favors…. I may be deemed superstitious, and even egotistical, in regarding this event as a special interposition of divine Providence in my favor. But I should be false to the earliest sentiments of my soul, if I suppressed the opinion. I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and incur my own abhorrence. From my earliest recollection, I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me within its foul embrace; and in the darkest hours of my career in slavery, this word of faith and spirit of hope departed not from me, but remained like ministering angels to cheer me through the gloom. This good spirit was from God, and to him I offer thanksgiving and praise. (p. 39)
Perhaps Douglass is merely an outdated example of antiquated piety. Not so. Several contemporary thinkers and scholars in the field of Self-Leadership have likewise confessed their faith. Former atheists, Peck (1997, 1993, 1983, 1978) and Lewis (2001) converted to Christianity and died ardent followers of their respective faiths. Covey (2004, 1990, 1989) was also a lifelong believer and credits God as the source of “correct principles” and “our conscience” (1989, p. 319). He goes on to say:

I believe that to the degree people live by this inspired conscience, they will grow to fulfill their natures; to the degree that they do not, they will not rise above the animal plane. I believe that there are parts to human nature that cannot be reached by either legislation or education, but require the power of God to deal with. I believe that as human beings, we cannot perfect ourselves. To the degree to which we align ourselves with correct principles, divine endowments will be released within our nature in enabling us to fulfill the measure of our creation. In the words of Teilhard de Chardin, “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” (p. 319)

Two of the most prolific professors in the secular field of Self-Leadership, Manz and Neck, have also both been influenced by religion and/or spirituality (see Manz, Manz, Marx, and Neck, 2001, pgs. xiv and 172). For example, Manz has said: “My spiritual background has indeed affected my work” (Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2004, p. 613). He also suggests that adding a spiritual component, or a spiritual “infusion can enrich treatments of Self-Leadership with meaning and purpose and help to address perhaps the most fundamental question: ‘So what if a person becomes an effective self-leader, what is the underlying reason to bother in the first place?’” (Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2004, p. 613).

---

56 “This author team represents Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious heritage. Our ages span the thirties, forties, and fifties. Among us, we have been active in religious life in all regions of the United States, from the East Coast to the Pacific Northwest, and the Desert Southwest to the Deep South” (Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2001, p. 172).
Manz and Neck have also both written about work and leadership from a religious and/or spiritual perspective. “In the late 1990s, [Manz] made a conscious choice to expand [his] focus and began to look more at issues such as physiology and spirituality” (Manz writing in Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2004, p. 612). His choice bore professional (and no doubt personal) fruit when, in the late 1990s, he published a book entitled *The Leadership Wisdom of Jesus: Practical Lessons for Today* (Manz, 2011 [3rd edition]; Manz, 2005; Manz, 1998). A few years later, *Manz* and Neck co-authored a book with two other authors (see Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2001) and an article (see Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2004) relating the wisdom of the Biblical King Solomon to the workplace. Neck, who reported questioning “may of the beliefs [he] was taught and thought [he] believed” (Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2004, p. 619) describes how this particular book project answered some of his questions about his own faith as well as helped him learn more about others views thereby increasing his own sense of religious tolerance.

Doing the research necessary for writing this book (e.g., reading the Bible and reading books and articles explaining these readings) helped me to begin to answer many of the questions I was having about my faith. For the first time in my life, I really read the Bible as opposed to skimming it or reading second-hand accounts of the stories in the Old Testament…. This project served as an organizing medium to question my faith, explore it further, and ponder the future. Although I still do not feel I have all the answers regarding my faith, writing this book has helped me to view things differently, be more tolerant of other views, and see many things in a new light. (p. 619)

Then there is the thoughtful poetry of Peck (1997), a popular proponent of Self-Leadership concepts, who also makes significant attributions to Suprarational intervention in the miracles he observed in the lives of many of his patients (Peck, 1978) as well as his own Self-Leadership and spiritual journey.
It’s been a great trip together,  
Hasn’t it, Lord? (p. 288).

You’ve been so good to me (p. 289)…

And I knew  
You were behind it all (p. 290)…

I cannot imagine  
Anything  
I could ever have done  
To deserve  
Such kindness (p. 291)…

It was You who planted in me the seed—  
This burning thirst for the Real (p. 292)…

In the end,  
All things point to you (p. 302)…

We take some credit, but again  
We know You have helped us  
In all we have achieved (p. 303)…

Thank you for letting me know  
That it is You  
Who are the name of the game (p. 306).

Finally, as this is an autoethnographic study, I add to these statements a  
declaration of my own faith-based convictions. Much of my interest in Self-Leadership  
was initially roused through the active and regular practice of religion and/or the search  
for spirituality in my life. Yet religious and spiritual pursuits, like many other  
meaningful, or potentially meaningful, journeys in life, are often like a two-edged sword.  
On many occasions, active efforts toward religiosity and spirituality on my part joined  
forces with my obsessive-compulsive disorder and nascent understanding of life and the  
world around me to spawn an undeniably bitter cocktail. I have metaphorically  
consumed many such beverages along many lonely walks with God, walks for which I
was often uncertain whether God was there, or had utterly abandoned me. On the other hand, I have also found much aid and strength through the process of prayer, including countless answers thereto and undeniable guidance, comfort, and direction there from.\textsuperscript{57} Religious practices and spiritual pursuits have also instilled desirable character traits into my personality such as discipline, loyalty, humility, courage, integrity, and faith. While I remain far from perfect, I cannot deny that religious practice and spiritual searching has wonderfully benefitted, and continues to positively influence and impact, my life.

Such professions of faith do not prove anything in the divine realm with scientific or visual\textsuperscript{58} certainty. Nevertheless, they do represent powerful testimonials of real people who have thought real thoughts and felt real feelings. While one cannot scientifically prove the veracity of such visceral experiences, one also cannot scientifically disprove them either. Thus you cannot refute a person’s testimony regarding spiritual or emotional experiences, even if you believe it to be fanciful or false. They require the discernment of “the higher faculties of man” (Schumacher, 1977, p. 134). For this reason, I consider spiritual and religious influences a legitimate variable affecting (as a limitation and/or a benefit) one’s Self-Leadership Efficacy, and suggest that these influences provide us as human beings with opportunities to tap into what Schumacher (1977) refers to as “the higher faculties of man” (p. 134).

I include this section on Suprarational intervention not because I can prove it exists, but because it is a widely accepted verity that many self-leaders do have mental, emotional, and visceral experiences that they attribute to a Higher Power. Whether these

\textsuperscript{57} For more information on scholarly research on the benefits of prayer, please see Denny (2011), Kiyani, Mohammadi, and Pourahmad (2011), and Krause, Chatters, Meltzer and Morgan (2000).

\textsuperscript{58} Although many religionist over the centuries claim to have seen visions of Deity, angels, or other supernatural beings and/or been privy to supernatural communications. (e.g., Muhammad, Joan of Arc, and Joseph Smith, to name a few).
experiences originate in the viscera or the heavens is not the primary point of this treatise; the point is that such experiences do occur and influence many self-leaders around the Globe. Moreover, it seems to not be uncommon for an individual with a high level of interest in Self-Leadership to take a corresponding high level of interest in spirituality and/or religiosity, as evidenced by the dual interest in these subjects among some of the most visible and august writers and thinkers on the subject of Self-Leadership. There are, however, undoubtedly many exceptions to this presumed parallel.

**Variable 13: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation introduces his famous hierarchy of human needs. The needs identified by his theory (i.e., physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization needs) were organized in a hierarchy, with physiological needs being the most primal, followed by safety, love, esteem, and finally self-actualization needs. He explained that, “human needs arrange themselves in hierarchies of prepotency. That is to say, the appearance of one need usually rests on the prior satisfaction of another, more pre-potent need” (p. 370). He further explained that once a given need has been satisfied, “at once other (and ‘higher’) needs emerge and these, rather than [the lower needs] dominate the organism” (p. 375).

A big question facing the field of Self-Leadership as it relates to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs is this: On what level of Maslow’s hierarchy might we find the desire, or human need, to improve Self-Leadership Efficacy? In other words, what needs must be met prior to the development of a desire to become a more effective self-leader?

I posit two divergent answers to this question. The first and more obvious possible answer might be that the need (desire) to enhance one’s Self-Leadership
Efficacy would naturally fall among needs higher up Maslow’s spectrum, most likely in the space between the *esteem* needs and *self-actualization* needs. Of the *esteem needs*, Maslow (1943) says,

> Satisfaction of the self-esteem needs leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give rise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends. (p. 382)

In light of this statement, it seems reasonable to assume that the fullest flowering of human interest in Self-Leadership Efficacy is likely to occur *after* one experiences “feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world” (p. 382), and *before* one discovers fully “what he is fitted for” (p. 382), which Maslow (1943) describes as *self-actualization*.59 The development of Self-Leadership Efficacy is, I would argue, a critical component of both meeting the *esteem* needs and of attaining *self-actualization*. It follows then that a person is less likely to engage fully in Self-Leadership oriented planning and action if they have not first been properly fed, clothed, loved, and self-assured. With those basic needs met, it would seem that the mental and physical energy to look inward toward self-improvement and development would increase dramatically.

The second possible answer is that the need (desire) for Self-Leadership Efficacy falls just a little bit lower down the spectrum, perhaps falling somewhere below the *esteem* needs and amidst the *love* needs. If a person is basically fed and safe, and has at least some basic love in one’s life (even if it is just authentic self-love), I posit that the need (desire) for Self-Leadership Efficacy has the potential to begin germinating.

---

59 “A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately happy. What a man can be, he must be. This need we may call self-actualization” (Maslow, 1943, p. 382).
Generally speaking, the need (desire) for Self-Leadership Efficacy is not likely to fall much below this point on the hierarchy, for obvious reasons, which are well documented by Maslow himself.

For the man who is extremely and dangerously hungry, no other interests exist but food. He dreams food, he remembers food, he thinks about food, he emotes only about food, he perceives only food and he wants only food.... For our chronically and extremely hungry man, Utopia can be defined as a place where there is plenty of food. He tends to think that, if only he is guaranteed food for the rest of his life, he will be perfectly happy and will never want anything more. Life itself tends to be defined in terms of eating. Anything else will be defined as unimportant. Freedom, love, community feeling, respect, philosophy, [Self-Leadership Efficacy], may all be waved aside as fripperies which are useless since they fail to fill the stomach. Such a man may fairly be said to live by bread alone. (p. 374)

Maslow (1943), however, also highlights the relativity of a term such as hunger, which ought to be taken into account, especially in developed countries.

In most ... societies, chronic extreme hunger of the emergency type is rare, rather than common. In any case, this is still true in the United States. The average American citizen is experiencing appetite rather than hunger when he says “I am hungry.” He is apt to experience sheer life-and-death hunger only by accident and then only a few times through his entire life. (p. 374-375)

There is a world of difference between being “hungry” or “thirsty” as an “average American citizen” (p. 374), and being hungry or thirsty as a starving refugee in the Horn of Africa. For the latter population, Maslow’s words must be taken at face value.

Without physical nourishment, how could a person who was literally starving to death possibly take an iota of interest in anything else but food? It is usually a different story for the former population here in America. While poverty is alive and well in America, it is usually a different kind of poverty than that which exists in developing countries.

While there are, no doubt, some Americans who may literally be physically starving to death, such examples are few and far between, and in almost all cases, such persons have
some recourse (such as government aid [i.e. food stamps] homeless shelters, or emergency rooms) where they can find some means of basic subsistence. Furthermore, it is not uncommon for individuals and families who live below the poverty line in America to possess items such as a place to live (however modest), an automobile, a television, a microwave, and other modern devices of convenience and/or entertainment. Individual and familial situations differ widely, of course, but the fact remains that the average American in poverty has better access to food, housing, and modern conveniences and entertainment devices than the average poverty-stricken citizens of developing countries. For example, according to the United States Census Bureau, in 2010, a family of five (mother, father, two children, and a great-aunt) that made less than $26,675 a year would qualify as residing in poverty. That means that a family earning $26,000 a year would still be considered impoverished (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). While $26,000 a year for five people will not purchase many luxuries, and will require the family to live on a tight budget, money is available to cover basic housing, food, and other basic needs, and probably some modest wants as well. Impoverished persons in developing countries would not possess the same buying power as their American counterparts.

Because of the safety nets I have had access to through my family (immediate and extended) and my church, I have never considered myself to have lived below the poverty level; however, in 2005 (the year I incorporated my business), my total income was only $2,536.70, which placed me well below the poverty line for that year. I

---

60 Jordan Jensen’s personal journal (Income Records).
61 According to Federal Poverty Line Guidelines (see ABC for Health, Inc., 2010, URL: http://www.safetyweb.org/fpl.php) the federal poverty level for one person in 2012 is $11,170. Adjusting for inflation, this would put the 2005 FPL at about $9,509.93, $6,973.23 short of the poverty threshold (using CPI Inflation Calculator located online at URL: http://146.142.4.24/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl?cost1=11%2C170&year1=2012&year2=2005). In 2005, I was more than just poor; I was broke.
blame no one other than myself for this because it was my decision to try to launch my own business when I had no other source of income. In hindsight, this was not an entirely wise decision. Nevertheless, my paltry income for the year did technically place me far below the poverty line. The consequences of this lasted for many years after 2005. For example, the totality of my debt accrued during this period of time was not finally paid back in full until May 2012.

In the following vignette, I describe the difficulties I faced in the years following my 2005 dip below the poverty line in terms of income. In doing so, I do not wish to insinuate that my experiences are directly applicable to everyone who has ever faced financial malaise. Rather, I desire to illustrate two specific points that Maslow (1943) makes clear. The first is that there is a difference between bona fide “hunger” and “appetite” (p. 374) since “in most of the known societies, chronic hunger of the emergency type is rare, rather than common” (p. 374). Hence, “anyone who attempts to make an emergency picture into a typical one, and who will measure all of man’s goals and desires by his behavior during extreme physiological deprivation is certainly being blind to many things” (p. 375). The second point is that Maslow’s (1943) “hierarchy … is not … rigid … [and] in actual fact, most members of our society who are normal, are partially satisfied in all their basic needs and partially unsatisfied in all their basic needs at the same time” (p. 386, 388). Therefore, “a more realistic description of the hierarchy would be in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up the hierarchy of prepotency” (p. 388); a given need does not need to “be satisfied 100 per cent before the next need emerges” (p. 388). As a result, an individual can be working to fulfill a higher need even before a lower need has been entirely satisfied. Moreover, as my own
experiences illustrated for me, the desire of fulfilling a higher need (such as Self-Leadership Efficacy, esteem, and actualization) can actually create a tremendous motivation to work hard to better satisfy any and/or all needs lower down on the spectrum, as will be illustrated in the following vignette.

**Real world example: From my life.**

I have some personal experience with being “hungry” as an American, illustrated by a couple of experiences. Once in college, I was, like a lot of other college students, *broke*. I was going to school full-time with a heavy load of courses (18+ credit hours). I was also competing on the school’s cross-country team. I had a part-time job building shelves with my older brothers, but my work hours and income were limited. I had a couple of credit cards; both had $300 spending limits. One day after a hard workout with the cross-country team, I proceeded from the far western side of the campus (where the athletic facilities were located) to the far eastern side of the campus where one of my evening courses was held. To get there, I had to walk a fair distance, including up six or seven flights of stairs. Hungry after my workout, I decided to stop and buy a burger and some fries from one of the campus eateries. I eagerly awaited the chance to sink my teeth into some sustenance to replenish my depleted energy. When it came time to pay, I pulled out one of my credit cards; it was denied. Somewhat embarrassed, I pulled out my other credit card to complete the purchase; it also was denied. I did not have a third credit card, nor was there any cash in my wallet. No money; no food. That’s the way it works. I backed away from the counter as I watched the already prepared burger and fries do likewise in the opposite direction. With my proverbial tail between my legs, I felt too sorry for myself to even be unduly embarrassed. If my bank account had plenty
of money in it, then I may have been more embarrassed than I was, but it didn’t; I was broke; that was my clear and pressing reality, and I just felt genuinely bad that I was temporarily unable to procure the desired burger and fries which, already prepared, was now headed into the garbage instead of into my stomach.

On another occasion, several years later, I was again completely strapped financially. I was working as a grounds keeper at a property owned by my Church for $11 per hour. The year before, I had come dangerously close to declaring individual bankruptcy. I had chosen to forego that route for two reasons. First, my sense of integrity compelled me to avoid that route if at all possible. Second, after meeting with a lawyer to discuss my bankruptcy options, I discovered that I was unable to afford the legal fees required by the law firm to draw up the necessary documentation even if I had opted to so declare! I was drowning in a sea of debt, and was struggling to pay my rent and other living expenses. The previous year I had come dangerously close to being evicted and having my car repossessed, and had even received financial assistance from my Church to cover significant portions of my rent a couple of times. I was in between paychecks and pretty much out of food. I’ll never forget the Sunday night before a new week started when I knew I was going to be short on food before I got my next paycheck. I can recall my devoted and caring girlfriend (now my wife) lovingly going through her kitchen cupboards in her college dorm room to fill up a grocery sack up for me with some basic dry foods (e.g. instant oatmeal). My journal entry the following day reads thus:

**Monday, October 8, 2007**

I am a nervous freaking wreck tonight. I feel kinda like I’m losing my mind. I have $1.54 in my checking account. The ——— money still hasn’t come in. I

---

62 This was *not* the worst scenario my checking account and I had ever faced. Previously, I had bounced perhaps a dozen or more checks to enter the “red” in my checking account. The challenge of maintaining a
may not get any money from ——— 64 until October 23rd. I have been eating oatmeal with water and instant mashed potatoes that Lina gave me for food. I also have a loaf of bread, which may be [my roommates], but I am eating it [anyway]. I called ——— for an appointment with the Bishop tomorrow night [for financial assistance] and the Bishop isn’t going to be there tomorrow night. I don’t know what I am going to do now. I get about $300 on Friday from [work]. I suppose that maybe I can wait until then…eating oatmeal and fake potatoes…but gas, I need gas. I can’t make it to work all week without gas.

In sharing these two experiences, I do not desire to blow my basic needs at this period of time out of proportion. The facts are that I had multiple safety nets from literally starving, or otherwise being unable to satisfy my basic physiological needs. I recognize that not all members of developed societies have the kind of ample safety nets I have been blessed with. Aside from governmental support, which I’ve never pursued or received, I had my girlfriend, my immediate family, my extended family, and my church, all of whom I could go to in times of desperation; and in more than one case during my most difficult financial years of 2006-2007, immediate and extended family members, and my Church did bail me out when I could no longer make ends meet. Moreover, even if all these layers of safety had failed me, I could have, as an American citizen, sought assistance from public charity or the government. My physiological needs, therefore, were ultimately met, but my sense of pride in my own self-reliance took a big hit, which in turn left my esteem needs wanting.

My purpose in sharing this vignette is to emphasize that despite the struggle I was having with meeting my basic needs during this penurious period of my past, I more

---

simple “black” balance plagued me continually for many years. This was a result of a consistently inconsistent (and meager) income combined with poor Self-Leadership in managing my finances. While not a spendthrift, I was often guilty of allowing my emotions to trump the logic of basic budgetary constraints. Fortunately, this trend was nearing its end in the fall of 2007, as I was on the cusp of finally obtaining a consistent stream of professional-wage income. Moreover, the following year I married a woman who was as effective at managing finances as I been mediocre.

63 Money for services I had recently rendered at a public high school.

64 Another client for which I had rendered services, but was still awaiting remuneration.
closely resembled what Maslow referred to as a hungry American than I did a person in
danger of literally starving to death. Regardless of my temporary struggle to procure
food, I was certainly not starving, and this fact left open the possibility of a concurrent
focus on continuing to rise in my Self-Leadership Efficacy in an effort to eventually find
success, and therefore enjoy the rewarding feelings of self-satisfaction that come from
being self-reliant in meeting my basic needs and continuing upward in a personal and
professional trajectory from that point. I wanted to successfully transcend my miserable
financial situation; it was miserable being broke. Despite the multiple safety nets that I
technically could have turned to (and sometimes had to turn to), I did not want to live that
way any longer than was absolutely necessary. I yearned to be self-supportive. I wanted
to be free to live my life fully through taking advantage of the opportunities and blessings
that stem from financial independence as well as personal and professional success.

My story is not particularly unique in America. Many people have struggled to
make ends meet, and then, through the effective exercise of Self-Leadership, created
noteworthy results for themselves over time. One widely visible example from
Hollywood is the actor Jim Carrey. Carrey was famously homeless and living in his car
prior to getting his big “break.” Of course, as Carrey would rightly note, his big “break”
came after years of self-led effort, sacrifice, struggle, and positive visualization of where
he ultimately wanted to be.

In sharing these experiences, I recognize that my experiences are not precisely
applicable to others who have faced what, from an external perspective, might seem to be
similar situations to mine. This is true for at least three reasons. First, no two self-
leaders’ life experiences are precisely the same. Second, it is unlikely that two different
self-leaders possess precisely the same percentages of met (and unmet) needs on Maslow’s theoretical hierarchy. Third, it is unlikely that two different self-leaders have developed the precise level of Self-Leadership Efficacy as each other. Furthermore, it should be noted that this vignette affirms Maslow’s hypothesis that when certain basic needs (physiological, safety, love, and esteem) have been consistently met over time in a person’s life, that person is well equipped to face temporary “hunger” (aka “appetite”).

It is precisely those individuals in whom a certain need has always been satisfied who are best equipped to tolerate deprivation of that need in the future…. People who have been satisfied in their basic needs throughout their lives, particularly in their earlier years, seem to develop exceptional power to withstand present or future thwarting of these needs simply because they have strong, healthy character structure as a result of basic satisfaction. (Maslow, 1943, p. 375, 387-388)

Having been blessed to be born in circumstances where all my basic (and many of my more advanced) needs were amply met as an infant, toddler, child, adolescent, and young adult, I was better equipped to face the financial difficulties that arose in my life than many other self-leaders may have been. Not wanting to brag about my fortunate early life experiences, but with a desire to maintain fidelity to the facts, I was, and am, because of my upbringing, one of what Maslow (1943) calls “the ‘strong’ people” (p. 388). These are the people,

Who can easily weather disagreement or opposition, who can swim against the stream of public opinion and who can stand up for the truth at great personal cost. It is just the ones who have loved and been well loved, and who have had many deep friendships who can hold out against hatred, rejection or persecution. (p. 388)

While I have achieved significant success in winning the battles I have waged in life, it should be noted that I went into those life battles reasonably well equipped in terms of having had my basic (and many higher) needs met for most of my life. Furthermore, I also confronted these personal battles (both internal and external in
nature) having had a depth, breadth, and quality of education in things related to Self-Leadership that was unusual to say the least. This is an important disclaimer on my part because in sharing the various anecdotes that make up my scholarly personal narrative (Nash, 2004), I do not wish to make the claim that everyone ought to be able to achieve the same success (in degree and kind) that I have realized in my own life’s journey if they will only pull themselves up by their bootstraps and be better self-leaders. In truth, some self-leaders will never possess the right mix of variables to match some of the successes I’ve enjoyed in life. Just as truly, I will never possess the right mix of variables to match some of the successes that other self-leaders have enjoyed in their lives. This is okay because the goal of Self-Leadership is not, and should not be to be better than another self-leader. Rather, the ultimate goal of Self-Leadership is to become one’s personal best, or to realize one’s full personal potential, and each self-leader’s potential is uniquely determined by one’s unique Self-Leadership variable formula.

It is my desire that this conversation implicitly draw attention to the incalculable importance of parenting, teaching, mentoring, and all other productive activities aimed at helping adults, and especially children and adolescents, to properly meet all needs on the spectrum, and especially the basic physiological, safety, and love needs. Maslow (1943) goes so far as to suggest that in order to create the “frustration tolerance” (p. 388) that tends to be present in “the ‘strong’ people” (p. 388),

It seems probable that the most important [need] gratifications come in the first two years of life. That is to say, people who have been made secure and strong in the earliest years, tend to remain secure and strong thereafter in the face of whatever threatens. (p. 388)

This is not to suggest that those whose basic needs were largely neglected as an infant, toddler, child, or adolescent have no hope for the future. Indeed, ample anecdotal
evidence exists of those who have transcended early losses through later development and gains. It should merely suggest that missing out on proper care during the early years tends to create and/or exacerbate certain psychosocial and other developmental problems and issues that could have been either avoided or minimized had the initial care been present. Whatever credit I may merit for my own Self-Leadership achievements, a commensurate portion (and likely an even greater proportion) of credit must rightfully go to the many persons (i.e., God, parents, siblings, extended family, teachers, mentors, spiritual leaders, et cetera) who have helped to fill my needs in connection with continually teaching and mentoring me in the art and science of Self-Leadership Efficacy.

**Variable 14: Intelligence & talent.**

According to Goleman (1995) “some argue that IQ [unlike EQ] cannot be changed and so represents an unbendable limitations on a child’s life potential” (p. 83-84). This argument suggests that a self-leader’s potential for conceptual intelligence is largely inborn. The same concept may be true of talent as well. It is no enigma that we are not all born with the innate intellectual gifts and capacity of an Aristotle, Galileo, or Hawking; nor do many of us enter the World with the outlying natural talents of a Shakespeare, Mozart, or Michael Jordan—no matter how hard we try, or how efficacious our Self-Leadership may be. As such, variable 14, *intelligence and talent*, posits that some self-leaders are naturally more intelligent and/or talented in given areas than others, and will therefore possess more natural potential in those areas than others.
Examples of the limitations and benefits of intelligence and talent: From my life.

All self-leaders possess natural proclivities toward certain forms of intelligence and talents over other forms; I certainly do. For example, intellectually, I am naturally much stronger in English, history, philosophy, and theology than I am in mathematics, science, music, computer technology, machinery, and electronics. Moreover, talent wise, I have far more potential as a writer and runner than I do as a musician or a machinist. While it is true that I have spent much more time writing and playing sports than I have learning to play musical instruments and/or fix things, I did so purposely because writing and athletics came easier to me naturally; I therefore found greater success as a writer and athlete. I also found those pursuits more naturally rewarding than others I possessed less talent for.

All self-leaders possess innate strengths and weaknesses in terms of their in-born proclivities toward intelligence and talent. For example, I greatly struggled with mathematics in high school; I took algebra one three years in a row from grade eight to 10. My ongoing efforts did help me to improve (I went from getting D-grades the first two years to getting B-grades and even one A-grade my third year). On the other hand, I had a gift for history and writing. The same year I took algebra one for the third time, I enrolled in advanced placement (A.P.) American history as a sophomore and passed the test with a four (out of a possible five). This ended up earning me five free history credits in college. My wife, on the other hand, is a mechanical engineer, and was far more gifted than me in mathematics and the sciences. In fact her favorite subject in high school was algebra one! She went on to take A.P. calculus, score A’s, and pass the A.P. test). Different folks, different (academic) cloaks.
While the exercise of one’s Self-Leadership will to work hard can help to strengthen a person’s natural capacity for intellect and/or talent, self-leaders cannot simply accomplish anything they set their minds to, as some proponents of positive thinking may implicitly (or explicitly) suggest, through hard work alone. The Self-Leadership variables intelligence and talent also play a significant role in the ultimate results we all get in life.

**Variable 15: Desire**

*Limitations, benefits, & real life examples of desire (or lack thereof).*

No self-leader will achieve long-term growth and higher levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy if they lack the desire for that growth, or at bare minimum, the desire to desire it. Desire is the natural ingredient that propels self-leaders to action. While one may temporarily will oneself to act in the absence of desire, desire remains a critical component of sustaining permanent Self-Leadership action in the long run. The degree to which a self-leader does (or does not) want to grow or develop in their own Self-Leadership Efficacy, will largely determine their results. Despite this truism, we are left to ponder the almost mystical enigma found in the questions: what is desire, and what creates it? Why do some self-leaders want to grow, develop, and improve more than others, even if they have what appears to be parallel (or in some cases superior) opportunities, resources, and privileges? Finally, can something be done to generate desire where there is none?

I am often mystified at the sizable gaps separating different human beings in terms of their desire to grow personally and rise in their Self-Leadership Efficacy. Even
more troubling to me is the recognition of certain gaps in my own desire for Self-Leadership growth. I am not a perfect self-leader, and I confess that sometimes my desire to make a necessary and desirable Self-Leadership change for my own betterment is wanting. In such instances, it seems as though the best I can do is to desire after the desire, or in other words, to want to want.

Desire is perhaps the most elusive and enigmatic element and variable of Self-Leadership. How desire itself is created, and why it comes when it comes (or why it doesn’t when it doesn’t)—and to whom—is not always clearly explicable. So far, I have only been able to incompletely comprehend how one can instill it in oneself if it is not there, or why one person clamors after personal growth as desperately as they seek air, food, and water, while another person seems perpetually content to wend their way through life tottering along pathways of least resistance that inevitably lead to existential mediocrity, desiring only to meet their basic physiological needs and/or satisfy their base, hedonistic inclinations along the way. The easy answer is found in Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs. Obviously, if a person’s basic needs are not being met, that person is not likely to desire to work and strive to fulfill needs higher up the pyramid. But it is more complicated than that because some people whose basic needs are wonderfully met still lack the desire to pay the price required to reach higher levels of Self-Leadership Efficacy.

If someone were to say to me: I have no desire to take initiative in my own Self-Leadership; how can I gain a desire? [,] I would feel less equipped to help them than with just about any other Self-Leadership query or issue. Furthermore, I know of zero research to date that has been explicitly conducted on desire as it relates specifically to
Self-Leadership. The closest thing that can be found is the connection that Neck and Manz (2010) make between Self-Leadership and *intrinsic motivation theory* (p. 5) and *internal locus of control* (p. 136). Moreover, I know of no scientific study seeking to explicitly address *why* one self-leader has an innately greater (or lesser) internal locus of control than another (especially if and/or when the external variables for the subjects being compared are similar) much less how one can instill such motivation or inner drive where it does not already innately exist.

One of my favorite movies is *The King’s Speech* (Hooper, 2010). This film cinematized the experiences of Albert of the House of Windsor (King George VI) of England as he worked with a lay speech therapist named Lionel Logue to overcome a profound speech impediment. George VI, the father of England’s present day Queen (Elizabeth II), eventually overcame his stutter to go down in history as one of the more historically visible and memorable monarchs in the history of the British Empire. A historical irony exists, however, in the monarchial ascent of *The Duke of York* (as he was known prior to his coronation) because he was not originally supposed to be King. His older brother Edward (*The Prince of Wales*) was ahead of Albert in line for the throne, to which he expectedly ascended upon the death of his father, King Edward V, in 1936. Only 41 years old at the time, Edward had the health and life expectancy to serve as England’s King for decades, but it did not turn out that way. Within a year of his coronation, Edward voluntarily abdicated the throne to marry the divorced American, Wallis Simpson.

*Why* did King Edward VIII (1894-1972) desire to relinquish his responsibilities, power, and influence as King while The Duke of York (King George VI, 1895-1952),
desired to square his shoulders to the political duties thrust upon him unexpectedly? The obvious—and simple answer—of course, is that Edward valued marrying Wallis Simpson more than he valued the Kingship, but this explanation fails to answer the question: why did Edward value marrying Wallis Simpson more than he did his kingly duties and the concomitant opportunities his position afforded him? Perhaps Edward himself would have been unable to generate a cogent response to this query beyond the generic statement: I just did. So it is with all of us. While some may be able to provide robust and detailed explanations for why they do or do not possess desire for something, others may be utterly incapable of explicating a why behind their desires (or lack thereof).

We can turn to Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs and other motivational theories to conceptualize a general context of human motivation, but such theories do not adequately explain why there is such disparity of motivation (desire) among different human beings, or how it can be fundamentally germinated and/or bolstered in the inherently unmotivated.

Based on lessons I have learned from examining my own Autoethnography, and the combined research and thought I have dedicated to questions surrounding the issue of desire, I have come to the conclusion that desire itself, as an independent, metaphysical force, is not, nor can it be, created; rather desire simply is, or is not. Moreover, it does not begin as itself—an actual desire—but rather as a seed of itself (potential desire). Whether or not a self-leader has the seedlings of desire for something, or is willing to plant such a seedling, for a given thing, ability, skill, trait, or state depends on the self-leader. Some seedlings of desire, it seems, occur naturally within a given self-leader, and tend to likewise develop naturally over time. Others, it seems, must be proactively
planted therein, and then subsequently cultivated and nurtured with great care over time if the desire is to grow.

Planting a seed of desire in one’s mind and/or heart can be likened to desiring to have a desire, or in other words, wanting to want. This desire to have a desire is where all desire, that does not already naturally or spontaneously occur, begins. How then does one go about planting a seed of desire in one’s mind and heart where it does not already naturally exist? They key, I have found, is to take action in the absence of desire. Such action requires the conscious, disciplined, and proactive exercise of the will (S-L variable 16) to take action even when one does not feel like (does not desire) to act. To employ a floral metaphor, if you are going to get a flower (desire) you must first plan a seed (a desire to have a desire). Then you must nurture and cultivate (take action) that seed (desire) by willing yourself to take action (e.g., watering, fertilizing, pruning, ensuring access to sunlight) whether you desire to water, fertilize, prune, and ensure access to sunlight or not. If you do not plant the seed (desire for a desire) of that flower (desire) below the surface, you will never get a flower (desire) to grow above the surface. A mere seedling of desire is a sufficient place to start, but neither I nor anyone else can do anything to help the person who lacks the seedling, or who refuses to plant it in oneself.

An example of action fueling desire where there initially was none is illustrated by the out-of-shape self-leader who despises physical exercise, but harbors at least the desire to despise it a little less. Going to work out for the first several times is likely to be sheer misery for such a person. Over time, however, if the person is persistent, consistent, open-minded, coachable, and creative, he or she may come to not only
discover a workout regimen that is *not so bad after all*, but in time, may even come to enjoy exercising to the point of craving it.

In addition to exercising one’s Self-Leadership *will* to take action in the absence of desire, I believe there is one other method to help get a seed of desire to germinate. This other method involves invoking the grace of a Higher Power through prayer.\(^6\) In my view, desire represents, at least in part, a Suprarational (*S-L Variable 12*) gift from God. If one harbors the desire to generate a desire they do not currently have, they can (if they will) turn to a Higher Power and request it as a free gift from Deity. I have discovered in my own Self-Leadership experiences that diligently and repeatedly petitioning a Higher Power over time for such a desire, where I currently lack the same, can empower the seedlings of that desire to begin to sprout and grow, and perhaps over time, to even flourish and mature. The usefulness of this practice has been demonstrated countless times by successful practitioners of the Alcoholics Anonymous *12-Step Program*,\(^6\) as well as a myriad spiritual and religious-minded groups and individuals.

Why, you may ask, would a self-leader want to want something he or she does not already naturally want? The answer is because the acquisition of knowledge may convince a self-leader that it is in one’s benefit to alter one’s behavior over time in order to obtain certain *states of being* and/or break counterproductive habits that are presently limiting, or even binding. For example, smokers, alcoholics, drug addicts, and any other kind of “addicts” usually do not *naturally* desire to curtail their addictive behaviors.

\(^6\) Atheists, agnostics, et cetera, would most likely not *desire or choose* to take this step. Since this is an autoethnographic study of my own life’s experiences, I am merely chronicling what works (and has worked) for me in the past.

\(^6\) While not an explicitly religious or spiritual program, and certainly non-denominational, typical 12-Step Programs for addiction recoveries are riddled with references to one’s need to involve a Higher Power in one’s recovery, and emphasize the individual self-leader’s incapacity to overcome one’s addiction *by oneself*. 
Rather, they usually naturally desire to continue in such habits because of the pleasant, short-term, sensual payoffs of using tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, drugs, or other addictive substances or materials. A person generally does not terminate use of such substances because they are no longer desirable; a person generally begins the process of terminating use because the acquisition of added knowledge and perspective empowers one with a recognition of the negative long-term consequences to one’s relationships, careers, and personal lives that stem from using the substances. Such perspective may be sufficient for one to at least desire the desire to stop, even though one does not presently want to stop. Then, by taking specific action steps, involving the assistance of others as needed, and, if desired, invoking the assistance of a Higher Power, that person may, over time, get to the point where they no longer desire to use the addictive substances or materials, whereas they began by merely wanting to want to stop. Now, they actually want to stop.

This is a powerful principle because it presents the possibility of planting a seed of desire before an actual desire exists. The seed, represented by one’s desire to want, is sufficient to begin cultivating and nurturing the seed until it begins to sprout, grow, and perhaps eventually flourish and mature to eventually fill the measure of its creation to help a self-leader on his or her journey toward Self-Transcendence.

To clarify this philosophical jargon, consider the following example from my personal life. At this present moment in my life, my desire to eat healthy in an effort to promote a healthy lifestyle as evidenced by low blood pressure, low cholesterol,67 et cetera, is not stellar. I do, however, want to desire to eat more healthily. Moreover, I know that doing so will promote my holistic well being by giving me more energy

---

67 I recently applied for a life insurance policy. It ended up being more expensive than I had anticipated due to my blood-work indicating I have developed a higher cholesterol than is healthy for a man my age—proof positive that I need to make some changes in my diet.
perhaps prolonging my physical life. While the thoughts of cutting out some of my cherished fast food, soda pop, and other junk food “delectable’s” are not as presently appealing to me as I wish they were, I have begun to take some tangible steps to nurture this seed of desire. For example, I have begun to utilize prayer, positive affirmations, and greater discipline in choosing what I eat for a given snack or meal. Moreover, I recently recommitted myself to my ongoing goal to qualify for the Boston Marathon. This decision has focused my efforts on getting into better shape and dropping some of those “extra pounds.” My guess is that I am in for a long, drawn-out process that will last the rest of my life for which I will have varying degrees of success in pursuing, but this much I do know: I am not a helpless victim of my less-than-stellar habits. Even if I lack the innate desire to achieve a goal, change a behavior, or overcome a weakness, there are still tangible action steps I can take to plant the seeds of that desire. Moreover, there are further action steps I can do to cultivate and nurture that seed over time, which, if I will remain consistent and persistent, will eventually grow and strengthen into genuine desire over time. This knowledge is greatly empowering to me.

In summary, desire is a relatively enigmatic and seemingly elusive phenomenon whose seeds possess an unknown genesis. Perhaps the seeds of desire themselves are not created; they simply are. While we do not know how the seeds of desire are created, we do know that one can consciously and intentionally plant the seeds of desire in one’s mind and heart. Next, a person who does not have desire must begin by wanting to desire. This desiring to want is evidence that one has at least chosen to plant a seed of desire in one’s heart. Thus one begins by merely desiring to desire (by wanting to want) whereby one proactively chooses to plant a seed of desire in one’s mind and heart, and
perhaps petitions a Higher Power to simultaneously sow it in one’s soul. Once a self-leader has planted this seed of desire in one’s hearts, one can begin to nurture it through one’s actions. Self-leaders can also choose to supplicate a Higher Power for supernal support and celestial assistance along the way. If self-leaders continue acting on their desires to desire (planting the seed) persistently over time, the desire itself will virtually always grow. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, “That which we persist in doing becomes easier [and I would argue, more desirable], not that the nature of the thing has changed, but our ability [and desire] to do has increased” (Covey, 2004, p. 335). While Emerson speaks here of task difficulty rather than task pleasure, my experiences suggest that task proficiency lends itself toward task pleasure, which makes for a self-evident connection between the two. I suggest that just as action has the tendency to enhance one’s aptitude or capacity, action likewise has the tendency to cause a seed of desire to sprout where there initially was none (desire), or very little. When one’s ability increases, one’s task proficiency increases; and when one’s task proficiency increases, one’s desire to engage in the task is usually augmented correspondingly. I have found that just as persistence in a task makes the task easier, persistence in a task also bolsters one’s desire to engage in the task itself. Therefore, if a self-leader does not want, but they at least want to want, then they can exercise their will to do until that seed of desire begins to germinate, and then grow, and then flourish, and finally mature fully.

Self-leaders may discover that they may have to do (take action) for quite some time before a seed of desire finally sprouts (before authentic desire is germinated). As such, I encourage self-leaders to avoid the temptation of giving up prematurely. If I

---

68 My thoughts on this subject have been influenced by the Prophet Alma’s discourse on faith in Alma Chapter 32. (The Book of Mormon, 1981/2008, p. 288-291).
made my decision to continue (or not) running/training after that first week based on how I felt the first few days back, you can probably guess what I would decide every time.

Some of the world’s greatest self-leaders were those who most strongly desired to accomplish a desired end, and were absolutely committed to seeing their desire realized, come what may in terms of trials and adversity, and even lapses of desire, along the way. Whether we reflect on Gandhi’s desire for Indian independence, Shakespeare’s desire to write, or Michael Jordan’s desire to win NBA Championships, high achievers seem to possess an extraordinary desire to succeed. This desire fuels their will power and drives them past whatever obstacles may lie in the way of success. Such obstacles are often ominous and daunting, and are not overcome quickly, yet determined self-leaders somehow find a way.

On the other hand, there are countless examples of others (usually much less known and/or venerated) whose desires for much of anything in life by way of personal achievement and Self-Leadership Efficacy are scant. Such individuals achieve little, influence few, and become little more than they started out as in life. In many cases, high achievers do not always possess the most talent and/or skills, while the low achievers may have been unusually endowed with both. For you as the reader, it probably will not take much reflection to identify individuals you have known who fit into one or the other categories. The consequences of desire (or lack thereof) can greatly influence the next, and last, Self-Leadership variable: a person’s will.

**Variable 16: Self-Leadership Will.**

It is no secret that self-leaders do not always perform up to their potential. Underperformance is often a result of a weakness of the will, for it is the will—and not
merely desire—that transmutes existential potentialities into tangible actualities. To desire, but not to do, is really not to desire, and all desires—no matter how strong—that fail to motivate action remain powerless to unilaterally or authentically achieve anything of value. Covey (2004) put it this way: “to learn and not to do is [really] not to learn” (p. 343), and “to know and not to do, is really not to know.” (p. 33). It is in the doing that self-leaders grow, expand, create, achieve, and solve real problems.

The will of a human being represents a formidable force and power in an individual’s metaphorical world, as well as in the World itself. Wilcox (1892) eloquently captured this truism in her poem, Will.

There is no chance, no destiny, no fate,
Can circumvent or hinder or control
The firm resolve of a determined soul.
Gifts count for nothing; will alone is great;
All things give way before it, soon or late.
What obstacle can stay the mighty force
Of the sea-seeking river in its course,
Or cause the ascending orb of day to wait?
Each well-born soul must win what it deserves.
Let the fool prate of luck. The fortunate
Is he whose earnest purpose never swerves,
Whose slightest action or inaction serves
The one great aim.

Why, even Death stands still,
And waits an hour sometimes for such a will. (p. 145-146)

A self-leader’s will refers to their commitment to think, say, or do something, even if they do not desire to think, say, or do that something. Kant (2002) introduced the concept of a “good will” (p. 77), which, he taught, a self-leader can possess if one is willing to act in accordance with certain categorical imperatives decreed by Natural Law when one’s natural inclination would be to act otherwise. When I speak of a will, will power, or a good will, I am referring to the Kantian notion thereof.
Whatever categorical imperatives Natural Laws may decree, self-leaders maintain their freedom to choose. No one—not even God or Natural Law—can force another person to think, feel, speak, or act in a certain way. While forced coercion does exist in a physical sense, individuals still maintain a vestige of mental and psychological freedom under the most oppressive of circumstances and subjugations. Returning again to the words of Frankl (2006), we learn that:

The experiences of [concentration] camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, often of a heroic nature, which proved that apathy could be overcome, irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress. (p. 65)

Thus is the potential power of the human will. The Self-Leadership variable of will is the most significant of all 15 variables for the simple reason that it is the only variable over which self-leaders reign omnipotent. All of the other variables have a measure of control and/or influence, but each of us is sovereign over our own Self-Leadership will. As such, variable 16 ultimately affords a self-leader with more personal power than any other variable, or, one might argue, more than all of the other variables combined—at least on a metaphysical level. Moreover, the variability of variable 15 lies within a self-leader rather than without. The importance of this point must not be underestimated, for the will is the only variable that a self-leader can not only influence, but control as well. The exercise of one’s Self-Leadership will (or lack thereof) can therefore be attributed primarily to self-leaders themselves, and what they volitionally choose to think, say, or do, or do not think, say, or do. As a result, primary credit for exercising that will, and primary blame for failing to do so, must also be attached to the self-leader. I, and I alone, must ultimately take responsibility for what I think about, say,
and do; and you, and you alone, must do the same. You and I may be able to find a whole host of other variables (and/or excuses) to explain why we did or did not accomplish or *become* something, but if we choose not to exercise our own, independent will, we have ourselves—and only ourselves—to blame.

**Benefits & limitations of will.**

Benefits of one’s Self-Leadership will include self-discipline, effective self-regulation, monitoring, and troubleshooting, as well as the potential for achievement of goals and personal growth. Limitations of Self-Leadership will, or the *lack* thereof, include laziness, irresponsibility, self-neglect, excuse-making, et cetera.

**Real world example of Self-Leadership will limitations: From my life**

At the time of this writing (late spring 2012), I am training for a couple of marathons I am scheduled to run later in the year. I have already run a couple this year; both were in preparation for these later, more important races yet to come whereby I will attempt to qualify for the Boston Marathon for the second year in a row. Because I failed in my attempt to qualify last year, I have attempted to identify what thoughts and behaviors need to be added, eliminated, or modified in some way in order to produce a more desirable result (i.e., meet the qualifying time for Boston). One of the negative behaviors I identified that I could eliminate was my penchant for the consumption of soda pop, French fries, and fast food in general. Unfortunately, I have a near-addiction to all three. This addiction is exacerbated by the fact that I travel a lot with my work. As any road warrior can attest, eating healthily on the road is usually trickier than it is at home. At one point in my training earlier this year, I resolved that I would abstain from soda
pop and French fries for the duration of my training leading up to the marathon I will be running on July 24th. Somewhat impressively (to myself) I was successful in self-regulating my patterns of food and drink consumption to eliminate both from my diet for about six weeks. Then, while traveling, I fell off the proverbial wagon. After a month or so of splurging again as I am accustomed, I resolved once again to abstain from soda pop and French fries, but this time, I added dessert, candy, and other junk food to my list. While my goal was harder, I set a more realistic timetable: just two-and-a-half weeks. Somewhat pathetically, I only lasted two-and-a-half days! I was a little disgusted with myself, but I also had to be honest. I am simply not willing to follow through on this resolve at this point in my life. The goal I originally set out for myself, while attainable, is not being accomplished because of my lack of will power to stay away from the many sweet and/or unhealthy foods I so self-damagingly adore. My will is also weak because my desire is weak; and my desire is weak in part because my will is weak. The good news is that I am training for a marathon and get a lot of healthy exercise as a result. Moreover, I tend to balance my unhealthy food choices with many other healthy choices and meals. Furthermore, I am only in my mid-thirties. This means that the likelihood of my experiencing significantly adverse consequences of my bad eating habits is, at least temporarily, unlikely. I am probably not going to be so fortunate down the road if I continue the same habits and patterns I follow today. Therefore, at some point, if I desire to maintain a healthy body, much less attain the physical shape necessary to qualify for the Boston Marathon, I will need to exercise more Self-Leadership will power.
As I revisit this section several months after first writing it (fall 2012), I have continued to struggle with moderation in what I eat and drink," and while I improved 15 minutes on my marathon time, I still have not realized my goal of qualifying for the Boston Marathon. My desire and will to improve has been low, and I have continued to gain unwanted weight as a result. I must continually search for creative ways to bolster my desire and will if I am going to make any meaningful progress in this area of my life.

As I revisit this section yet again several months further down the road (March 2013), it is a new year, and I am attempting to qualify for the Boston Marathon once again after failing in my first five attempts over the past two years. Happily, I have recently lost 13 pounds due to exercise and healthier eating. Sadly, I have still not made a significant shift to eating habits that are consistently conducive to my health, and I continue to struggle especially when I am on the road. Experience suggests that I will continue to fall short of my goal until I am willing to exercise the necessary will to discipline my diet in a way that empower my loss of an additional 15-20 pounds. Will I be so willing in 2013? I wish I could say I was fully committed enough to answer in the affirmative, but honestly, I’m just not sure yet. This is a work in progress for me, and, I might add, a difficult work as well—as are all authentic efforts to rise in one’s Self-Leadership Efficacy. Moreover, the journeys that lead to Self-Transcendence, while they begin in the Edenic paradise of one’s mother’s womb, ultimately require that “we … go forward through the desert[s]” of life (Peck, 1993, p. 19). These desert journeys through mortality are:

Hard and … often painful. And so most people stop their journey as quickly as they can. They find what looks like a safe place, burrow into the sand, and stay there rather than [exercise their will to] go forward through the painful desert,

69 I do not drink alcohol, but am somewhat addicted to soda pop, especially caffeinated soda pop.
which is filled with cactuses and thorns and sharp rocks. Even if most people have been taught at one time or another that “those things that hurt, instruct” (to borrow Benjamin Franklin’s phrase), the education of the desert is so painful that [those of lesser wills] discontinue it as early as they can. (p. 19-20)

To conclude this section, I wish to add that I do not believe that human will power is omnipotent. I also do not believe that Self-Leadership can succeed in all things without the aid of others and/or a formulaic mix of Self-Leadership variables that is reasonably favorable. Nevertheless, my own life’s experiences have led me to come to deeply respect the power of human will when purposely and purposefully disciplined and directed. In the words of the fictional devil Screwtape (Lewis, 1995).

Our plight is never more in danger than when … [a person], willing, but no longer desiring to obey, looks at a creation from which all signs of God seem to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys! (p. 24)

Real world example of benefits of will: From my life.

At a very young age, I developed the socially infelicitous habit of sucking my finger. I do not remember when this habit was formed (it was that early in my life), but I do remember when it stopped. Unlike many toddlers who pass through a finger or thumb-sucking phase, my habit grew into a deep addiction that lasted well beyond the realms of a mere “phase.” Consider the following entry from my Dad’s journals when I was already five.

Thurs. September 13, 1984

I let Jordan sleep with me, but his finger-sucking in the middle of the night forced his removal to his own bed, and I did get some sleep thereafter.

This childish habit persisted beyond age five, six, seven, and even age eight. Indeed, at age nine, though I had finished the third grade, I was still sucking my finger.

As I looked around at my peers, I was embarrassed at the perpetuation of such a
preschooler’s penchant of mine. “Other kids my age weren’t sucking their fingers or
thumbs anymore,” I thought to myself. “Why must I?” Yet I could not just wish my bad
habit away. It was a strong drive. I’ve never smoked tobacco, but I feel as though I can
relate in some way to what nicotine addicts must suffer. I had trouble going to sleep if I
did not suck my finger; I simply loved the taste of my finger I had, over so many years,
become so accustomed (addicted) to. My parents had tried to break me of this habit by
painting horrible tasting formula on my finger before I would go to bed, but to no avail. I
would either go and wash it off, or worse, suck it off! Though a very unpleasant
endeavor, it seemed to me at the time a pleasanter alternative to not sucking my finger at
all. To avoid sucking my finger before going to bed or taking a nap was to deprive my
senses of a pressing hunger. I wanted to always suck my finger. On the other hand, I
disliked the consequences of doing so. I believed it made me appear like a baby to
anyone who might have known about my habit. Furthermore, it tended to cause a wart-
like callous on my finger that I shamefully sought to hide from others, especially my
peers at school. When I would be sitting in class, I would often place my right hand on
top of my left hand in an effort to hide the deforming effects of my habit from the
purview of my peers. I was ashamed. I did not want to be “found out” for fear of the
ridicule (both tacit and otherwise) it might engender.

As I approached my tenth birthday during the summer of 1989, I reached a
personal threshold where I reasoned, and then determined, that it was high time I break
this habit. I made a personal commitment to myself that after I turned ten (August 21), I
would never again suck my finger, no matter how badly I wanted to. August twenty-first
came and I began my resolve. It was hard, sometimes exceedingly hard. It made it
harder to go to sleep. It was painful thinking about doing what I had resolved I would no longer do. Twice over the course of the next several months, the desire to suck my finger overpowered my will power, and I gave in and sucked for a while. Fortunately, I did not give in until after I had already suffered the worst of the withdrawal symptoms, and by then the habit was already half broken. It was many months, and perhaps even years before the longing to suck my finger ceased entirely, but eventually, after a considerable amount of time had passed, my will had destroyed the power of the addiction. I was no longer captive, and as I sit and write this today, I have no desire to suck my finger, nor does the thought even cross my mind—except for when I recall this experience.

The Variables As Informants, Not Enablers or Excuses

I present the aforementioned variables of Self-Leadership not to enable laziness or to provide self-leaders with excuses for why they cannot rise in their Self-Leadership Efficacy, but merely to accede and respect both the limitations and benefits that come as a part of living as an imperfect human being in an imperfect world. We do not want to make the mistake of unfairly blaming people for poor Self-Leadership when they have legitimate limitations that circumvent their exercise thereof. On the other hand, we also do not want to fall into the error of allowing Self-Leadership variables to turn people into victims unnecessarily. There is usually a proverbial “fine-line” separating one camp from the other.

I wish to share a hopeful Self-Leadership message. While Self-Leadership cannot solve every problem and cure every illness, it can help each of us to improve based on where we currently stand in our respective Self-Leadership journeys. I have known a quadriplegic who was one of the happiest, most cheerful persons I have known. I know
people who grew up in dangerous, inner-city neighborhoods with limited opportunities to begin with who, through the exercise of Self-Leadership, have overcome many odds to become college graduates and highly successful individuals in their careers. I have known people who have lived through terrible tragedies and illnesses who wear a smile on their face and persist in their Self-Leadership journey eager to improve and make the most of their lives while their lives in this world last. It is my hope, therefore, that readers will choose to honestly view these variables in their proper perspective, with the recognition that Self-Leadership has the potential to empower individuals with great limitations, to someday, over time, and with great personal effort, transcend those limitations, perhaps even in ways that transform those very limitations into great strengths.

**Interpreting the Variables to Gauge Self-Leadership Potential**

When working as limitations, these variables illustrate that Self-Leadership is not always an omnipotent *cure-all* or consummate panacea to the multiplicity of challenges and ills Life is capable of presenting to us as self-leaders and human beings. Moreover, when working as benefits, many of these variables may cause a person to appear to be a more effective self-leader than they really are. Some self-leaders achieve temporary success in a given life arena, and may even be financially well-off as a result, due to sheer personal intelligence or talent, or the result of congenital physical variables, family environment, and social environment that were not of the self-leader’s own making. Therefore, measurements of Self-Leadership Efficacy must take into account the many ways in which these variables benefit *and* limit a self-leader.
Fifteen of the 16 variables are beyond our direct control as self-leaders. The one exception is variable 16, our \textit{Self-Leadership will}, over which we \textit{do} have direct control.\footnote{In the case of certain mental illnesses, an otherwise autonomous individual may lack varying degrees of control over one’s thoughts, speech, and/or actions.} We have indirect control, or influence, over several of the other variables (i.e., genetic predispositions and mimetic inclinations, social environment, some choices of others, how we use our time, structural inequality, and some Suprarational intervention). The rest of the variables are pretty much set in stone regardless what we do (i.e., forces of nature, congenital physical variables, congenital familial environment, initial opportunities for education, some choices of others, the inevitable passage of time, most geopolitics and economics, good and bad luck, some Suprarational intervention, Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and inborn intelligence & talent). While self-leaders cannot always control desire (or lack thereof), there are some things one can do to plant the seeds of desire in one’s mind and heart, and then to cultivate and nurture those seeds in an effort to bolster that desire.

\textbf{Concluding Comments}

A trove of anecdotal data evince narratives of remarkable self-leaders who started out in life with limited resources and opportunities and numerous obstacles in their way, but through the power of their own Self-Leadership, managed to transcend difficulties, dangers, demons, and/or penury of their past to lead remarkably successful and influential lives. There are also many narratives that illuminate the successes of individuals like Frankl (2006), who found a way to survive, and even grow personally, in the midst of terrible external adversity. Certain high profile individuals (and especially those representing minority groups, those with disabilities, and/or children born into middle to
lower income homes, or poverty) provide illustrative examples of this Self-Leadership phenomenon. For example, consider the following examples from history: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Booker T. Washington, John D. Rockefeller, Florence Nightingale, George Washington Carver, Andrew Carnegie, and Helen Keller; and from more current times as well: Oprah Winfrey, Barack Obama, Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Sonia Sotomayor, Joe Biden, Bill O’Reilly, John Boehner, Jim Carey, and Bill Cosby, to name only a few. All of these individuals rose from relative obscurity to the realms of worldwide influence in their respective fields. Some rose from penury to prosperity; others from ordinary citizen to national leaders. Others progressed from being a middle to lower income local talent to an international superstar. Others overcame abject obstacles to achieve what many at the time would have thought was unattainable.

In considering examples like these, let it be noted that money, fame, position, and prestige, can sometimes be shallow indicators of what I, and many others, would define as “true Self-Leadership success.” Indeed, sometimes those accruing vast bank accounts and widespread societal influence may do so through questionable means, dubious integrity, and/or a series of variables they did very little to personally create or arrange. Moreover, I know (or know of) many self-leaders who, in my own view, are as great, if not greater, than any and/or all of the individuals listed above in terms of Self-Leadership effectiveness within a construct of their own sphere of influence. The problem is that if I named these individuals, readers would not have any way to reference them or their accomplishments. You could probably likewise point to similar examples in your own life that I would be unable to reference. As such, examples such as those listed above can

71 While certainly not born into poverty, Nightingale exercised remarkable Self-Leadership to overcome enormous odds in her chosen profession—which contrasted starkly with the life her parents had planned and hoped for her to have—and proved a much more difficult road to travel.
serve as helpfully illustrative points of reference from the simple standpoint that as high profile persons, they and their stories stand out; moreover, many such individuals can often be credited legitimately with accomplishing much that is noble and beneficial to society through honorable methods. Of course, one might reasonably argue that the examples referenced above are merely “outliers” (Gladwell, 2008), statistical aberrations, or exceptions to the rule, “something that is situated away from or classed differently from a main or related body” (p. 3). Moreover, such individuals sometimes had a unique opportunity arise in their life in a way that is unusual for someone of their social standing or economic class. For example, Frederick Douglass had his move to Baltimore and his Sophia Auld72 (Douglass, 2003), Helen Keller had her Anne Sullivan;73 Barack Obama had his mother, who provided him with an unusually quality informal education,74 and a prestigious formal education75 (Obama, 2004), and Gates had unusual access to rare equipment that enabled him to pile up thousands of hours of programming experience at a relatively young age at a time in history when such opportunities would have been rare (Gladwell, 2008). The value of these teachers, mentors, guides, and opportunities cannot be underestimated, and could possibly be grouped under the Self-Leadership variables of good luck or Suprarational intervention. For example, Douglass (2003) was the beneficiary of moving from a rural Maryland plantation to a home in Baltimore, which was an opportunity that, according to him, may have been the turning point of his life, without which he may still have “been confined in the galling chains of slavery” (p. 39)

72 The wife of Douglass’s master Hugh Auld in Baltimore Maryland, who introduced Douglass to the alphabet—the beginning of his journey to learn to read.
73 Johanna (Anne) Mansfield Sullivan Macy (1866-1936) was the famous teacher of Helen Keller.
74 Obama’s mother would wake him at 4:30 a.m. as a boy to review his lessons with him (Obama, 2004).
75 Obama’s family invested in his education by enrolling him at the prestigious Punahou, known for its academic and more recently, its athletic prowess throughout the State of Hawaii and the Nation (Murphy, 2008), and later on at Harvard University Law School.
instead of penning his narrative as a free and educated man. For him, “going to live at Baltimore laid the foundation, and opened the gateway, to all [his] subsequent prosperity” (p. 39). Commenting further, he stated:

I regarded the selection of myself (to go to Baltimore) as being somewhat remarkable. There were a number of slave children that might have been sent from the plantation to Baltimore. There were those younger, those older, and those of the same age. I was chosen from among them all, and was the first, last, and only choice. (p. 39)

When he got to Baltimore, he was shown kindness by a white woman (Sophia Auld) the likes of which he had never seen before, and this same white woman introduced him to the alphabet. Despite these obvious advantages above and beyond the typical slave of his day, Douglass also possessed an unusually impressive Self-Leadership drive that empowered him to seize upon opportunities when opportunities were scarce. For example, after a while of lessons on the alphabet from Mrs. Auld, she was scolded by her husband for trying to teach a slave to read and write, which was not only illegal, but as he explained, “unsafe” (p. 40). From that point on, Douglass would have to rely on his own Self-Leadership if he desired to finish the process that his master’s wife had begun with him. Douglass was up to the task: “Though conscious of the difficulty of learning without a teacher, I set out with high hope, and a fixed purpose, at whatever cost of trouble, to learn how to read” (p. 41). Like Douglass, outliers usually possess an unusual degree of Self-Leadership to compliment their “better-than-average” opportunities, and this must be considered when determining the variables accounting for a person’s results and/or success. As such, Self-Leadership performance and effectiveness are relative to the self-leader at hand, as well as the myriad variables at play in that self-leader’s individual world. Since each self-leader is unique and no two self-
leaders are the same, it follows that specifically (but not generally) speaking, no two self-leaders will possess the exact same potential for achievement, nor will they realize the exact same actual accomplishments. Therefore, I agree (substantively rather than numerically) with Swindoll who said: “Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it.” Covey (1989) echoed a similar sentiment when he wrote: “We are responsible for our own effectiveness, for our own happiness, and ultimately … for most of our circumstances” (p. 93). Self-Leadership scholars reiterate Covey and Swindoll’s sentiments by affirming that, “we possess a great deal of choice concerning what we experience and what we accomplish with our lives” (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 10). Said authors and scholars seem united in their agreement that all self-leaders have the potential to self-lead and access Self-Leadership power regardless of their personal situations and environmental circumstances. This means that no matter when or where a person was born, and despite whatever variables make up each person’s unique life experience, the exercise of Self-Leadership is still possible to one degree or another; we are not merely products of our environment, upbringing and scripting, or genetic predispositions and mimetic tendencies. Outliers or not, individual self-leaders like Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Oprah Winfrey, et cetera, are examples of extraordinary Self-Leadership in their given circumstances; so much so, that it is not unreasonable to purport that others who are less inclined to exert Self-Leadership effort when the going gets tough in their lives would likely achieve less than Douglass, Lincoln, or Winfrey, even if they started out with identical opportunities and other life variables.

76 I was unable to identify the original source location of this quote; however, it can be located in numerous different places on the internet where it is consistently attributed to the pastor Charles R. Swindoll (1934-Present).
Gauging a person’s Self-Leadership potential for achievement, or Self-Leadership Efficacy remains subjective and unempirical, at best, and involves the art of approximation rather than the science of exactitude. While various assessments have been developed over the years to attempt to gauge Self-Leadership effectiveness (e.g. Neck & Manz, 2010; Houghton & Neck, 2002; Anderson & Prussia, 1997, and Cox, 1993), I know of no empirical, quantitative tool for measuring the multi-dimensional concatenation of diverse variables leading to one’s ultimate results and quality of life. Furthermore, any claim to adequately describe such percentile-based causations with any kind of numerical precision would be dubious at best. A measure of legitimacy must therefore be granted to qualitative efforts aimed at approximating quantifications of Self-Leadership Efficacy based on imperfect metrics, general formulas, and personal observations, and good-faith testimonials. As such, autoethnographic data, such as is shared in this dissertation, holds research value beyond its mere anecdotal inspiration derivation. Moreover, because of the inherently unempirical nature of the subject at hand (Self-Leadership) Autoethnography, as a research method, may qualify as one of the most effective, valuable, and powerful research methods that Self-Leadership scholars currently have at their disposal.

Because this study utilizes language to narrate Autoethnography, I add a word about the power of language to compel and persuade. Language possesses an emotional and spiritual power that statistics alone cannot invoke. When positivists and empiricists attempt to quantify the qualitative, a disconnect takes place in the minds of real human beings who feel as much (more or less) as they think. Such attempts are tantamount to efforts to turn poetry into mathematics; art into science; and the human emotional
experience into an insipidly achromatic statistical chart. Poetry, and language in general, when utilized for artistic rather than scientific means, allows us to tap into the emotional, spiritual sides of ourselves, something science and mathematics alone can never accomplish. This work argues that there is a place in the academe of social science (and specifically the academe of Self-Leadership) for poetry and mathematics; for art and science; for feeling as well as thinking; for the hard as well as the soft sciences.

The term *Self-Leadership* first appeared in the literature in 1983 (Manz, 1983a; 1983b). Self-Leadership was, of course, practiced (for good or ill) by everyone living prior to 1983, it was just not referred to by that name. Therefore, if we are to access the roots of Self-Leadership theory from erstwhile generations, we must turn to stories, anecdotes, testimonials, quotations, and the literature of philosophy, religion, self-help, poetry, and in some cases, even some fiction literature. Such material tends to stick with me far more readily than prosaic verbiage from a peer reviewed paper. Moreover, by memorizing some passages, the message of the text is inscribed into the long-term recesses of my mind, heart, and soul in a way that inspires as much as it educates, and uplifts as much as it informs. For example, consider Marable’s (1983) comment, which suggests that poetry can fill the gaps that are sometimes left standing by social scientific hard data as etched in sterile prose. “Probably the greatest intuitive insights I achieved came from those writers who are most removed from social sciences—the poets.” (p. ix). To underscore his point, he then proceeds to quote a quatrain/stanza from a well-known poem by Langston Hughes. Not only does the poetic insertion immediately catch the reader’s eye, because of its attendant white space and poetic formatting, but it is also, in my view, far more memorable than just about anything else he happened to write on the
page, or perhaps even the rest of the book for that matter. For this reason, I have chosen to cite a wide range of literary sources in this treatise in an attempt to corroborate the scholarly voices, assertions, and findings of this study.
CHAPTER THREE

Self-Leadership, Autoethnography, and Action Research:
A Review of the Literature

Introduction to Chapter Three

Having thoroughly introduced the subject, substance, and variables of this
dissertation, I now proceed to provide literature reviews for the three primary topics dealt
with in this work: Self-Leadership, Autoethnography, and Action Research. Each topic
will be covered under sections one, two, and three, respectively. This ordering is
intentional based on priority to the overall work. Self-Leadership is the primary topic
being investigated and will therefore receive the most thorough literature review in this
chapter. Autoethnography is the secondary topic for which the research methodology is
derived, and will receive a lesser review. Action Research is the tertiary topic and will
receive the most surface-based coverage in terms of a literature review.
PART ONE. SELF-LEADERSHIP LITERATURE REVIEW

To date, the two most comprehensive articles reviewing the Self-Leadership literature are Neck and Houghton’s (2006) *Two Decades of Self-Leadership Theory and Research: Past Developments, Present Trends, and Future Possibilities*, and the more recent Stewart, Courtright, and Manz’ (2011) *Self-Leadership: A Multilevel Review*. Both of these articles are cited in this present literature review, and Neck and Houghton’s (2006) extensively so.

**Introduction to Part One**

Self-Leadership (Manz, 1983a; 1983b; 1992, and Neck and Manz, 2010) is concerned with the leadership of one’s own person, or self. Instead of traditional leadership, which focuses on leading other people to gain a desired result in business or in life, Self-Leadership involves leading oneself to achieve results in one’s own personal or professional life. A form of autonomous leadership targeted specifically on the individual, Self-Leadership is highly personal in nature. As such, in popular literature, it is commonly referred to as personal leadership (Schaetti, Ramsey, & Watanabe, 2008; Jensen, 2005, 2007; Russell, 1996, Dreher, 1996; Covey, Merrill & Merrill, 1994; Covey, 1989; Laird & Laird, 1946).

In academic circles, Self-Leadership is a relatively new field of inquiry. It first appeared in the literature in the mid-1980s (Manz, 1983a; 1983b). It is perhaps ironic that the academe failed to introduce such a term until so recently, for it is a self-evident fact that sentient, conscious, reasoning, and self-aware human beings have been leading themselves to one extent or another since the dawn of mankind. On one level or another,
“everyone practices Self-Leadership” (Manz, 1983a, p. 289), and, I might add, everyone has always done so, even if they were unaware of it on a conscious, or conceptual level. Self-Leadership is ubiquitous and universal.

While everyone practices Self-Leadership, “not everyone is an effective self-leader” (Manz, 1983a, p. 289). While Self-Leadership “can be learned” (Manz, 1983a, p. 289), it is not always easy (Manz, 1983b). Moreover, “we all have weaknesses in our Self-Leadership process, (and) in some people the process is very dysfunctional” (Manz, 1992, p. 6). Drucker (2010) equates the challenge and difficulty of effectively leading oneself, or in his words, “managing oneself” (p. 20), to the skills required by the leader at the top of an organization—no easy task! While the basic concept of Self-Leadership may seem to be a simple (and in some regards, it is), it is important to not allow the theoretical simplicity of Self-Leadership to belie the profound difficulties and challenges it holds out to every self-leader in terms of its real life practice. In the words of Drucker (2010):

The challenges of managing oneself may seem obvious, if not elementary. And the answers may seem self-evident to the point of appearing naïve. But managing oneself requires new and unprecedented things from the individual, and especially from the knowledge worker. In effect, managing oneself demands that each knowledge worker think and behave like a chief executive officer. (p. 20)

Drucker insinuates that the demand for self-management is increasing because of the elevated mobility of contemporary knowledge workers. Moreover, in some cases knowledge workers outlive the organizations they once worked for, whereas it was often the other way around in the past. Therefore, he claims that, “the need to manage oneself is … creating a revolution in human affairs” (p. 20).
Covey (2004) speaks of another development in human affairs that chronologically parallels the self-management revolution referred to by Drucker. This development involves society’s entrance into the “Information/Knowledge Worker” age in the past few decades (p. 13). The twenty-first century societal shift from the industrial age to the information age will, according to Covey (2004), increase production by a factor of 50! In support of his claim, he quotes Drucker, who said: “‘The most valuable asset(s) of … 21st-century institution(s), whether business or non-business, will be its knowledge workers and their productivity’” (Covey, 2004, p. 15). To realize this lofty prediction, knowledge workers (self-leaders) will need “a new mind-set—a new way of thinking” (p. 14). According to Drucker (2010) and Manz (1983a), this new way of thinking involves, and is called: managing oneself (Drucker, 2010, p. 1), Self-Leadership (Manz, 1983a), or its popular equivalent (as was mentioned earlier): personal leadership (Dreher, 1996). Furthermore, the concept of leading oneself has further evolved into another, related concept: SuperLeadership (Manz & Sims Jr., 1995; Manz & Sims, Jr., 2001), which champions Self-Leadership for the explicit purpose of creating and leading effective “self-managing work systems” (Manz & Sims, Jr., 2001, p. 84), also referred to as, “self-managed teams” (p. 146), or “self-directed work teams” (Stokes, 1994, p. 40). In a self-managed (or directed) work team, “the SuperLeader is concerned with unleashing the power of Self-Leadership in others” (Manz & Sims, Jr., 2001, p. 146) on their team, and “the 21st-century leader should strive to unleash the full talents of people by stimulating their own capacity for Self-Leadership” (p. 26).

77 In June 2008 as a contract trainer, I taught a Fred Pryor/CareerTrack Seminars business course entitled Self-Directed Work Teams to an organization in Anniston, Alabama. This highlighted for me personally the growing trend toward the concept of self-managed/self-directed groups.
Before delving deeper into the academic etiology of this relatively new form (in terms of its scholarly inquisition) of individualized leadership, I begin by discussing the history of the topic from a general standpoint. This is appropriate when considering that the original roots of Self-Leadership theory are timeless.

**Self-Leadership: A Historical Perspective**

**Roots in Religion**

If one reflects on the history of individuals seeking personal knowledge and strategies to positively affect their attitudes, behavior or performance, and character, the concepts of Self-Leadership and character education are at least as old as humankind. Indeed, spiritual texts of myriad religions and their respective denominations are often highly focused on divinely appointed approaches to enhancing one’s personal conduct or *righteousness*, which might be viewed as *clerical code* for good character, noteworthy conduct, or effective Self-Leadership. Consider the following excerpts from sacred religious scripts representing five different religious and/or denominational persuasions—Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Taoism, and Mormonism. Then consider the injunctions therein, and their relation to Self-Leadership.

**The Bible**: The Ten Commandments in *Exodus* chapter 20 of the *Old Testament* are quintessential examples of purported divine directions for governing behavior and guiding Self-Leadership. These directions come in the form of behavioral *don’ts* (i.e.: *thou shalt not*…). Moreover, consider Jesus Christ’s pronouncement of the *golden rule* as recorded in the *New Testament*: “Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”

---

78 Commonly known as “*the Golden Rule*” found in Matthew 7:12; King James Version (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1979/2008, p. 1197-1198).
The Bhagavad-Gita: “When a man has mastered himself, / he is perfectly at ease in cold, / in heat, in pleasure or pain, / in honor or in disgrace….

“The man of yoga should practice / concentration, alone, / mastering mind and body, / free of possessions and desires.

“Sitting down, having chosen / a spot that is neither too high / nor too low, that is clean and covered / with a grass mat, a deerskin, and a cloth, / he should concentrate, with his whole / mind, on a single object; / if he practices in this way, / his mind will soon become pure.

“With torso and head held straight, / with posture steady and unmoving, / gazing at the tip of his nose, / not letting his eyes look elsewhere,

“he should sit there calm, fearless, / firm in his vow to be chaste, / his whole mind controlled, directed, / focused, absorbed in me.

“Constantly mastering his mind, / the man of yoga grows peaceful, / attains supreme liberation, / and vanishes into my bliss” (p. 89-91)

The Qur’an: “And guard yourselves against the fire which has been prepared for the unbelievers.”

The Tao Te Ching. “Analyzing others is knowledge. Knowing yourself is wisdom. Managing others requires skill. Mastering yourself takes inner strength. … With the best of leaders, When the work is done, The project completed, The people all say ‘We did it ourselves.’”

The Book of Mormon: “But this much I can tell you, that if you do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord [Jesus Christ], even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.”

While the purpose of this literature review is not to provide an all-inclusive compendium of religious texts’ references to Self-Leadership oriented material, the examples listed above from major world and/or U.S. religions lead me to believe that
virtually all religions and their concomitant texts are apt to grant coverage to Self-Leadership topics since the very nature of religious faith and practice requires the active engagement of cognitive, behavioral, and spiritual strategies and practices.

Ecclesiastical worship and tradition continues today in churches, temples, mosques, homes, and other sacred places of worship around the world. Moreover, spirituality is not always limited to the parochial realm. Indeed, despite the increasingly broad based secularization of American public life, some (Neck & Milliman, 1994) indicate there is evidence of a contemporary revival of interest in spirituality as it relates to the workplace. “Recently there has been a sharp increase in the interest in spirituality in the workplace” (p. 9). These researchers have also found that “spirituality can positively affect employee and organizational performance” (p. 10). While such a revival is not religious in the traditional sense, it does involve an intentional focus on finding a purpose and establishing a legacy for one’s work that goes beyond the concatenation of pedestrian tasks inherent in the typical quotidian office slog (Neck & Milliman, 1994). Similarly, Dreher (1996) conducted purposeful analysis of the personal leadership lessons to be gained from a careful consideration of Lao Tzu’s *Tao Te Ching*.

Another example involves the collaborative work of a team of colleagues (Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2001) that considers how wisdom derived from Biblical characters, passages, and stories can be likened to contemporary business situations and challenges. In their own words: “As we read the stories … in the Hebrew Bible (commonly called the Old Testament), we were impressed by the possibilities that this ancient wisdom might offer for today’s worklife” (p. xii). Thus, even in inherently secular situations, it is
evident that religion, religious texts, and spirituality do influence Self-Leadership thought.

**Philosophy Joins the Conversation**

Philosophy is fundamentally Self-Leadership oriented in that its very function is to provide direction to human beings regarding how they should think and/or act.

Consider the following excerpts from philosophers through the ages:

**Aristotle**: (384-322 B.C.) “We become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage.” (Aristotle, 2002, p. 19)

**Immanuel Kant**: (1724-1804) “Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will. … A good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition—that is, it is good in itself, and considered by itself is to be esteemed much higher than all that can be brought about by it in favor of any inclination, nay, even of the sum-total of all inclinations.” (Kant, 2002, p. 77-78)

In the next quote, notice how Mill blends religion with philosophy to support utilitarianism.

**John Stuart Mill**: (1806-1873) “As between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires [a man] to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and benevolent spectator. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. “To do as you would be done by,” and “to love your neighbor as yourself,” constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality.” (Mill, 2002, p. 95)

Or consider the oft-quoted American philosophers Franklin85 (1986), and Emerson (1961), or Thoreau (2001), whose pilgrimage to Walden Pond was not only an extended exercise in self-reliance and economy (i.e., Self-Leadership) but who, in his account of said adventure (which lasted for 26 months) offered perhaps the quintessential...

---

85 Franklin’s autobiography is perhaps the most historically visible and widely read self-help oriented book in the history of the United States.
Self-Leadership philosophical statement of the nineteenth century (*quoted below*). All three penned words rife with a Pedagogy of Personal Leadership.

**Benjamin Franklin:** (1706-1790) “Diligence is the mother of good luck.” “None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing” (Franklin, 1946, p. 31). “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that’s the stuff Life is made of” (p. 37). “One today is worth two tomorrows” (p. 29). “He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night” (p. 32).

**Ralph Waldo Emerson:** (1803-1882) “A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace” (Atkinson, 2000, p. 133). “Difficulties exist to be surmounted. The great heart will no more complain of obstructions that make success hard, than of the iron walls of the gun which hinder the shot from scattering. It was walled round with iron tube with that purpose, to give it irresistible force in one direction. A strenuous soul hates cheap successes.” (Emerson, 1961, p. 6)

**Henry David Thoreau:** (1817-1862): “I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by a conscious endeavor. It is something to be able to paint a picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do. To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts. Every man is tasked to make his life, even in its details, worthy of the contemplation of his most elevated and critical hour.” (Thoreau, 2001, p. 74-75)

Even Abraham Lincoln, although a lawyer and politician, wrote on the subject of Self-Leadership.

The way for a young man to rise is to improve himself every way he can, never suspecting that anybody wishes to hinder him. Allow me to assure you that suspicion and jealousy never did help any man in any situation. There may some times be ungenerous attempts to keep a young man down; and they will succeed too, if he allows his mind to be diverted from its true channel to brood over the attempted in jury. (Hubbard, 1946, p. 79)

Philosophical writings throughout the ages are replete with personal leadership oriented material; so much so that it is altogether reasonable to consider Self-Leadership theory as a branch of philosophy within a number of different related fields, some of
which have been discussed already (traditional philosophy, psychology, and religion),
and others which will be detailed in a later section entitled academic genealogy.

**Popular Participants**

Covey (1989, 1990; Covey, Merrill & Merrill, 1994) is perhaps the most
influential force in the popular realm of Self-Leadership, more commonly referred to as
personal leadership. His bestselling book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, has
sold over fifteen million copies and has been translated into more than a score of
languages. The first half of his landmark book, entitled *The Private Victory*, is dedicated
to three specific aspects of personal leadership, namely: 1) Principles of Personal Vision
(Habit 1: *Be Proactive*), 2) Principles of Personal Leadership (Habit 2: *Begin with the
End in Mind*), and 3) Principles of Personal Management (Habit 3: *Put First Things
First*) (1989). Scott DeGarmo, former Editor-in-Chief of *Success Magazine* offered a
prescient endorsement of Covey’s 1989 edition when he predicted it would become “the
personal leadership handbook of the decade” (front cover).

Another example is Peck (1978), who preceded Covey by a decade in his own rise
to the top of the bestseller charts. A clinical psychiatrist by profession, Peck successfully
targeted a popular audience with his book *The Road Less Traveled*, which, like Covey’s 7
Habits, has since become culturally iconic. Strewn throughout Peck’s book are personal
leadership oriented themes such as discipline, delaying gratification, and taking personal
responsibility. Peck, like Manz, affirms the inherent “difficult[y]” (Manz, 1992, p. 6) of
effectively leading oneself, and even opened his bestseller with the famous opening
There are many other examples of personal leadership in the popular literature; indeed, it could be argued that the entire self-help industry has its roots in personal leadership theory. From the earlier days of Carnegie (1936), Peale (1952) and Hill (1960); to the more contemporary Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1993), Robbins (1991) and Tolle (1999, 2005), there may always be a coterie of personal leadership “experts” or gurus that society can turn to for advice in place of wading through inscrutable scholarly texts on the topic. It could be argued that the continuous success of the self-help market, generally speaking, bespeaks an underlying human recognition of the need and desire for personal leadership development. Perhaps this may account for at least one reason why Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends* (1936), Covey’s *7 Habits* (1989), and Peck’s *Road* (1978), all titles involving aspects of personal leadership development and human betterment, have sold a combined 36 million plus copies.

**Self-Leadership in the Academe**

As was previously mentioned, Self-Leadership as an academic field of inquiry was officially initiated by the work of Manz (1983a; 1983b, 1986b), who derived his own ideas on the subject from related topics on which he had been researching and writing. The genealogy of Self-Leadership in academia reaching back in time before 1983, when the term first appeared, will be discussed in greater detail in a later section entitled: Academic Genealogy.

---

86 Lovelace, Manz, and Alves (2007) have suggested that Self-Leadership is one of the practices that can lead to the generation of *flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

87 According to a May 15, 2003 article in Forbes magazine, Covey’s original title had sold more than 15 million copies. Peck’s book has sold over 6 million copies to date, according to a page on the late Dr. Peck’s official website maintained by his family at URL: http://www.mscottpeck.com/html/biography.html. Carnegie’s book has sold over 15 million copies according to the front jacket of the 1981 *Pocket Books* paperback version.
What is Self-Leadership?

This section addresses what Self-Leadership is, and what it entails. In addition to providing definitions from the literature, I review the academic evolution of this increasingly independent field of inquiry, discuss other subjects and theories from whence Self-Leadership sprang, review the roads Self-Leadership research has traversed to date, and outline avenues for future research.

Self-Leadership Defined

Self-Leadership is perhaps best defined as “a process through which individuals control their own behavior, influencing and leading themselves through the use of specific sets of behavioral and cognitive strategies” (Neck & Houghton, 2006, p. 270). Neck & Manz (2010) define leadership, generally speaking, as “a process of influence” (p. 2), and Self-Leadership, therefore, as “the leadership [influence] that we exercise over ourselves” (p. 2).

Academic Genealogy

This section recounts the history of Self-Leadership in the academe before, during, and after the term was first coined in the mid-1980s (Manz 1983a, 1983b). In so doing, it discusses the ongoing evolution (up to the present) of this relatively new academic field.

Neck and Houghton (2006) tersely sum up this genealogy thus:

The concept of Self-Leadership first emerged in the mid-1980s (e.g. Manz, 1983, 1986), as an expansion of self-management (e.g. Manz and Sims, 1980), which was rooted in clinical self-control theory (e.g. Cautela, 1969) and inspired by Kerr and Jermier’s (1978) notion of “substitutes for leadership…. [Self-Leadership is related to] motivational, personality and self-influence constructs such as self-

**Academic peripherals of Self-Leadership theory.**

As has already been addressed, both religion and philosophy (among other subjects) have been championing a vast array of Self-Leadership oriented principles, skills, and strategies for ages. Moreover, there are many other related topics within the fields of self-help and leadership studies that constitute important components of a comprehensive discussion of the subject of Self-Leadership. Virtually all of these topics have existed formally in the academe prior to Self-Leadership’s entrance thereto.

Consider the following areas of inquiry that are either directly or indirectly related to Self-Leadership. These fields include, but are not limited to the following topics: **self-development** (Zenger, 2002); **self-awareness** (Neck & Manz, 2010; Goleman, 1995); **self-management** (Andrasik & Heimberg, 1982; Goleman, 1995; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004); **behavioral self-management** (Luthans & Davis, 1979); **attention** and **self-regulation** (Carver & Scheier, 1981); **self-control** (Cautela, 1969); **self-discipline**, (Goleman, 1995); **self-efficacy** (Neck & Manz, 2010; Goleman, 1995; Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004); **autonomy** and **control of behavior** (Deci & Ryan, 1987); **action-state orientation** (Diefendorff, Hall, Lord, & Stream, 2000); **mental practice** (Driskell, Copper, & Moran, 1994); **self-discrepancy, self-discrepancy theory, and knowledge activation** (Higgins, 1987, 1989, and 1996, respectively); **goal setting** (Latham & Locke, 1991); **self-concept, self-interest, self-confidence, self-monitoring, self-assessment ability, self-reliance, self-reinforcement, self-respect, self-talk, self-fulfilling prophecy, and self-esteem** (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004); **cognitive and self-control**
therapies (Mahoney & Arnkoff, 1978); inner leadership (Neck & Barnard, 1996; Manz & Neck, 1991a; 1991b); the control of perception (Powers, 1973); action identification (Vallacher & Wegner, 1985); self-regulation (Forgas, Baumeister, and Tice, 2009); emotional self-regulation (Goleman, 1995); conscientiousness (Houghton, Bonham, Neck, & Singh, 2004; Neck & Houghton, 2006); self-determination (Bass, 2008); self-directed learning, (Knowles, 1975); and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943).

For the sake of convenient perusal, let us take a look at these terms in list form:

- Self-development
- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Behavioral self-management
- Attention and self-regulation
- Self-control
- Self-discipline
- Self-efficacy
- Autonomy and control of behavior
- Action-state orientation
- Mental practice
- Self-discrepancy
- Self-discrepancy theory
- Knowledge activation
- Goal setting
- Self-concept
- Self-interest
- Self-confidence
- Self-monitoring
- Self-assessment ability
- Self-reliance
- Self-reinforcement
- Self-respect
- Self-talk
- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Self-esteem
- Cognitive and self-control therapies
- The Control of Perception
- A Theory of Action Identification
- Self-regulation
- Emotional self-regulation
- Conscientiousness
• Self-determination
• Self-directed learning
• Self-actualization

While not an exhaustive index of topics related to Self-Leadership, this list does illustrate the potential scope of the subject. Despite this peripheral breadth of purview, Self-Leadership is still a relatively nascent field of study. This is evidenced in part by Self-Leadership’s conspicuous absence from Bass’s (2008) landmark Handbook of Leadership. Despite this glaring absence from a tome which very well might represent the most comprehensive established leadership canon to date, Self-Leadership’s peripherals continue to grow, even in Bass, as evidenced by the 29 different topics Bass does cover that begin with the word “self.”

Who/what preceded Manz?

Manz (1983a, 1983b, 1986b) is the father of scholarly Self-Leadership theory. He coined the term, was the first to publish it, and has since been the most prolific author in the field he pioneered; but who and what inspired Manz? If Self-Leadership is really as old as religion and philosophy, what led Manz to introduce the field into academia? The full answer to this question probably involves a lot of different variables, like spirituality, which has clearly played a role in Manz’ thinking about Self-Leadership (Manz, Manz, Marx, & Neck, 2001). Although many variables likely played a role in the combined research and thought of Manz and other Self-Leadership scholars, this paper will focus on the specific role of academic research, where the literature has left a trail.

88 In the forward to the Fourth Edition of The Bass Handbook of Leadership (formally Bass & Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership), Ronald E. Riggio of the Kravis Leadership Institute at Claremont McKenna College writes: “without a doubt, Bass & Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership has been the most widely used and cited reference book in the study of leadership” (p. v).
Before Manz began employing the term *Self-Leadership* in his articles, he was investigating a related term and subject: *self-management* (Manz & Sims, Jr., 1980). In their work, Manz & Sims, Jr. were investigating a term introduced by Kerr and Jermier (1978) known as “substitutes for leadership,” which referred to “certain individual, task, and organizational variables … [that] negat[e]… the hierarchical superior’s ability to exert either positive or negative influence over subordinate attitudes and effectiveness” (p. 375). In other words, forces of influence (both positive and negative) arise from sources beyond one’s boss and others above an employee in the organizational chain of command. Kerr and Jermier’s (1978) research identified several such “substitutes.” In reviewing their work, Manz and Sims, Jr. saw a connection to their own research on self-management, wherein they found that “if an individual is instrumental in specifying contingencies of self-reinforcement, this self-influence might well be regarded as a substitute for leadership” (p. 361-362). Voile! “Self-management as a substitute for leadership” (p. 361), introduced “self-management” (p. 362), which morphed into “Self-Leadership” (Manz, 1983a, p. 288) just a few years later.

Neck and Houghton (2006) point to a source of inspiration even further back than Kerr and Jermier (1978)—Cautela’s (1969) work on self-control. A clear precursor to the work of postmodern Self-Leadership scholars, Cautela (1969) defined self-control “as the response of an organism made to control the probability of another response” (p. 324) and sought to investigate the “rationale, procedures, and experimentation concerning SC [self-control] … within the framework of an individual initiating responses to control the probability of other responses” (p. 324). The scholarly work of researching specific cognitive and behavioral responses aimed specifically at influencing levels of self-control.
had formally begun. Manz and Sims, Jr. (1980) were also likely influenced by Thoresen and Mahoney’s (1974) work on behavioral self-control since, in their 1980 article, they equated self-management with self-control as if the two were synonymous (e.g., “self-management, more often called self-control…” [Manz and Sims, Jr. p. 362]).

Around the same time he first coined the term, Manz (1983b) produced the first—and to date only—textbook on Self-Leadership. A few years later, Manz (1986) further developed his ideas on Self-Leadership in an article wherein he articulated a theoretical framework for Self-Leadership and otherwise “proposed … a Self-Leadership view” (p. 589) as follows: “Self-Leadership is conceptualized as a comprehensive self-influence perspective that concerns leading oneself toward performance of naturally motivating tasks as well as managing oneself to do work that must be done but is not naturally motivating” (p. 589).

Manz continued to revisit and republish succeeding editions of his original text (1983b) on Self-Leadership. He changed the title (1992), and then brought on Neck as co-author in a second (1999) and third (2004) edition. In the fourth edition (2007), Neck became the lead author, where he would remain for the fifth (2010) and sixth (2012) edition as well. To date, this is the only full-text coverage of Self-Leadership in the academe; however, several books related to Self-Leadership, as well as numerous articles published explicitly on the subject have appeared throughout the 1990s and especially the 2000s. In the words of Neck and Houghton (2006):

Over the past two decades, the Self-Leadership concept has enjoyed considerable popularity, as evidenced by the large number of practitioner-oriented Self-Leadership books and articles on the subject … Moreover, Self-Leadership has earned the respect of many academics, as reflected by a plethora of theoretical and empirical Self-Leadership journal publications…. Business executives have also
embraced Self-Leadership concepts through training programs designed to increase Self-Leadership skills and behaviors in the workplace…. (p. 270-271)

The next section focuses on the “Self-Leadership journal publications” (p. 270-271) referenced above.

**Recent research.**

Since Manz’ (1983a; 1983b) seminal work on the subject, many other research studies and scholarly papers have been conducted and written on various aspects of Self-Leadership, thus allowing the field to continue to grow. A sampling of the field’s most prominent studies and papers to date are outlined below.

**Thought Self-Leadership.**


**Self-managed/directed work teams & SuperLeadership.**

A key evolution of Self-Leadership theory in the workplace has been the development of self-managed (or directed) work teams (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Self-directed work teams deviate from traditional command-control leadership hierarchies whereby they maximize individual creativity, autonomy, and leverage while minimizing micromanagement tactics. Successful self-directed work teams rely on a team of workers
who individually are effective self-leaders. A prominent outgrowth of the concept of a self-directed work team was the development of a concept called SuperLeadership (Manz & Sims, Jr., 2001; 1995). One who practices SuperLeadership—or a SuperLeader—is someone “who leads others to lead themselves” (2001, p. 5).

Neck and Manz (2010) explain that “there is more to conquer” (p. 81) than just Self-Leadership. The next step is to inculcate the concept of Self-Leadership into team and organizational dynamics in order to create “self-directed teams, self-managing teams, and high-performance teams” (p. 81). Such teams “are a new work-design innovation that has swept the country and the rest of the world [and] this fact of business life is gaining in popularity” (p. 81).

The introduction of empowered work teams into the workplace represents perhaps the most important new organizational development since the industrial revolution. Teams have already demonstrated their ability to make major contributions to organizations in a variety of industries. Increased productivity; higher product and service quality; a better quality of work life for the employees; and reduced costs, turnover, and absenteeism are among the more salient payoffs.

Usually [self-directed] team members have an increased amount of responsibility and control. Teams perform many of the tasks that previously were the responsibility of the management. (p. 81)

Such teams can utilize many of the same strategies that self-leaders use individually, except the strategies are projected onto the team as a whole. For example, team self-observation, team self-goal setting, team self-reward and self-punishment, team rehearsal, team beliefs and assumptions, team self-talk, and team mental imagery can all be applied to gain similar positive results for the team as one would ordinarily be aiming for as an individual self-leader (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 82-84).

The importance of self-managed/directed work teams and SuperLeadership should not be underestimated. These concepts represent applied Self-Leadership as it
relates to organizational behavior, and have profound implications for productively impacting the ways in which self-leaders work together towards common goals in organizational settings.

**Empirical studies.**

Several research projects have empirically investigated certain components of Self-Leadership theory. For example, Neck & Manz (1996) conducted “a training intervention-based field study” (p. 445) to empirically investigate the influence of thought Self-Leadership (cognitive strategies) on employee performance. Their “results suggested that individuals who received the thought Self-Leadership training experienced increased mental performance, positive affect (enthusiasm), job satisfaction, and decreased negative affect (nervousness) relative to those not receiving the training” (p. 445). Moreover, “trainees reported a strong and positive reaction to the training … [including] enhanced perceptions of self-efficacy and more optimistic perceptions of the organization’s bankruptcy condition than those not receiving the training” (p. 445).

Houghton, Bonham, Neck, & Singh (2004) investigated Self-Leadership’s connection to personality “through an analysis and comparison of hierarchical factor structures” (p. 427). Their “results seem to provide some initial evidence that Self-Leadership dimensions are distinct from, yet related to, certain key personality traits” (p. 427).

Manz and Sims, Jr. (1987) carried out a quantitative study involving “self-managing work teams” (p. 106) that suggest “external leaders’ most important behaviors are those that facilitate the team’s self-management” (p. 106). Most recently, Brown and Fields (2011) “examined the relationships between a leader’s use of three Self-
Leadership strategies (behavior-focused, natural reward, and constructive thought) and leader behaviors using data provided by 75 leaders and 225 of their followers working within a non-profit organization” (p. 275). Their research and “analysis showed that a leader’s behavior-focused Self-Leadership strategies were related to three of the five leadership behaviors comprising a model of effective leadership” (p. 275), and that “from a practical standpoint, the small effects experienced by followers suggest the impact of the use of Self-Leadership strategies on the behaviors of leaders may be limited and depend on the individual characteristics of the leader” (p. 275).

Three other empirical studies not mentioned in this section (Pattni & Soutar, 2009; Georgianna, 2007; and Neubert & Wu, 2006) have also been conducted. These three studies will be discussed in a later section on Self-Leadership as it relates to diversity and multiculturalism.

While more of an intervention than a classical empirical research study, Georgianna (2009) compared the results “of two groups of community college students in California” (p. 20). Using Self-Leadership oriented strategies, Georgianna oversaw an intervention aimed at “improv[ing the] study skills … [of] students in two English writing classes” (p. 20). When comparing the experimental group that received the Self-Leadership intervention training to the control group that did not, students in the control group scored better on a mini essay assigned them, thereby indicating positive short-term results from the intervention; however, when student’s “final grades and success rates” (p. 20) were compared between the two groups, “no significant differences … were found” (p. 20).
Models.

At least five different efforts have been made to develop original models designed to describe specific aspects of Self-Leadership theory. The first (mentioned earlier) was developed by Manz (1983b; 1992) and then revised by Manz and Neck (1999; 2004) and Neck and Manz (2007; 2010; 2012). Called A Comprehensive Self-Leadership Framework, this model provides a holistic presentation of the main components comprising Manz’ original Self-Leadership theory. It incorporates concepts related to cognitive and behavioral Self-Leadership including a dozen different explicit strategies for the practice of Self-Leadership. Self-Leadership as it relates to teams and organizations is also represented.

Figure 1. A Comprehensive Self-Leadership Framework.89

The second model involves self-goal setting. Researchers (Neck, Nouri & Godwin, 2003) “placed … individual participative goal setting (PGS) … within the theoretical foundation of social cognitive theory (SCT)” (p. 691). Then, “based on this foundation, a cognitive-based Self-Leadership approach [was] suggested as a mechanism to enhance the PGS process and to achieve effective participation behavior” (p. 691). In other words, by implementing certain cognitive Self-Leadership strategies (i.e. beliefs, self-talk, mental imagery, affective state, and thought patterns [aka: thought Self-Leadership (Manz & Neck, 1991; Godwin, Neck, & Houghton, 1999)]), one might have access to tools that would positively influence an individual self-leader’s effective exercise of setting self-goals (Neck, Nouri & Godwin, 2003). The result was the development and publication of A comprehensive social learning theory-based thought Self-Leadership model of participative goal setting (p. 700) with six concomitant propositions that attempt to describe the potential positive affects resulting in applying the model to self-goal setting exercises (p. 701).

The third model (Houghton & Yoho, 2005) attempted to develop a “contingency model of leadership and psychological empowerment” (p. 65) that aimed to answer the question: “when should Self-Leadership be encouraged” (p. 65) in an organization. This question grew out of a point articulated by Manz and Sims Jr. (2001), who said that, “it is naïve to assume that relying on Self-Leadership is always appropriate [in organizations]. External executive control will likely always have a role in any organization” (p. 63). Their (Houghton & Yoho’s, 2005) proposed model “specifies the circumstances and situations under which follower Self-Leadership should be encouraged” (p. 65) based on their findings that “despite the considerable potential for Self-Leadership in today’s
modern organizations, … the encouragement of follower Self-Leadership through an empowering leadership approach is not always appropriate” (p. 77). For example, they suggest that “in urgent or crisis situations, a directive or transformational leadership approach would likely be much more effective than an empowering approach which requires relative stability and a longer timeframe” (p. 77). Their model “suggests that certain key contingency factors … dictate which of several leadership approaches … should be chosen” (p. 65) and lays groundwork for future empirical research to further hone its practical applicability (Houghton & Yoho, 2005). While “not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive with regards to all possible leadership approaches or behaviors, contingency factors and outcomes” (p. 78), their model did yield eight explicit propositions (including several sub-points of those propositions) that incorporated three key contingency factors (follower development, situational urgency, and task environment) in conjunction with four (4) predictable outcomes (follower commitment, follower dependence, follower creativity or innovation, and psychological empowerment).

The fourth model (DiLiello & Houghton, 2006) “develop[ed] and present[ed] a model of Self-Leadership, innovation and creativity” (p. 319). Their model drew a link between “strong Self-Leadership” (p. 319) and “innovation and creativity potential” (p. 319) in individuals. They also discovered “that individuals who have innovation and creativity potential will be more likely to practise [sic] innovation and creativity when they perceive strong support from the workplace than individuals who perceive weak support from the workplace” (p. 319).
While not specifically a model, Manz and Neck (1991) have “proposed an integrative thought Self-Leadership procedure” (p. 91) that involves five specific steps that self-leaders can take to better practice the “inner-leadership” (p. 87) or “thought Self-Leadership” (p. 91) of the cognitive aspects of S-L. Neck and Barnard (1996) reintroduced these five steps in a context of “help[ing] educators recognize and reverse their self-defeating thought patterns, clearing the way for more constructive living” (p. 24). These five steps are:

1. Observing and recording existing beliefs and assumptions, self-verbalization, and mental imagery patterns;

2. Analyzing the functionality and constructiveness of the beliefs, self-talk, and imagery patterns uncovered in step 1;

3. Identifying and or developing more functional and constructive beliefs and assumptions, self-verbalizations, and mental images to substitute for dysfunctional ones;

4. Substituting the more functional thinking for the dysfunctional thoughts experienced in actual situations. For example, new more constructive assumptions, ways of talking to oneself, and mental images of the likely outcome of an encounter, can be worked out and written on paper. Then this new mental plan can be worked through when faced with particularly troubling repetitive situations, such as difficulties with an assertive and creative subordinate that arouses personal feelings of threat;

5. Continued monitoring and maintenance of beliefs, self-verbalizations, and mental images over time. This final component of the process feeds back into the functionality and constructiveness analysis in phase two and the process is continuously repeated. (p. 91)

While heralding the enormous benefits that can arise from the efficacious implementation of effective thought Self-Leadership, Manz and Neck (1991) do not ignore the challenges involved with realizing its potential.

Thought Self-Leadership offers the potential to provide significant individual and organizational benefits. However, it should not be regarded as a quick-fix miracle cure for suboptimum performance. Individual setbacks will occur and significant
challenges to successful application exist for both managers and subordinates within organizations. A central concern for managers, for example, centers on the challenge of helping employees to practice more effective thought Self-Leadership. (p. 92)

Despite any and all potential challenges, Manz and Neck (1991) position thought Self-Leadership, and Self-Leadership more generally speaking, as possibly representing the “ultimate key to organizational effectiveness” (p. 94). In context, they write:

Management of thought in organizations is perhaps the ultimate frontier to be explored in the pursuit of employee and organizational effectiveness. There is probably a great deal of truth to the idea that the managers, at their best, only influence the way employees manage themselves. For years organizations have spent millions of dollars on training their managers to be effective managers of others. Perhaps it's time that a significant investment be made in the Self-Leadership skills of employees so that they can better lead themselves. Increasing our understanding of the thought Self-Leadership process, and how it can be improved for all members of organizations, might be described as the ultimate key to employee and organizational effectiveness. (p. 94)

Measuring Self-Leadership.

Let us turn our attention now to metrics. Can Self-Leadership be measured? If so, what scholarly efforts have been undertaken to design S-L metrics? “While no psychometrically-sound Self-Leadership measurement scale has … been developed, … noteworthy … attempts have been made” (Houghton & Neck, 2002, p. 675). Two such attempts were made by Cox (1993) and Anderson and Prussia (1997) who both made attempts to develop a “valid Self-Leadership scale” by creating a Self-Leadership questionnaire (SLQ) (Houghton & Neck, 2002, p. 676). Both attempts built on a former empirical study (Manz & Sims, 1987) and other extant S-L literature (Houghton & Neck, 2002). While both studies “represent significant and valuable progress … these efforts [were] clearly preliminary” (p. 676). Thus recognizing that “further development of a psychometrically acceptable Self-Leadership scale is a pressing concern in the
advancement of Self-Leadership research” (p. 676) Houghton and Neck (2002) undertook to improve upon the SLQ’s originally developed by Cox (1993) and Anderson and Prussia (1997) by introducing their own revised Self-Leadership questionnaire (RSLQ). This new survey built on Cox’s (1993) and Anderson and Prussia’s (1997) work by empirically testing its “reliability and construct validity” (Houghton & Neck, 2002, p. 672). Houghton and Neck (2002) introduced the need for their study by acknowledging the lack of a “valid and reliable Self-Leadership assessment scale” (p. 672), despite the field’s “popularity and potential” (p. 672). The achievement of their research was the development of a revised S-L questionnaire that although not empirically flawless, did seem “to be a reasonably reliable and valid instrument for the measurement of Self-Leadership skills, behaviors, and cognitions” (p. 672).

Diversity and multiculturalism as it relates to Self-Leadership.

In the past decade, there has been an increase in research conducted in the area of diversity and multiculturalism as it relates to Self-Leadership. A groundbreaking study took place when Manz collaborated with a multi-cultural research team wherein they sought “to understand how differences in national cultures impact on the understanding and meaning of the concept of Self-Leadership and its application” (Alves, Lovelace, Manz & Matsypura, Toyasaki, and Ke, 2006, p. 338) by analyzing Self-Leadership through the lens of “Hofstede’s cultural framework” (p. 338). They found that “while Self-Leadership remains, in general, a valid concept, its understanding and application is likely to differ across cultures” (p. 338).

---

90 See Geert Hofstede’s (1967-2009) website online at http://www.geert-hofstede.com for more information about his Geert Hofstede™ Cultural Dimensions.
The same year, Neubert and Wu (2006) conducted an empirical study involving “559 Chinese employees of a large petroleum company” (p. 360). The purpose of the study was to “examine the psychometric properties and construct validity of the Houghton and Neck\textsuperscript{91} Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ) in a Chinese context” (p. 560). While their study found many useful correlatives of the RSLQ to Chinese employees in the workforce, they also learned that “the RSLQ [does] not uniformly generalize to a Chinese context” (p. 360).

The year following Alves, et al.’s (2006) and Neubert and Wu’s (2006) studies, Georgianna (2007) conducted an empirical study that sought to similarly discover “what … the relationship of culture to Self-Leadership” (p. 569) might entail. Her study involved college-aged subjects from both the United States and China. The study “provid[ed] some insight into the similarities and differences between people from different cultures as to their use of Self-Leadership strategies” (p. 569). Moreover, the research project suggested that “managers will benefit from becoming aware that individuals’ cultural characteristics influence their use and development of Self-Leadership strategies” (p. 569).

Two years later, Patnie and Soutar (2009) conducted an empirical Self-Leadership study that examined “the effectiveness of the self-management training between employees from Australian (individualistic country) and Kenya (collectivistic country)” (p. 633). This study found that Self-Leadership intervention training done over a 24-week period of time led to a “significant improvement in the learning of skills and efficacious beliefs” (p. 633). However, when improvement differences between the Australians and Kenyans were compared to each other, there was “no significant

\textsuperscript{91} Houghton and Neck (2002).
differences … and the training [was found to be] similarly effective in both cultures” (p. 633).

One obvious component of diversity that has been heretofore neglected is the issue of how men versus women respond to the opportunity to self-lead. When comparing Self-Leadership between the sexes, Neck and Manz (2010) report:

Gender is another factor that may have some bearing on a person’s Self-Leadership. [However] Studies have generally found no relationship between gender and Self-Leadership. Overall, women appear to be no more or less effective in leading themselves than men and vice versa. Nevertheless, gender may have a subtle effect on various aspects of the practice of Self-Leadership (p. 138).

In conclusion, the research to date seems to suggest that while different cultures may view and approach Self-Leadership in culturally unique ways, the concept itself is universally applicable to all cultures and both sexes. However, these findings do not negate the need for further research to better understand specific differences between the sexes and among different cultures as it applies to perceptions and approaches to Self-Leadership. Neubert and Wu (2006), tersely capture both the potential need and importance of further research in the field of Self-Leadership as it relates to different cultures around the globe: “Given its importance to performance in our increasingly global work environments, cross-cultural research on Self-Leadership is of critical importance to managers who must understand and improve the performance of employees in the twenty-first century” (p. 371). Despite the increase of Self-Leadership research as it relates to multiculturalism in the past decade, many opportunities remain for further investigations into the subject, especially as it relates to indigenous populations and developing countries around the World.
Contingency Factors.

One “current trend in Self-Leadership research concerns Self-Leadership contingency factors” (Neck and Houghton, 2006, p. 286). There is dissent among scholars regarding the degree to which Self-Leadership should be encouraged and just as importantly, when it should be encouraged, especially as it relates to organizational settings where Self-Leadership may be tapped into (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Houghton and Yoho’s (2005) “contingency model of leadership and psychological empowerment” (p. 65) mentioned above “specifies when and under what circumstances Self-Leadership should be encouraged by organizational leaders” (Neck & Houghton, 2006, p. 286).

As was mentioned earlier, Manz and Sims, Jr. (2001) wrote that, “It is naïve to assume that relying on Self-Leadership is always appropriate. External executive control will likely always have a role in any organization” (p. 63). In this statement they are referring to Self-Leadership as applied to on-the-job personal decision making within a framework of autonomous leverage provided by an (assumed) self-directed (or managed) work team manager or supervisor. They clarify this point by adding: “It is incorrect to assume that Self-Leadership and external control are mutually exclusive. Even in the most intensive external-control situations, employees always exercise some degree of Self-Leadership” (p. 63-64). Manz further clarified this point in a personal e-mail to me dated 13 November 2010 wherein I made the following query in an e-mail to Manz and Sims on 11 November 2010:

It seems to me that Self-Leadership is universally applicable—if for nothing else than to determine an appropriate response to forces of external control. (or as you put it: "Even in the most intensive external-control situations, employees always exercise some degree of Self-Leadership" [p. 63-64]). As such, I’m considering the possibility that Self-Leadership is in fact applicable (in one form or another) in every possible instance or situation—at least insofar as it concerns anything we
could possibly think, say, or do. From your perspective, is there something missing in my line of thinking about this?

Manz responded as follows in his November 13 e-mail wherein he further clarified the point he had made in his and Sims Jr.’s book (2001):

It depends on whether you are talking about individual S-L or looking at it from the view of the organization. Possible terms to use here are Self-Leadership capacity (an individual's capability to apply S-L strategies) or structural S-L (empowering leadership, self-managing teams, empowerment efforts in general ...) to foster more Self-Leadership input from employees. For example, while everyone exercises S-L to some degree (cognitively, behaviorally, etc.) it is not always a good fit for the organization to facilitate higher levels of S-L input ... [for example,] if there is an emergency in a nuclear power plant it is important that employees involved follow procedures closely rather than try to express their individual creativity via S-L.92

Where in the Academe Does Self-Leadership Fit?

Self-Leadership is related to, and found its scholarly genesis within, several other academic topics that had already been developed. For example, Neck and Houghton (2006) mention four such related topics: “self-regulation, self-management, conscientiousness and emotional intelligence” (p. 271), and there are many others. In this section, the primary, parent topics of Self-Leadership will be discussed. These manifold parent topics include: self-control and self-management (Neck & Houghton, 2006), social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Neck & Manz, 2010), self-regulation (Forgas, Baumeister, & Tice, 2009; Neck & Houghton, 2006) motivation theory (Maslow, 1943; Bolles, 1967; Neck & Manz, 2010), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002; Neck & Manz, 2010), organizational behavior (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004), leadership (Manz & Neck, 2010), followership

---

92 E-mail excerpt reprinted with Dr. Manz’ written permission.
(Gardner, 1995; Kelley, 1995; Rost, 1995), and personality (Neck & Houghton, 2006; Houghton, Bonham & Neck, and Singh, 2004). These topics are addressed next.

**Self-Control & Self-Management**

Neck and Houghton (2006) explain that, “self-management consists of a set of strategies designed to help a person manage behavior with respect to reducing discrepancies from immediate externally set standards” (p. 280). Moreover, they ascribe the concept to an outgrowth of “concepts of self-control originally developed in clinical psychology” (p. 280) that were utilized “to manage addictive or self-destructive health-related behaviors (e.g. smoking cessation or eating disorders)” (p. 280), but which were later “adapted to organizational settings” (p. 280).

Lest one assume that Self-Leadership and self-management are synonymous terms, consider the words of Neck and Houghton: “Self-Leadership is a more encompassing approach to self-influence than self-management (Manz, 1986)” (p. 280).

**Social Cognitive Theory**

Neck and Houghton (2006) label “Self-Leadership (as) a normative model of self-influence (operating) within the framework of more descriptive and deductive theories such as self-regulation and social cognitive theory” (bold and italics added) (Neck & Houghton, 2006, p. 270). A normative model differs from a descriptive model in that instead of trying to simply describe the way something is (descriptive model) a normative model actually posits potential means and methods of accomplishing something, thereby making it prescriptive rather than merely descriptive.93 In other words, Self-Leadership

---

93 Information derived from online definition provided by BusinessDictionary.com (2011).
theory is not meant to merely describe what Self-Leadership is and can do, but also to
proscribe certain practices to individual Self-Leadership for the enhancement of their
own Self-Leadership Efficacy (Neck & Manz, 2010; Bandura, 1986) and life.

field of social cognitive theory, developed by Bandura (1977, 1986). Bandura (1977)
“attempt(s) to provide a unified theoretical framework for analyzing human thought and
behavior” (p. vi). According to Bandura, a key component of social learning theory
includes self-regulatory processes. In describing a central role played by self-regulatory
processes in the theory, thematic Self-Leadership undertones emerge:

Theorists who exclude the capacity for self-direction from their view of human
potentialities restrict their research to external sources of influence … People are
not simply reactors to external influences. They select, organize, and transform
the stimuli that impinge upon them. Through self-generated inducements and
consequences they can exercise some influence over their own behavior. An act
therefore includes among its determinants self-produced influences. Recognition
of people’s self-directing capacities provided the impetus for self-regulatory
paradigms of research in which individuals themselves serve as the principal
agents of their own change. (Bandura, 1977, p. vi-vii)

An aspect of Bandura’s social learning theory is reciprocal determinism, which
occurs when “behavior, other personal factors, and environmental factors all operate as
interlocking determinants of each other” (1977, p. 9-10).

Nine years later, Bandura honed in further on the behavioral aspect of reciprocal
determinism in the development of his social cognitive theory, of which his social
learning theory had been precursor. Bandura (1986) later introduced a complement term
to reciprocal determinism: reciprocal causation. Reciprocal causation provides self-
leaders the opportunity to have a say in the results they get in life, but also sets self-
directional limits. Despite any such “limits,” Bandura (1986) asserts:
The conceptualization of personal determinants of psychosocial functioning accords a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes. Human thought is a powerful instrument for comprehending the environment and dealing with it … People are not only knowers and performers. They are also self-reactors with a capacity for self-direction.” (p. xi)

Bandura (1986) discusses numerous topics that have since become associated in various ways with Self-Leadership (e.g.: self-regulation, goals, intentions, moral judgment, self-reactive influences, and the selective activation and disengagement of internal control. He also addresses the concept of self-efficacy, which is defined as a person’s sense of belief or confidence in their own capacity to accomplish something (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2006), or as Neck and Manz (2010) put it: “Self-efficacy is, in essence, our level of effectiveness in dealing with our world” (p. 145). The concept was included in Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, but was developed in greater detail in his Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura asserts that a person’s self-efficacy is a partial determinant in the decisions they will choose to make (Bandura, 1986). Likewise, the choices a self-leader makes will, in turn, influence their self-efficacy. The concept of Self-Leadership Efficacy introduced in this dissertation is an outgrowth of these basic definitions of self-efficacy applied explicitly to Self-Leadership contexts.

Neck and Manz (2010) assert that social cognitive theory serves as one of two primary constructs from which “the concept of Self-Leadership is derived” (p. 4). The other primary construct, according to Neck and Manz is intrinsic motivation theory, which will be discussed in the next section.

**Motivation Theory**

Neck and Manz (2010) suggest that motivation theory is one of the primary umbrella topics of which Self-Leadership falls underneath. More specifically, they
consider it to be an outgrowth of intrinsic motivation theory and cite Deci and Ryan’s (1980) and Steers, Porter, and Bigley’s (1996) work, among others as authorities on both intrinsic motivation theory and cognitive evaluation theory—a deductive theory from which Self-Leadership theory is “even more specifically” (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 5) derived from.

Related to intrinsic motivation is the concept of locus of control. There are two kinds of locus of control: internal and external (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 136)

People with an internal locus of control believe that they have direct (or intrinsic) control over their personal outcomes and that this control comes from within. People with an external locus of control, on the other hand, believe that they have little control over their outcomes and that control comes primarily from factors in their external environment. Not surprisingly, research has shown that Self-Leadership is related to an internal locus of control … [moreover] To the extent that we believe that our choices and behaviors can influence the world around us, we will be more likely to practice Self-Leadership. To the contrary, if we feel that our choices and behaviors are largely shaped and limited by our external world, we will be less likely to engage in Self-Leadership. (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 136)

According to Neck and Manz (2010), “research has shown that Self-Leadership is related to an internal locus of control” (p. 136). This is because “to the extent that we believe that our choices and behaviors can influence the world around us, we will be more likely to practice Self-Leadership” (p. 136). By contrast, “if we feel that our choices and behaviors are largely shaped and limited by our external world, we will be less likely to naturally engage in Self-Leadership” (p. 136). As such, Neck and Manz (2010) suggest that those with an external locus of control “could benefit more from … [studying] Self-Leadership concepts … than people with an internal locus of control … [because those with an internal locus of control] may already be effectively leading themselves” (p. 136).
Self-Regulation

According to Neck and Houghton (2006) “Self-Leadership strategies operate within the larger theoretical framework of self-regulation” (p. 275). Self-regulation, which is, “the ability to control and regulate our actions” (Forgas, Baumeister, and Tice, 2009, p. 1) “is perhaps the quintessential characteristic of human beings. Indeed, the capacity to engage in effective self-regulation is probably one of the defining features of our species” (p. 1). Moreover, compared to the rest of the animal kingdom, “no other species comes even close to us in its ability to engage in effective self-regulation and self-control in order to achieve distal goals” (p. 2). Baumeister and Alquist (2009) explain the self-evident value inherent in self-control as an aspect of self-regulation:

The ability to consciously and effortfully replace current habits, moods, and ruminations with more desirable ones is an extremely useful tool. Self-control provides individuals with the ability to override current impulses in order to respond in more adaptive and beneficial ways. This flexibility of behavior allows individuals to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by modern society, as well as to cope with new demands and challenges. Research has supported the idea that self-control is highly beneficial for individuals. (p. 22)

An in-depth field of its own, an entire dissertation could easily be written on the various components and nuances of self-regulation. Suffice it here to say, self-regulation deals with the mode, manner, processes (including motivational factors [see Sansone, 2009] and emotional variables [see Tice, 2009; Koole, 2009; and Denson, 2009]) human beings undertake to control and regulate their own behavior, which is a key component of Self-Leadership. According to Neck and Houghton (2006) “Self-Leadership strategies may enhance self-regulatory effectiveness in a number of important ways” (p. 277).
Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (or the measurement of one’s emotional quotient [EQ]) is virtually synonymous with Self-Leadership. To illustrate, consider the words of Goleman (1995), likely the most visible exponent of emotional intelligence: “Emotional intelligence … include[s] self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself” (p. xii). Goleman (1995) goes on to present “five main domains” (p. 43) that constitute the presence and/or practice of emotional intelligence by an individual. Said domains were originally introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), and include the following:

1. Knowing one’s emotions. Self-awareness—recognizing a feeling as it happens—is the keystone of emotional intelligence.
4. Recognizing emotions in others.
5. Handling relationships (Goleman, 1995, p. 43-44)

The relation of these aptitudes (especially numbers one, two, and three) to Self-Leadership theory is tautological. Moreover, many Self-Leadership oriented concepts play a role in the aptitudes and skills concerned with emotional intelligence. Such concepts include self-awareness, self-control, self-discipline, self-efficacy, self management, and self-talk (Goleman, 1995). To illustrate what emotional intelligence looks like, Goleman calls on the wisdom of the Greek philosopher Aristotle: “Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not easy”94 (p. ix). This is perhaps an eloquent caricature of one of life’s ultimate Self-Leadership challenges (managing one’s internal emotional states) and provides a witty description of

94 From The Nichomachean Ethics.
the complex interplay of the internal and external variables that such challenges afford.

Goleman also quotes Socrates in the naming of one of his book’s chapters: *know thyself*, a classic self-awareness (Self-Leadership) mantra.

Neck and Manz (2010) combine the constructs of emotional intelligence and self-regulation to employ the hybrid term *emotion regulation* and emphasize that “having confidence in our ability to self-lead our emotions can be a critical part of our effectiveness” (p. 52). Although several similarities can be made between emotional intelligence and Self-Leadership, Neck and Manz (2010) strike an important difference in that “EI is primarily concerned with the ability to self-regulate emotions, whereas Self-Leadership focuses on the self-regulation of thought processes and behaviors” (p. 137). Despite drawing this distinction, they ultimately emphasize the mutual inclusivity of the two concepts and the synergistic role they play toward each other. This is a reasonable merger to draw from the standpoint that our thought processes and behaviors will have a dramatic influence when it comes to “self-regulat[ing] emotions” (p. 137).

Insomuch as emotions have a powerful potential for impacting cognitive processes and behaviors, emotional intelligence and Self-Leadership concepts almost certainly interact with one another. People scoring high in EI who can control their emotions will most likely be more effective in leading themselves. At the same time, Self-Leadership skills … may be useful in helping people to become more emotionally intelligent. In short, it appears that EI and Self-Leadership are reciprocally related…. Having EI may make people better self-leaders and Self-Leadership techniques may help people to improve their EI. (p. 137-138)

**Organizational Behavior**

The most prominent link Self-Leadership has to organizational behavior comes in the role it has played in promoting the concept of self-managed (or directed) work teams, led by Manz and Sims Jr.’s (2001) *SuperLeader*, or leader “who leads others to lead
themselves” (p. 5). Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) cite “proponents … of the self-management approach” (p. 472) in putting forth another term: self-management leadership which has the same basic definition: “The process of leading others to lead themselves” (p. 472), and emphasize that for self-managed teams to be successful, individual members of the team must receive training in self-management and leaders must likewise be “engaging in self-management leadership behaviors” (p. 472).

Manz and Sims Jr. (2001) believe their message of Self-Leadership as it applies to organizations (SuperLeadership) is even more important now than it has been in the past because of the way in which the information age has changed, and continues to change, the landscape. Like Covey (2004) in his categorization of the “Industrial” age as preceding the “Information/Knowledge Worker” age, (p. 13-14) they highlight the differences between the “The Industrial Enterprise” and “The Knowledge-Based Enterprise” (Manz & Sims Jr., p. 18).

These changes in structure require rather radical changes in the culture—the social systems within … organizations. The essence of this cultural change is the investment in and emphasis on knowledge work … To be truly effective the knowledge worker needs to be empowered at an advanced level. Talented and empowered human capital will become the prime ingredient of organizational success. Most of all, people need to be able to lead themselves. (p. 20)

In their blanket treatment of contemporary organizational behavioral (OB) topics, Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) neglect to include the term “self-leader” or “Self-Leadership” in their general text. This is perhaps an indicator of the fledgling position Self-Leadership currently carries in the broader field of leadership and/or other social scientific studies. Nevertheless, despite this salient absence at the current table of OB discussions, it is worth noting that numerous related topics are addressed, including: self-concept, self-confidence, self-contract, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-fulfilling prophecy,
self-interest, self-management, self-monitoring, self-observation, self-reinforcement, self-reliance, self-respect, and self-talk (see subject index page 120). In discussing the concept of self-management, they (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004) recapitulate a statement of Bandura related to the concept of his social learning theory by stating the following: “To the extent that you can control your environment and your cognitive representations of your environment, you are the master of your own behavior” (p. 161). Sounds a lot like Self-Leadership theory, does it not? Considering the coverage of such similar topics, it is reasonable to assume that Self-Leadership will eventually be considered a bona fide member of the OB community.

Leadership

Self-Leadership theory derives some of its ideas from general leadership theories. For example, both are concerned with influence. Leadership generally speaking involves “a process of influence” on other people (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 2). Self-Leadership, on the other hand, involves “the process of influencing oneself” (p. 4). According to Neck and Manz (2010) the effective leadership of self is a prerequisite of effectively leading others, and Covey (2004) emphasizes the “absolute necessity of personal development and integration before trust can be built at the relationship level” (p. 122). Furthermore, Topper (2009) explains that:

Many leaders are put into positions of power often before they have learned the art of Self-Leadership. Leaders do not motivate others. Motivation is a personal thing and must come from within. What leaders do is help others tap into things they care about and help them to move forward in achieving their goals. (p. 561)

In a discussion on “learning about leadership” (p. 30), Cronin (1995) emphasized that, “personal mastery is important” (p. 31). Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith,
Dutton, & Kleiner (2000) positions “personal mastery” as the first and foundational building block in his eminent “five key disciplines of organizational learning” (p. 7). In other words, before *shared vision, mental models, team learning, systems thinking* (p. 7-8) can effectively take place, one must “practice … articulating a coherent image of … [one’s own] personal vision—the results you most want to create in your [own] life—alongside a realistic assessment of the current reality of your life today” (p. 7). In a later work, Senge (2007) categorized personal mastery as a relative rarity, echoing the words of Clawson (2008).95

Personal mastery is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively. As such, it is an essential cornerstone of the learning organization.... And surprisingly few adults work to rigorously develop their own personal mastery. (Senge, 2007, p. 7)

The last line of Senge’s quote reverberates back to an earlier statement that bears reiterating: while all of us are self-leaders, not all of us are effective self-leaders all the time (Manz, 1983a). Other authors have made the point that leading other people effectively is difficult, if not impossible, unless one can first lead themselves (Neck & Manz, 2010; Jensen, 2007; 2005; Covey, 1989). Covey (1989) explicitly teaches that dependence precedes independence, which in-turn precedes interdependence. His 7 *Habits* model is based entirely on an upward continuum of leadership development that begins with little to no leadership (*dependence*), then develops into personal leadership (*independence*), and finally graduates into interpersonal leadership capacity (*interdependence*). Covey (1989) emphasizes that interdependence is a much higher state

---

95 “One of the biggest leadership issues is the inability of people – even and especially managers – to lead themselves” (p. 175).
of being and leadership than is independence, which likewise surpasses dependence in like manner.

The list of those proclaiming the importance of leadership is not short. For example, Wren (1995) says that “leadership has become one of the hot topics in the popular consciousness” and that “colleges and corporations have discovered that the study of leadership is both popular and potentially quite useful” (p. ix). Moreover, he goes on to report “a widespread perception of a lack of leadership in our society, in the face of increasingly challenging problems and needs” (p. ix). In order to confront this perception (and need), Bennis and Nanus (2003) proclaim that,

We must raise our search for new leadership to a national priority. We desperately need women and men who can take charge … [as] our present crisis calls out for leadership at every level of society and in all organizations that compose it. (p. 220)

Hinckley (2000) put it this way:

What we desperately need today on all fronts—in our homes and communities, in schoolrooms and boardrooms, and certainly throughout society at large—are leaders, men and women who are willing to stand for something … Never in the history of the world has there been a more profound need for leaders of principle to step forward. (p. 197-200)

Finally, Wren (1995) explains the importance of leadership:

It is important to understand leadership. Knowing more about leadership and how the process operates permits one to realize the real end of leadership: the achievement of mutual goals which are intended to enhance one’s group, organization, or society…. The more that is known and understood about the process of leadership by all who participate in it, the more likely it is that the fruits of the combined efforts of leaders and followers will yield satisfactory results. (p. xi)

In Bass’s (2008) prominent and quasi-comprehensive Handbook of Leadership, the term Self-Leadership does not yet appear. This is an indication of Self-Leadership’s relative nascence as an independent theory of leadership. Despite Bass’ current exclusion
of the term, it does, however, cover 29 other leadership topics that begin with the related word *self*. A few examples related (indirectly or directly) to Self-Leadership include *self-awareness, self-assessment, self-managed teams,* (Manz & Sims, 1987, 2001; Kelley, 1995) *self-managing individuals, self-perception, self-regulation,* (Neck & Houghton, 2006) *self-reinforcement, self-sacrifice,* and *self-understanding* (Bass, 2008). Moreover, there is growing evidence that Self-Leadership increasingly does represent a field unto itself. In the words of Neck & Houghton (2006): “Self-Leadership has earned the respect of many academics, as reflected by a plethora of theoretical and empirical Self-Leadership journal publications” (p. 271). As such, it is likely only a matter of time before future editions of Bass’ leadership tome *does* grant explicit coverage to *Self-Leadership* as an independent field of inquiry.

No matter how much a supervisor or other authority figure might attempt to micromanage a person’s workday or life direction, each individual person must still ultimately make the majority of individual decisions, both cognitively and behaviorally, throughout the course of one’s day and life. Everyone practices Self-Leadership to one degree or another. I argue that the degree to which a person masters their own Self-Leadership will directly influence the corresponding degree to which an individual achieves goals they set for themselves and/or acquires leadership opportunities to influence others over the course of their lives and careers. This is why Bennis (2009) “urge[s self-leaders] to discover and cultivate that authentic self, the part of you that is most alive, the part that is most you,” and emphasizes that “finding and nurturing that authentic self is the one sure way of becoming a leader” (p. xxviii).
Followership

Growing up, I was repeatedly taught that in order to be an effective leader, I must first practice being an effective follower of those men and women who acted as my leaders in the community, at school and church, and in my home. This lesson echoes the words of Neck and Manz (2010) who teach that Self-Leadership is an important prerequisite for leadership. This section explores not only the importance of followership, but also makes the obvious connection between followership and Self-Leadership, and the evident relationship they both have to the leadership of others.

Kelley (1995) effectively positions the importance of followers and followership in a context of leaders and leadership:

Leaders matter greatly. But in searching … for better leaders we tend to lose sight of the people these leaders will lead. Without his armies, after all, Napoleon was just a man with grandiose ambitions. Organizations 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. (p. 193)

When it comes to formal leadership positions versus followership positions, most of us spend a lot more time and energy in followership roles than we do in leadership roles (Kelley, 1995). Even “the leaders,” including CEOs, in an organization often play the role of subordinate in addition to their leadership responsibilities.96 This is ironic when one considers how much time and treasure is invested in the study, research, and analysis of leadership, and how relatively little of the same is invested in followership (Kelley, 1995). Of the 64 chapters in Wren’s (1995) tome: The Leader’s Companion,

96 CEOs may sometimes appear to be omnipotent potentates who answer to no one—especially in the rock-star CEO culture that has increasingly marked the American corporate culture in recent decades. This image, however, is ultimately an illusion. Even CEO’s must answer to boards, stakeholders, customers, and/or government intervention. Or consider the President of the United States, commonly referred to as “the most powerful person in the world.” Even he (or perhaps someday she) must answer to Congress and the Supreme Court, international bodies (in some instances), and the voting populace, an electorate from which he ultimately derives his power. The point is that regardless how high up the leadership ladder persons may climb, they will never entirely relinquish the role of follower.
only three chapters focus on followership or followers (Gardner, Kelley, & Rost). Kelley suggests that just as leadership (like Self-Leadership [Manz, 1983a]) can be formally and explicitly taught, there is likewise value in providing formal training in the art of followership.

What makes a good follower? Kelley (1995) says, “An effective … follower is enthusiastic, intelligent, and self-reliant…” (p. 195) and is willing to contribute to the realization of organizational objectives without demanding regular overt credit. Some followers are good at following because they receive natural rewards (Neck & Manz, 2010) from contributing to the team and otherwise performing well in a subordinate role. Others pursue followership out of personal ambition, hoping to eventually secure for themselves supervisory leadership opportunities (Kelley, 1995). Kelley uncovered “two underlying behavioral dimensions” (p. 195) that distinguish effective followers from ineffective followers. The first is that they “exercise independent, critical thinking” (p. 195). The second dimension ranks them on an active versus passive scale of behavior. Not surprisingly, effective followers tend to be more active than passive (Kelley, 1995). They are proactive rather than reactive, and active rather than passive in taking personal responsibility for carrying out a given task or pursing a key objective.

A vivid example of this proactive brand of followership was described and acclaimed by Hubbard (1924) in the description of the nonfictional character Rowan in his eminent essay: A Message to Garcia. In the late nineteenth century, during the Spanish-American War, U.S. President William McKinley needed a message delivered to Garcia. The leader of the Spanish insurgents, Garcia was ensconced somewhere in the mountainous jungles of Cuba. It was a difficult, dangerous mission, and Rowan was the
man tasked with the undertaking. Rowan pursued his mission with the courage and
courage and character of a dedicated follower, and remained at the task until he had successfully
delivered the missive and safely returned. While “fortune undoubtedly favored him, …
behind it all was the indomitable pluck of a young American who was determined to do
his duty” (p. 8). Rowan’s achievement garnered venerable attention: “General Miles,
then commanding the United States Army, recommended a decoration for (Rowan) …
saying: ‘I regard the achievement as one of the most hazardous and heroic deeds in
military warfare’” (p. 8). Kelley (1995) would laud Rowan as being a highly effective
follower. Hubbard (1924) did it for him:

By the eternal! there is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and
the statue placed in every college of the land. … (what) young men need (is) a
stiffening of the vertebrae (sic) which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act
promptly, concentrate their energies: do the thing—”Carry a message to Garcia.”
(p. 16)

For Hubbard, the results/rewards of effective followership include employment,
prosperity, and the honor of being needed/wanted. It is something for which all of us can
aspire. Apparently, many people (and no doubt educators) felt the message of
followership lionized in Hubbard’s immortal essay was something everyone (and perhaps
especially youngsters) should aspire to as illustrated by this particularly illuminating fact:

“Over forty million copies of A Message to Garcia have been printed. This is said to be a
larger circulation than any other literary venture ever has attained during the lifetime of
the author, in all history”97 (Hubbard, 1924, p. 14) up to that point in time. In estimating
the worth of followers as effective as Rowan, Hubbard exclaims:

---

97 This quote comes from the last paragraph of Hubbard’s (1924) own Apologia prefacing his essay, and
was composed on December 1, 1913, suggesting that many more copies have been printed (beyond 40
million) in the intervening century.
My heart goes out to the man who does his work when the “boss” is away, as well as when he is at home. And the man who, when given a letter for Garcia, quietly takes the missive, without asking any idiotic questions, and with no lurking intention of chucking it into the nearest sewer, or of doing aught else but deliver it, never gets “laid off,” nor has to go on a strike for higher wages. Civilization is one long, anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asked shall be granted. He is wanted in every city, town and village—in every office, shop, store, and factory. The world cries out for such; he is needed and needed badly. (p. 22-23)

Seventy years later, Kelley (1995) echoes Hubbard’s words:

Effective followers are well-balanced adults who can succeed … (and) many followers believe they offer as much value to an organization as leaders do. … As organizational structures flatten, the quality of those who follow will become more and more important. … Companies will not succeed without them. (p. 196, 204)

Kelley (1995) cites self-management as a key component of effective followership. Because skilled followers tend to think for themselves (Kelley, 1995), supervision time is cut down. Effective followers anticipate the needs of organization leaders and those same leaders tend to delegate important tasks with confidence they will be properly executed. With faith in their own capacity to contribute, effective followers will also more readily speak frankly with superiors about important issues, yet they are simultaneously loyal to the organization they serve, and to those who lead it. If an effective follower becomes disenchanted with the direction of the company, she is more likely to find a new opportunity elsewhere with an organization she does believe in, rather than digging in her heels and making life more difficult for everyone in the original organization. Through competence, commitment, and focus, effective followers enhance organizational productivity and ultimately save company money (Kelley, 1995).

A false assumption of most organizations is that followership does not need to be taught in the same way leadership does (Kelley 1995). This assumption arises from a
misunderstanding of the essential link between followership and Self-Leadership. Essentially, effective followers are also effective self-leaders.

To be an effective follower, one must also understand that followers are as important as leaders (Kelley, 1995). As the famous romantic poet Longfellow (1912) so eloquently stated in his immortal poem *The Builders*:

```
Nothing useless is, or low;
Each thing in its place is best;
And what seems but idle show
Strengthening and supports the rest. (p. 186)
```

Furthermore, effective followers understand that there is a lot more to followership than merely “doing what you are told to do” (Kelly, 1995, p. 202), and that enthusiasm for their work can be accessed from within; motivation does not always have to come externally from the leader. Self-Leadership (or followership) oriented paradigms can be cultivated by leaders and followers alike in an organization. Moreover, just as organizations invest in formal leadership training, explicit training on the development of a followership and/or Self-Leadership oriented mindset, and the concomitant skills, practices, and habits engendered thereby, can be implemented to develop more effective employees, thereby fostering an organizational culture that values followership in greater proportion to leadership (Kelley, 1995).

**Personality**

According to Neck and Manz (2010), “Psychological research suggests that personality is related to Self-Leadership in important and interesting ways” (p. 135). One dominant study they are referring to when they say “psychological research” is that of Houghton, Bonham and Neck, and Singh (2004) wherein the researchers empirically...
investigated “the relationship between Self-Leadership and personality” through “a comparison of hierarchical factor structures”\(^{98}\) (p. 427). Studying a test sample of nearly 400 college students, and using Houghton and Neck’s (2002) revised Self-Leadership questionnaire (RSLQ) as their method of measuring Self-Leadership among sample participants, Houghton et al. (2004) determined “that Self-Leadership dimensions and personality traits are related yet distinct concepts” (p. 436). Furthermore, in reviewing the resultant data derived from the quantitative study, the authors concluded on two potential interpretations of the data. The first “is that Self-Leadership’s dimensions merely describe the behavioral manifestations of personality” (p. 436). In other words, a person’s pre-disposed personality traits become a blueprint for that person’s likely degree and manner of Self-Leadership practice. The second interpretation “is that a person’s configuration of Self-Leadership tendencies is identical to that person’s configuration of related personality traits before any exposure to Self-Leadership strategies, but potentially distinctive after exposure to Self-Leadership’s principles” (p. 436).

Therefore, according to the second interpretation: “the learning and application of Self-Leadership strategies can and does affect Self-Leadership behaviors over and above the effects of personality” (p. 437) and “assumes that self-leading tendencies, processes, and behaviors can be shaped and changed” (p. 437).

Houghton et al. (2004) explain that their second interpretation and set of assumptions “appears consistent with Self-Leadership theory, trait personality theory, prior empirical research, and the findings of the present study” (p. 438). However, they accede that,

---

\(^{98}\) In this study, three factor structures pertaining to Self-Leadership: behavior focused strategies, natural reward, and constructive thought patterns, and three factor structures pertaining to personality: extraversion, emotional stability, and conscientiousness were reviewed.
Other plausible explanations for these findings may exist…, [and] is it therefore impossible, based on [the] data alone, to unequivocally determine the veracity of [the] second interpretation; [therefore] additional research is needed to further examine the validity of this conceptualization of the relationship between Self-Leadership and personality. (p. 438)

**Self-Leadership Strategies**

Self-Leadership strategies are cognitive and/or behavioral techniques that individuals can utilize to practice Self-Leadership in their lives. According to Neck and Houghton (2006), there are three basic categories of Self-Leadership strategies. These categories consist of *constructive thought pattern strategies*, *behavior-focused strategies*, and *reward strategies* (p. 271).

**Constructive Thought Pattern Strategies**

Constructive thought patterns constitute the front side of Self-Leadership application from the simple standpoint that thoughts precede actions. The basic concept of constructive thought patterns has been around indefinitely. The twentieth century saw a precipitous rise in the publication of literature extolling the virtues of developing constructive thought patterns in one’s life. For example, consider the following sampling of comments from popular writers on the subject of thought construction and/or control:

First, Carnegie (1944/1975):

*By far the most vital lesson I have ever learned in the importance of what we think…. Our thoughts make us what we are. Our mental attitude is the X factor that determines our fate…. I now know with a conviction beyond all doubt that the biggest problem you and I have to deal with—in fact, almost the only problem we have to deal with—is choosing the right thoughts. If we can do that, we will be on the highroad to solving all our problems. The great philosopher who ruled the Roman Empire, Marcus Aurelius, summed it up in eight words—*eight words that can determine your destiny*: “*Our life is what our thoughts make it.*”* (p. 89)

Second Peale (1952):
A primary method for gaining a mind full of peace is to practice emptying the mind….practice emptying your mind of fears, hates, insecurities, regrets, and guilt feelings. The mere fact that you consciously make this effort to empty your mind tends to give relief. (p. 19)99

Third, Hill (1960):

Truly, “thoughts are things,” and powerful things at that, when they are mixed with definiteness of purpose, persistence, and a burning desire for their translation into riches, or other material objects…. If you fill your mind with fear, doubt and unbelief in your ability to connect with and use the forces of Infinite intelligence, … your subconscious mind will translate it into its physical equivalent…. The subconscious mind will translate into reality a thought driven by fear just as readily as it will translate into reality a thought driven by courage, or faith. (p. 19, 56)100

Fourth, Dyer (1976) wrote: “You have the power to think whatever you choose to allow into your head” (p. 21).101 Such popular authors from the past and present likely influenced contemporary Self-Leadership scholars to some degree in the emphasis and importance of cultivating constructive thought patterns. One of the earlier developments in the field of scholarly Self-Leadership was the concept of thought Self-Leadership or TSL (see Manz & Neck, 1991; Neck & Manz, 1996; and Godwin, Neck, & Houghton, 1999). TSL “involves employee self-influence through cognitive strategies that focus on individual self-dialogue, mental imagery, beliefs and assumptions, and thought patterns” (Neck & Manz, 1996, p. 62) and promotes the idea that “individuals can influence themselves by utilizing specific cognitive strategies” (Godwin, Neck & Houghton, 1999, p. 153). Manz and Neck (1991) suggest that because of the important influence that thoughts have on both individual and organizational levels, “understanding … the thought Self-Leadership process, and how it can be improved for all members of

99 From The Power of Positive Thinking: A Practical Guide to Mastering the Problems of Everyday Living
100 From Think and Grow Rich
101 From Your Erroneous Zones
organizations, might be described as the ultimate key to employee and organizational effectiveness” (p. 94). In an attempt to validate this premise, Neck and Manz (1996) conducted an empirical study to “examine the applicability of thought Self-Leadership in an organizational setting (with a bankruptcy financial status), and the potential for cognitions to be self-controlled” (p. 445). The results of their study suggest “that individuals who received … thought Self-Leadership training experienced increased mental performance, positive affect (enthusiasm), job satisfaction, and decreased negative affect (nervousness) relative to those not receiving the training” (p. 445). Moreover, “the trainees reported a strong and positive reaction to the training … [and] those who received the training experienced enhanced perceptions of self-efficacy and more optimistic perceptions of the organization’s bankruptcy condition than those not receiving the training” (p. 445). Ultimately, the goal of thought Self-Leadership is to direct one’s thoughts into channels that are consistent with achieving a goal or objective. It is to become like *The Little Engine that Could* (Piper, 1930) who *did* because he *thought* that he *could* (Neck, Neck, Manz, & Godwin, 1999).

In identifying the key components of Self-Leadership oriented constructive thought pattern strategies, Neck and Houghton (2006) iterate three specific practices that rise to the surface. These three items will be discussed in the next three sub-sections as *identify and replace dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions, mental imagery, and positive self talk* (p. 272).
Identify and replace dysfunctional beliefs and assumptions.\textsuperscript{102}

Burns (2009) introduced 10 different “primary categories of dysfunctional thinking” (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 65) that he calls “cognitive distortions” (Burns, 2009, p. 42). They are:

1. All-or-nothing thinking
2. Overgeneralization
3. Mental filter
4. Disqualifying the positive
5. Jumping to conclusions
6. Magnification (catastrophizing) or minimization
7. Emotional reasoning
8. Should statements
9. Labeling and mislabeling
10. Personalization\textsuperscript{103}

It is reasonable to assume that everyone has cognitively distorted thought processes from time to time and to one degree or another. Moreover, it could be argued that in degrees that are minor and quantities that are small, cognitive distortions represent a normal outgrowth of the human cognitive experience. When distortions reach a certain level of extremity and/or longevity, neurosis has taken up residence where a sense of normalcy once prevailed, and a psychological, and/or psychiatric, diagnoses may be in order.

Neck and Manz (2010) explain that “to alter destructive belief[s], [we] must identify the dysfunction and then change the thoughts that occur to be more rational in nature” (p. 66). Peck (1978) has defined mental health as the “dedication to reality at all costs” (p. 289). He has also stated that a “patient’s will to grow is the once crucial determinant of success or failure in psychotherapy” (p. 299). I submit that whether a person is striving to overcome what might be considered, or termed, “normal

\textsuperscript{102} Neck & Houghton (2006, p. 272).
\textsuperscript{103} Burns (2009, p. 42-43).
dysfunctional thought processes,” or clinically neurotic and/or psychotic “cognitive distortions,” that person must exercise the will to face reality, or in Neck and Manz’ (2010) words, the “rational” in order to recognize dysfunctional thinking and then seek out cognitive alternatives that better support mental hygiene.

**Mental imagery**

Neck and Manz (2010) affirm that, “Your mind can have a big impact on whether or not you achieve your goals” (p. 123). The concept of mental imagery involves the proactive engendering of imaginative cognitions that envision performing a given task before actually undertaking it. It is a concept that has been utilized in many different life arenas, from athletics and academics, to on-the-job performance and relationships. Covey (1989) teaches that, “All things are created twice. There’s a mental or first creation, and a physical or second creation to all things” (p. 99), and that the degree to which we practice “begin[ing a task, project, etc.] with the end in mind” (p. 97) is the degree to which the physical equivalent to our mental imaging will be realized. Mental imagery is, in Covey’s words, the “first creation” (p. 99).

Neck and Manz (2010) also use the term “travel thinking” (p. 58) in explaining how we, as self-leaders, can “redesign… our psychological worlds” (p. 58). They emphasize, “That we usually have a choice regarding what we focus on and what we think about” (p. 59). While they accede that, “we can’t deal with every possible stimulus that we come in contact with … [and] we don’t have much of a choice about some of our thoughts, such as those we experience when struck by unexpected physical pain” (p. 59). Nevertheless, the fact is that ”we **do** have a choice regarding what we think about much

---

of the time” (p. 59). Therefore, “we create our own psychological worlds by selecting what enters our minds (where the essence of human experience takes place) and what shape it takes after it does” (p. 59). Neck and Manz (2010) make a case for the implicit essentiality of taking control of our inner states as a self-leader because “the content of our unique psychological worlds determines the way we behave, and our behavior helps determine the nature of our physical worlds [and] all of these things together determine our progress toward our personal destinies” (p. 59).

Neck and Manz (2010) suggest another component of constructive thought processes that while specifically discussed as a form of self-reward, might also apply to “travel thinking” (p. 58) and mental imagery. This thought process involves picturing ourselves traveling to a desirable physical destination and enjoying all the pleasurable sentient stimuli associated with that favorable location. This strategy allows us to take a vacation mentally even if we are not able to do so physically. Furthermore, picturing the desired destination over and over may provide the necessary motivation to do what it takes (over time) to eventually be able to actually take the trip physically.

Positive self-talk.

Self-talk is sometimes postured as a solo topic independent of Self-Leadership theory (e.g. Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004; Goleman, 1995). However, Neck & Manz (2010) include it explicitly as part of their comprehensive leadership framework as an element of “thought patterns.” Stated simply and briefly, self-talk is the dialogue we have with ourselves either out loud or in our head. Neck and Manz (2010) “believe that … self-talk

105 The concept of the self-reward will be discussed at length in a later section.
107 Neck & Manz’s comprehensive Self-Leadership framework will be addressed in detail in Chapter Five.
… can help you perform better on the tasks that you are responsible for completing” (p. 61-62). Moreover, they go further to suggest that, “If you are at this moment not doing well at school, on the job, or in your personal life, then it could possibly be related to what you are saying to yourself” (p. 62). Finally, they offer a productive self-leading question any self-leader might pose to oneself: “How do I change my self-talk so that I can get over my own personal mountain to achieve my goals and dreams?” (p. 63).

Behavior Focused Strategies

Having introduced and described constructive thought pattern strategies, let us now shift our attention to the physical personification of those thoughts: behavioral Self-Leadership strategies. These strategies include self-observation, self-examination, self-goal setting, and world-altering strategies (Neck & Manz, 2010). All of these strategies are found in Neck & Manz’ (2010) Comprehensive Self-Leadership Framework and fall under the categories of either World-Altering Strategies or Self-Imposed Strategies (p. 111).

Self-observation.

Self-observation is a prerequisite to self-awareness. Covey (1989) refers to self-awareness, “or the ability to think about your very thought processes” (p. 66) as a “unique human capacity” (p. 67) or “endowment” (p. 70)108 which enables us to “write new programs for ourselves totally apart from our instincts and training” (p. 70). Neck and Manz (2010) teach that self-observation is a process wherein we “study … [our] experience[s]” in order to “determin[e] when, why, and under what conditions we use

108 Covey (1989) introduces four “unique human endowments” (p. 70). They are: self-awareness, imagination, conscience, and independent will.
certain behaviors” (p. 17). The purpose, of course, is to “learn more about [our]
behavior” (p. 70) in order to make future improvements thereto. “Self-observation can
provide the foundation for managing our behavior” (p. 18).

**Self-examination.**

Self-examination differs from self-observation in that self-observation is more concerned with specific behaviors (micro life elements) whereas self-examination deals more with general directions (macro life elements). Neck and Manz (2010) position the concept of self-examination before the succeeding principle of self-goal setting because of the inherent clarification that can occur in the latter by first instigating the former. In their words: “Before you can establish specific goals, you need to decide what’s important to you and what you’d like to accomplish” (p. 19). It is their way of recapitulating Covey (1989) concept of: “Begin with the end in mind” (p. 95).

There are many ways to conduct a self-examination. Neck and Manz (2010) discuss setting specific goals and then dividing them into short versus long-range goals. They also emphasize the vital import of seeking out your own individual purpose in life, and the important role that purpose identification plays in making the most of our individual lives. Covey (1989) on the other hand, emphasizes developing a personal mission statement, not unlike a corporate or organizational mission statement, that applies to your own life as a self-leader. Jensen (2013a; 2013b; 2007; 2005) suggests taking Covey’s personal mission statement several step further to create a comprehensive personal constitution that takes several different Self-Leadership life arenas and life-planning tools into account, of which a personal mission statement is just one.
While the tools for conducting a self-examination may vary greatly from person to person and from organization to organization, the principle underlying any and all related practices is to answer deep personal questions about oneself such as: *who am I? What do I want in my life? What am I supposed to accomplish? What/who is most important to me? What kind of legacy do I want to leave?* In light of Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs, it might be argued that only individuals who have successfully progressed beyond the first several levels of needs (physiological, safety, and love) would be adequately suited to effectively engage in authentically effective self-examination since tangible steps practiced in the name thereof are generally undertaken with at least some conception of a hoped-for self-actualization in mind. On the other hand, global (big-picture) oriented self-leading thinkers may have the capacity to begin the process at lower levels, and perhaps even use self-examination as a means of engendering the motivation necessary to take actions aimed at propelling them up the hierarchy more quickly than would have otherwise been possible.

**Self-goal setting.**

Frankly, there is not a lot to say about *what* self-goal setting is because the term itself is descriptively self-evident. There are many different principles, methods, and opinions swirling out there about the *how’s* and *why’s* of goals setting. To delve too deeply into the minutia of such a topic would be to go beyond the scope of this treatise. Suffice it to say, once a self-leader has engaged in honest and effective self-observation and self-examination, it is then time to begin setting self-goals. In doing so, it is worth noting that when setting self-goals, one should consider the potential value of strategically crafting the syntax of stated goals to ensure *specificity, realism,*
measurability, track-ability, that they have a deadline, and that they are based primarily on competition with self rather than others (Jensen, 2005, 209-211).

**World-altering strategies.**

World-altering strategies (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 15) include three different strategies aimed at “mak[ing] alterations in our immediate worlds that will help us behave in desirable ways” (p. 15). Neck & Manz (2010) offer three specific world-altering strategies self-leaders can utilize. They are: reminders and attention focusers, increasing positive cues, and removing negative cues (p. 15-16).

**Reminders and attention focusers.**

Reminders and attention focusers allow us as self-leaders to take a proactive approach to their environment by “using physical objects to remind us of, or to focus our attention on, things we need [or want] to do” (p. 15). An example of utilizing a reminder or an attention focuser is to create a prioritized task list and then cross off completed tasks as you go (Neck & Manz 2010 citing Douglas [1998]; see also Smith, 1994, p. 105-115).

**Increasing positive cues.**

An example of a possible positive cue might be to write down a goal you have set and then post it in a visible location in your home or office. Another idea is to hang a picture or poster of something or someone that triggers your thoughts toward positive thoughts and actions aimed at motivating you to pay the price to realize your goal (Neck & Manz, 2010).
Removing negative cues.

An example of removing negative cues would be for a smoker who was trying to quit the smoking habit to rid his or her home, office, and/or car of anything that might remind them of cigarettes or smoking. Such a person might take this process a step further and have their walls and/or furniture and carpet cleaned to remove (insofar as possible) the odor of tobacco smoke.

Rewards Strategies

While the concept of reward strategies (self-reward, punishment, and natural rewards) is not new, the specific nomenclature employed represents a unique contribution to the scholarly field of Self-Leadership. Manz (1983b) introduced the terms in his combined seminal work in the field (Manz, 1983a; 1983b). Self-reward and self-punishment are found in Neck & Manz’ (2010) Comprehensive Self-Leadership Framework under the category labeled “self-imposed strategies.” Natural reward strategies represent an independent category in the same framework.

Self-reward.

In a command and control hierarchical leadership scenario involving a supervisor and a subordinate, a supervisor might “reward,” or “give an award” to a subordinate whose performance merits it. In a Self-Leadership scenario, there is no “supervisor” to offer an award for accomplishment or personal achievement. As such, self-leaders can extend self-rewards to themselves for meeting given objectives. A self-reward is simply an object or activity that a self-leader finds desirable. It could involve traveling to an appealing destination to engage in a desirable activity such as going to the beach or park,
mall or movie, or eating out. It could also involve staying in and engaging in a pleasurable activity such as relaxing, sleeping, watching television, surfing the internet, spending time with loved ones, etc. Other self-rewards might be more cognitively based such as zoning out and daydreaming for a while to rest after engaging in strenuous, focused effort on something, or practicing self-congratulations for a job well done. There are no set rules about what the self-reward has to be; the guidelines merely assert that the reward must prove pleasurable for the self-leader at hand (or else it won’t qualify as a “reward”), and the reward must not be taken until after the self-agreed-upon objective for which the reward is attached has been realized or accomplished (Neck & Manz, 2010).

Neck and Manz (2010) teach that the use of self-rewards can be “especially useful for … persons who are quick to criticize themselves” (p. 27). They elaborate by explaining that “guilt and self-criticism may have their place in keeping us from engaging in socially and personally undesirable acts, but to rely on these mechanisms and ignore self-praise is a poor way to lead ourselves” (p. 27).

**Self-punishment.**

Self-punishments follow in the same line of thinking as self-rewards, except they serve to discourage unwanted behavioral patterns rather than to encourage desired actions (the purpose of self-rewards). Instead of getting something positive for doing a task, self-punishment would involve revoking something desirable (food, activity, trip, etc.) for failing to do a task or meet an objective (Neck & Manz, 2010). While Neck and Manz (2010) accede that self-punishment has its place within the general constructs of Self-Leadership theory, they mostly discourage the practice and state that “many individuals rely too heavily on this approach [and that] habitual guilt and self-criticism can impair
motivation and creativity” (p. 29). Hardy’s (2007) dissertation research (which involved surveying 429 government managers using Houghton and Neck’s (2002) revised Self-Leadership questionnaire) corroborated this claim and added that, “Rewarding oneself … is an overlooked, but effective performance tool … [that could positively impact the work of] public managers [who] are responsible for maximizing government efficiency and effectiveness through the use of management tools and resources” (p. 57, 56).

Neck and Manz (2010) contrast the approach of self-punishment with the use of positive self-rewards for meeting self-objectives: “It involves negative rather than positive self-applied results” (p. 29). Moreover, they iterate the fact that, “Research and writing have generally indicated that self-punishment is not an effective strategy for controlling behavior” (p. 29). Therefore, they encourage an alternative to self-punishment as follows: “A better strategy would be to … remove any rewards supporting the problem behavior and [then] apply self-reward when we do things right” (p. 29). They emphasize that “self-observation will be important to accomplish this strategy” (p. 29).

**Natural rewards.**

While self-rewards and self-punishments involve the acquisition or revocation of tangible things or activities, a natural reward occurs when a self-leader experiences naturally occurring inner joy and satisfaction from doing certain work or engaging in a particular activity (Neck & Manz, 2010). Neck and Manz (2010) explain that, “No special externally administered or self-administered incentives are necessary to motivate this behavior. The incentives are built into the task itself” (p. 38). An example would be someone who exercises because of the positive (desirable) emotions that are triggered by
engaging in vigorous physical activity. Another would be a person who chooses to work extra long and/or hard on a project because of the feelings of confidence, competence, control and/or contribution it brings to that person, or the hopes of moving ahead in the organization that could potentially be fomented by such proactivity. The key is to engage in self-observation and self-examination in creative ways that empower you as a self-leader to better discover what activities initiate natural rewards along the pathways of your own Self-Leadership journey (Neck & Manz, 2010).

### The Importance of Self-Leadership

Self-Leadership is important because “generally, [it] comprises socially desirable traits such as evaluating one’s assumptions, visualizing productive behavior patterns, and pursuing one’s goals” (Furtner, Rauthmann, & Sachse, 2011, p. 369). Its import is further illuminated when considering the essential role it plays in any other leadership practice. For example, “if we ever hope to be effective leaders of others, we need first to be able to lead ourselves effectively” (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 1). This fundamental role makes Self-Leadership a prerequisite for the acquisition of other effective leadership aptitudes and capacities. The twentieth century saw an explosion of research and writing in the field of leadership in both the academic and popular realm. As Bass’s (2008) ponderous tome on the subject conspicuously reveals, there are scores of different styles, sub-topics, and other nuanced derivatives within the general category referred to as leadership studies. Whether we are discussing team leadership (Northouse, 2007), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2002), situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1995), SuperLeadership (Manz & Sims, Jr., 1995, 2001), transactional and/or transformational leadership (including visionary and charismatic leadership [Bass, 2008] (Burns, 1995),

---

quiet leadership (Badaracco, 2002), primal leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2002), Leadership and the New Science (Wheatley, 2006), to name just a few topics of recent interest in the field, Self-Leadership will inevitably play an inextricable role in developing said leadership trait, style, and practice because all said practices concern the self, which must be developed as a precursor to acquiring the capacity to influence others as a team leader (morally or formally speaking).

Covey (1989) also positions Self-Leadership as a prerequisite to all leadership development and influence. In his words, the “Private Victory,” (p. 185), or internal, personal, Self-Leadership successes born of self-discipline, hard work, personal responsibility always “precedes Public Victory” (p. 185), or external, organizational, interpersonal, team leadership successes. “We should remember that effective interdependence can only be built on a foundation of true independence [or Self-Leadership]…. Private Victory precedes Public Victory. Algebra comes before calculus” (p. 185).

In discussing the importance of Self-Leadership, let us move beyond the point of leadership prerequisite for a moment to address another reason for Self-Leadership’s vital importance in our lives, and that is the inescapable relationship we each have with ourselves. As was mentioned in Chapter One, like it or not, none of us can get away from our own person. At any given point along our personal leadership journey, we may find ourselves “stuck” and miserable in this most personal of life’s relationships, or on the positive flip side, we may also find ourselves “set,” happy, and fulfilled. In actuality, life has a way of providing plenty of undulation between these two extremes to even the most effective of self-leaders. As Neck and Manz (2010) relent: “The world we live in
does influence what we do with ourselves on a day-to-day basis and can largely shape our ultimate destiny in life,” and “external influences … are … important” (p. 7). Indeed, the effective self-leader is not a rosy-lensed optimist who ignores reality. Rather, the effective self-leader recognizes “the important role [one] play[s] in determining the external influences that will be [personally] relevant” (p. 7). In other words, the self-leader does not ignore the hand they have been dealt in life, or the manifold “dealers of the cards,”109 speaking metaphorically. Rather, the self-leader focuses on learning the rules of the game and focusing on how they can, over time, find success to win whatever game they have chosen to play regardless of the cards originally dealt them by external factors beyond their control. All of us have one complaint or another about the metaphorical “cards” we were dealt in life. It is reasonable to assume that some have more reason to feel frustrated with their “hand” than others. An indisputable fact, however, persistently stares all self-leaders in the face: none of us can change the original hand we were dealt when we came into this world. The opportunity Self-Leadership affords us is the freedom to choose how we are going to play those “cards,” that we were dealt, and the opportunity to, if we will, invest our best effort in an endeavor to improve our “hand.”

Even though we function within a complex system of influence—involving ourselves, our behavior, and our world—we possess a great deal of choice concerning what we experience and what we accomplish with our lives. We are subject to constraints. These include limitations in our situations (for example, because of Earth’s gravity we cannot fly without the aid of equipment of some kind) and the roles in which we find ourselves (such as parents, bosses, citizens). This fact, however, is not reason to feel helpless. Even when faced with the most difficult situations, we lead ourselves by the choices we make…. The world does impact our lives, but we are in no way helpless pawns. (Neck & Manz, 2010, p. 10 & p. 7)

109 And of course, the “card-dealers” do not always deal cards to participating players in a way that is fair, or that levels the playing field.
Beyond the realms of the self, the potential value that Self-Leadership can offer to teams and organizations is clear and compelling. In the words of Neubert and Wu (2006) “The importance of Self-Leadership to organizations is self-evident” (p. 360).

While a “leader” can influence, inspire, and plant seeds of motivation in another’s heart and mind, self-leaders still have to choose whether to be influenced, inspired, or motivated. As Frankl (2006) so lucidly illustrated, no one can ultimately force another to think and feel a certain way, even at gunpoint. Therefore, we begin to see the enormous limitations that leadership has without the presence and willing execution of Self-Leadership by both the individuals who are being led, and the persons who are leading. In short, the very essence of leadership then becomes to enhance others’ Self-Leadership. As such, a plausible argument could be made to classify Manz and Sims Jr.’s (2001) SuperLeadership as the peerless paragon and nonpareil of all other theories within a framework of general leadership studies. For knowing that self-leaders must ultimately lead themselves to act on any inspiration or motivation derived from an external leader’s influence reveals the absolute essentiality of both Self-Leadership and SuperLeadership. It bumps it to the very top of a theoretical hierarchy of leadership styles that might be organized by virtue of their perceived priority in terms of overall importance according to philosophical utilitarianism.

**Criticisms of Self-Leadership Theory**

Despite its seemingly self-evident value and universal applicability, academically valid criticism does exist to counter the many perceived benefits of Self-Leadership theory. Most criticism tends to funnel through two particular categories (Neck &
Houghton, 2006). The first is that there has been “relatively few empirical studies 
examining Self-Leadership in organizational settings” (p. 274). Exceptions include: in 
organizations (Pattni & Soutar, 2009; Neck & Manz, 1996; Manz & Sims Jr., 1987); and 
in collegiate settings (Georgianna, 2007; Houghton, Bonham & Neck, & Singh, 2004; 
Houghton & Neck, 2002).

The second primary category and “perhaps the most common criticism of Self-
Leadership is that it is conceptually indistinct from and redundant with classical theories 
of motivation such as self-regulation” (Neck & Houghton, 2006, p. 274). Because “Self-
Leadership consists of a broad set of strategies … [which] are founded upon other 
established theories of motivation and self-influence…., some theorists have questioned 
the extent to which Self-Leadership [represents] a unique and distinguishable construct 
of its own” (p. 274). Moreover, “Others have suggested that Self-Leadership is a mere 
repackaging of individual differences already explained by previously existing 
personality constructs” (p. 275). Scholars (Neck & Houghton, 2006) refute this latter 
criticism with the argument that Self-Leadership theory represents a normative rather 
than a descriptive theory, and is therefore proscribing a set of management and leadership 
trouble-shooting tools through Self-Leadership theory rather than merely putting forth a 
descriptive theory such as those upon which it is derived (i.e. “self-regulation, social 
cognitive, self-control and intrinsic motivation theories” (p. 275). In other words, Self-
Leadership theory is proscribing a set of strategies to actually practice effective Self-
Leadership as opposed to merely describing what Self-Leadership is. The topics and 
theories upon which Self-Leadership is built (e.g. “self-regulation, social cognitive, self-
control and intrinsic motivation theories”) (p. 275) are more descriptive-based. With this
clarification in mind, it seems reasonable for Neck and Houghton (2006) to “suggest that Self-Leadership represents a unique constellation of strategies that are founded upon, related to, and yet distinct from these various theories as well as from various personality traits” (p. 275). In conclusion, while “it has enjoyed an enduring and expanding popularity based on a strong intuitive appeal, Self-Leadership has not been without developmental problems and criticisms” (Neck & Houghton, 2006, p. 274).

Furtner, Rauthmann, and Sachse (2011) broke new ground in Self-Leadership research when they conducted an empirical study that investigated S-L theory within a framework of negative personality traits such as “narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy” (p. 369). Whereas traditional research has focused more on the inherently positive ways in which Self-Leadership theory influences behavior and personality, these scholars began their research with the premise that “there could also be undesirable sides to SL, and thus associations with dark traits are of interest” (p. 369). Their findings discovered that while “narcissism was positively associated with Self-Leadership scales … Machiavellianism and psychopathy were not” (p. 369). In other words, narcissism does play a “role in Self-Leadership” (p. 369), and therefore serves as a potential detriment to one’s efforts to effectively exercise Self-Leadership.

**Benefits of Self-Leadership Practice**

There are innumerable potential benefits of Self-Leadership practice. What these benefits specifically are will vary from self-leader to self-leader. Moreover, outside of the academic realm, said benefits will largely be identified through the anecdotal and qualitative analysis of one’s own autobiography and will therefore represent the subjective opinion of a given self-leader. While the testimonial-based validity of these
anecdotal-based self-assessments, along with the value attribution assigned to Self-Leadership practice in a given person’s life by that given self leader, cannot be questioned in its subjective appraisal, the academe has found it beneficial to attempt to quantifiably (insofar as possible) determine (at least generally speaking) what potential benefits may arise through an individual’s study and practice of Self-Leadership. In so doing, the “Self-Leadership literature has suggested a number of outcomes or dependent variables thought to be associated with the application of Self-Leadership strategies. These include commitment, independence, creativity/innovation, trust, potency, positive affect, job satisfaction, psychological empowerment and self-efficacy” (Neck & Houghton, 2006, 283). Scholars (Neck & Houghton, 2006) consider these “outcomes” to be inherently helpful in creating positive change and meaningful results for individuals and organizations who/that choose to practice/embrace them.

Nevertheless, it should also be pointed out that Stewart, Courtright, and Manz (2011) in a recent (and thorough) review of the extant literature in a field that now spans three decades, have made it clear that while “studies consistently show that increased Self-Leadership corresponds with better affective responses and improved work performance … at the individual level…, findings are not as consistent at the team level” (p. 185). This does not mean that Self-Leadership does not produce positive affective responses at the team level, it merely means that such responses are not as predictable as they are on the individual level. Stewart et al. (2011) still assert that “having individuals regulate their own actions is consistently helpful both to them personally and to the organization. Self-leading employees have more positive affect at work. They also tend to have higher productivity and more fulfilling careers” (p 195-196), which indicate the
clear potential for Self-Leadership benefits to accrue organizationally as well as individually.

**Possibilities for Future Research**

Scholars (Neck & Houghton, 2006) are optimistic about the future of “Self-Leadership theory and research … after [the field’s first] two [now three] decades” (p. 286). According to Neck and Houghton (2006), “current trends in Self-Leadership research include intercultural/international issues, Self-Leadership contingency factors, executive health/fitness and shared leadership” (p. 286). While studies have been undertaken and/or papers have been written on all of these subjects to date, all of them, and many other aspects of Self-Leadership, are still in the early stages of academic inquiry. Another possibility for future research involves Self-Leadership as studied through the qualitative research method of Autoethnography, which, of course, this present work attempts to provide the first extended example thereof.
PART TWO. AUTOETHNOGRAPHY LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Part Two

Part two of Chapter Three provides a literature review of Autoethnography as a burgeoning method of qualitative research.

Anthropology to Ethnography to Autoethnography

Autoethnography, or self-ethnography, is both a fledgling and a burgeoning field of ethnographic analysis that allows you—the researcher—to “use yourself to get to culture” (Pelias, 2003, p. 372), or perhaps to the social (Reed-Danahay, 1997), or perhaps to something else altogether, based on emotions evoked by a narrative (Ellis & Bochner, 2006) or through a detailed analysis of it (Anderson, 2006). Also referred to as Scholarly Personal Narrative or SPN writing (Nash, 2004), Autoethnography allows academics the luxury of becoming a “public intellectual” (p. 8), meaning “a writer who is able to take a complex idea and communicate it in readable English, without compromising its integrity” (p. 8). Autoethnography as a field of study has developed out of the constructs of ethnography, which evolved from the even “broad[er] discipline” (Mwaria, 2009, p. xiii) of anthropology. Specifically, Duncan (2004) positions the ethnographic movement as falling within anthropological work undertaken in the early twentieth century.

In the 21st century, ethnographic approaches are being acculturated into a postmodern academic world … [where] narrative approaches typical of ethnography are not changing to facilitate a more personal point of view by emphasizing reflexivity and personal voice (Mykhalovskiy, 1996; Tierney & Lincoln, 1997) and recognizing the researcher as representative of a multilayered lifeworld, itself worthy of expression…. The essential difference between ethnography and Autoethnography is that in an Autoethnography, the researcher is not trying to become an insider in the research setting. He or she, in fact, is the insider. The context is his or her own. (p. 3)
While diverging from anthropology and ethnography, Autoethnography represents an inclusively convergent field of many different, albeit related, fields of endeavor such as *autobiology, autopathography, ethnobiography, lived experience, radical empiricism, personal writing, and sociopoetics*, among many others (Chang, 2008, p. 47-48).\(^{110}\) It is a postmodern research approach that affords researchers the potential of “transcend[ing] everyday conceptions of selfhood and social life” (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 4) by “rewriting the self and the social” (p. 4) through “an artistically constructed piece of prose, poetry, music or piece of art work that attempts to portray an individual experience in a way that evokes the imagination of the reader, viewer, or listener” (Muncey, 2010, p. 2). Dramatic, or “performance Autoethnography” (see Spry, 2011, p. 497) is also gaining traction as a bona fide mode of autoethnographic presentation.

Recent developments within the field of anthropology have been more accepting of creative literary and other methods of inquiry. This development was aided in part by the collaborative work of Daniel and Peck (1996a, 1996b). Daniel and Peck represent the fields of anthropology and literary studies, respectively, which “for the first time,” have joined forces “to reflect on the antidisciplinary urge that has made [such a] rapprochement both possible and necessary (1996a, p. 1). Although described as “a putative science” (p. 1), the field of anthropology has traditionally valued hard “…scientific drive[s]” (p. 1). Indeed, “the presence of the literary in anthropology is … a presence both desired and dreaded” (p. 1). In their work, Daniel and Peck strive to bridge this historical gap by illustrating the mutual benefits derived from such a merger of

science and literary (and other forms of) art. From poetry, stories, and narrative ethnographies to travel writings, genealogy, and ethnographic novels (Daniel & Peck, 1996, p. v-vi), literary constructs have, and can continue to inform anthropology. According to Mwaria (2009), “Good writing that engages a wide audience is a priceless asset to [the anthropological] enterprise” (p. xv).

Jacobson (1991) quotes Clifford Geertz in describing ethnography as the “what” that anthropologists actually do (p. 1); and what precisely is it that they do? Mwaria (2009) points out that among “dig[ging] up bones, … study[ing] people in far-off places, like Africa,… [and] study[ing] ancient civilizations,” anthropologists write. What then do they write? According to Jacobson (1991), they write ethnographies; and what are ethnographies? They are “the scientific description of the customs of individual peoples and cultures.” Jacobson (1991) also points out that ethnographers do more than merely describe the people or cultures they write about, they also interpret “what he or she has observed and/or heard” (p. 3).

Ethnography, like composition, is a relatively new field of inquiry, and … has been practiced by any people who called it different generic names—history, autobiography, journal writing, diary, travel account—while also affiliating it with the narrower and more academically prestigious discipline of anthropology. (David Bleich as quoted in Bishop, 1999, p. ix)

In recent decades, the concept of applying ethnographic principles has begun to be applied to self-research and experience. Such self-applied ethnographic research and representations have come to be known as Autoethnography; in other words, the ethnography of the self.

---

What is Autoethnography?

Auto/Ethnography (Reed-Danahay, 1997), “self- or auto-ethnograph[y]” (Van Maanen, 1995) or more commonly known as just Autoethnography (Chang, 2008) is a burgeoning (Delamont, 2007), qualitative research method that enables researchers to study themselves through the context of their own self-narratives in order to evoke and engage emotion in the reader (Ellis & Bochner, 2006), to produce data that can be theoretically analyzed (Anderson, 2006), or perhaps to accomplish both, or something in between (Denzin, 2006). Through this process, the researcher attempts to “mak[e] the personal political” (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 763), or perhaps cultural (Chang, 2008), social (Anderson, 2006), educational/pedagogical (Denzin, 2006), or, as I implicitly purport in this treatise, interpersonal and even existential—for the greater purpose of contributing meaningfully to various dialogues aimed at productive social and/or other change in a variety of different social, political, cultural, and other life arenas.

The term Autoethnography first appeared (as auto-ethnography) in the mid-to-later 1970s (Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 4) in the work of Heider (1975) and Hayano (1979). It has since gone from a fledgling to a burgeoning field as illustrated by the increasing

---

112 As quoted in Reed-Danahay, 1997, p. 5.
113 Other terms appear in the literature that are either related to, or synonymous with Autoethnography. Examples of these terms include: auto-ethnology, autobiographical ethnography, and autohistory (Reed-Danahay, 1997), autobiography (Ellis & Flaherty, 1992), personal or self-narrative research and writing (Anderson, 2006), scholarly personal narrative (SPN) (Nash, 2004), and autobiology (Payne, 1996).
114 According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005): “The topic of Autoethnography” allows the “researcher [to become] the research subject” (p. 645).
115 My purpose in this dissertation is to accomplish both, with a primary focus on analytic Autoethnography.
116 Denzin (2006) implies that perhaps there is a middle ground, but ultimately boards the ship of the evocative ethnographers/autoethnographers. However, he also argues that evocative Autoethnography is “pedagogical” and by default is therefore “always moral and political” (p. 422).
117 In my own Autoethnography shared within this treatise, my explicit purpose for sharing and interpreting my own story is to productively promote positive self-change in individual self-leaders. The purported paradigm presented herein posits that individual Self-Leadership improvements (on a micro scale) create a positive synergy that may lead to positive improvements (on a macro scale) in an entity or organization.
number of publications on the subject in subsequent decades. Over time, autoethnographers have been emboldened by Ellis and Flaherty’s (1992) “agenda for the interpretation of lived experience” (p. 1). This agenda strives to identify the potentially minable ore hidden in the mountainside of subjective sociological research “in an attempt to invigorate the investigation of subjective experience” (p. 4) thereby championing a growing acceptance of the paradigm that “emotional processes are crucial components of social experience” (p. 2). Let us now take a look at two of the primary and divergent forces in autoethnographic studies today: evocative Autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2006) and analytic Autoethnography (Anderson, 2006).

**Analytic Autoethnography**

Analytic Autoethnography (Anderson, 2006) goes back to at least “the early years of American sociology following World War I” (Anderson, 2006, p. 375) where “Robert Park’s interest in the biographical backgrounds of his University of Chicago graduate students encouraged many of his students to pursue sociological involvement in settings close to their personal lives” (p. 375). This movement led to what has since become known as the first, or “classic Chicago School” (Denzin, 2006, p. 420) of ethnography. A “Second Chicago School” (Anderson, 2006, p. 375) of ethnography developed a generation later and bore many similarities to the first. Both were rooted largely in traditional sociological research methodologies and tended to “downplay or obscure the researcher as a social actor in the settings or groups under study” (Anderson, 2006, p. 376). Denzin speaks of a “third Chicago School” (p. 421) “that came of age after the Vietnam War” (p. 421). He explains that, “This cohort … had to bear the brunt of many new formations, from ethnomethodology, to standpoint epistemologies, to feminist,
queer, critical race, postcolonial, and now indigenous methodologies” (p. 421). Denzin (2006) also emphasizes that, “This is the space that Anderson [or the analytical autoethnographer] writes out of” (p. 421). The third Chicago School came of age a generation after the second school and provided “some notable examples of social scientists experimenting more explicitly with self-observation and analysis … [which] offered potential direction for the development of Autoethnography in the realist or analytic tradition” (Anderson, 2006, p. 376).

In heralding what Denzin (2006) calls the Third Chicago School, Anderson also articulates it by explaining that there are “five key features of analytic Autoethnography” (Anderson, 2006, p. 378). These five features include: “(1) complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis” (p. 378). Anderson draws on Murphy’s (1990) narrative experiences with a spinal disease to derive a cogent argument for analytic Autoethnography whereby “deeply personal and self-observant ethnography can rise above idiographic particularity to address broader theoretical issues” (p. 379).\footnote{This is my goal in this dissertation. While I want to avoid “idiographic particularities” (Anderson, 2006, p. 379) in terms of unsullied empirical data, I do want to analyze my narrative in a way that “addresses” broader theoretical issues” (p. 379) with an aim to provide new knowledge in the field of Self-Leadership.}

Anderson (2006) is not a lone voice in the wilderness in his advocacy that Autoethnography carry the burden of analysis. Atkinson (2006) “welcome[s] Anderson’s discussion of analytic Autoethnography” (p. 400) and declares that he “is quite right to insist on the analytic aspect of Autoethnography” (p. 402) because “the goals of analysis and theorizing are too often lost to sight in contemporary fashions for subjective and
evocative ethnographic work” (p. 400). Before commenting further on the overall objectives of analytic autoethnography, let take a closer look at Anderson’s (2006) five requirements.

**Complete member researcher (CMR).**\(^{119}\)

“The first and most obvious feature of Autoethnography is that the researcher is a complete member in the social world under study” (Anderson, 2006, p. 379). Unlike anthropological or ethnographic studies, where the researcher is usually a passive observer—an outsider looking in on the research subjects—autoethnographic studies require that the researcher is also the research subject. Autoethnography, therefore, allows the researcher to *become* the researched.

**Analytic reflexivity.**\(^{120}\)

[Analytic] reflexivity involves an awareness of reciprocal influence between ethnographers and their settings and informants. It entails self-conscious introspection guided by a desire to better understand both self and others through examining one’s actions and perceptions in reference to and dialogue with those of others. (p. 382)

**Narrative visibility of the researcher’s self.**\(^{121}\)

A central feature of Autoethnography is that the researcher is a highly visible social actor within the written text. The researcher’s own feelings and experiences are incorporated into the story and considered as vital data for understanding the social world being observed … [and] autoethnographers should illustrate analytic insights through recounting their own experiences and thoughts as well as those of others. (p. 384)

---

Dialogue with informants beyond the self.¹²²

“Unlike evocative Autoethnography, which seeks narrative fidelity only to the researcher’s subjective experience, analytic Autoethnography is grounded in self-experience but reaches beyond it as well” (Anderson, 2006, p. 386). Analytic autoethnographic research, therefore, taps what others have to say about the subject being researched, including others’ analysis of the data under scrutiny.

Commitment to theoretical analysis.¹²³

“The definitive feature of analytic Autoethnography … [involves] not only truthfully rendering the social world under investigation but also transcending that world through broader generalization;… it contributes to a spiraling refinement, elaboration, extension, and revision of theoretical understanding” (p. 388). Nash (2004) falls in line, at least partially, with the analytic crowd by insinuating an autoethnographer has an “intellectual responsibility … to find a way to use the personal insights gained in order to draw larger conclusions for readers; possibly even to challenge and reconstruct older political or educational narratives”; he qualifies this point, however, by add that this responsibility hinges on whether or not “draw[ing] larger conclusions … is an important goal for the researcher” (p. 18).¹²⁴

An explicit example of analytic Autoethnography can be found in the work of Murphy (1990). Anderson (2006) endorses this work and enthusiastically postures it as “a particularly rich embodiment of the kind of autoethnographic research that I am seeking to promote” (p. 378). In his autoethnographic treatise, Murphy (1990) exposes

¹²⁴ For me, in this study, it is.
his own struggle through a “long illness with a disease of the spinal cord” (p. xi), an experience he describes as “a kind of extended anthropological field trip” (p. xi) which afforded him an opportunity to personally “sojourn… in a social world no less strange to me at first than those of the Amazon forests” (p. xi). While Anderson (2006) points out that the book possesses similarities to “many evocative autoethnographies” (p. 378), he emphasizes that Murphy takes his personal story a step further to connect it to the larger social issue at hand.

Since it is the duty of all anthropologists to report on their travels, whether to earth’s antipodes or to equally remote recesses of human experience, [I have chosen to chronicle my experiences with long-term illness]. [I have done so] with many purposes in mind, but the most important is to relate to the general public, and to disabled people everywhere, the social circumstances of the physically impaired and the meaning of this condition as an allegory of all life in society. (Murphy, 1990, p. xi)

Analytic Autoethnography, by that explicit name, does not, to date, boast a great many examples in actual research practice. There are some (see Pong; 2012; Carrico, 2011; Whelan, 2011; Rimando, 2011; and Griffin, 2010). Moreover, Anderson (2011) himself recently published the first example of his own by analyzing his experiences with a cherished personal hobby: skydiving. In his article, he strives to achieve a measure of clarity regarding his own ambivalence towards a hobby that represents for him “an inconsistent luxury” (p. 154), where “conflicts … can emerge when … pursued in the context of extensive work and family obligations” (p. 153). As part of his analysis, he also seeks to tie his experiences to the “broader social contexts” (p. 154) of “serious leisure pursuits” (p. 133).

125 I, like Murphy (1990) have undertaken the present work for the purpose of “report[ing] on [my] travels,” (p. xi) but for the larger purpose of connecting with individuals everywhere who struggle with mental illness, or any form of cognitive distortions and other Self-Leadership challenges which would limit their progress and/or potential.
In conclusion, analytic Autoethnography, what Denzin (2006) would consider part of the Third Chicago School of ethnography, is an outgrowth of the first and second Chicago Schools of ethnography that maintained a commitment to traditional standards of social science research. The third school, or analytic Autoethnography, maintains a commitment of some scientific analysis and reporting while simultaneously presenting oneself and one’s story as the data under examination.

**Evocative Autoethnography**

The roots of evocative Autoethnography (Anderson, 2006; Denzin, 2006; Ellis & Bochner, 2006) do not formally run as deep, nor do they stretch as far back in time as they do for analytic Autoethnography (or specifically, analytic ethnography). While both analytic and evocative Autoethnography stem in part from the original work done on the field in the 1970s (e.g. Heider, 1975; Hayano, 1979) where the term *Autoethnography* first appeared, a split has occurred in the field since that time with what we might call evocateurs on one side and analytics on the other.\(^{126}\) Let us first review the history and purpose of the evocateur movement; then, we will discuss their respective disagreements with each other.

The most visible and prolific evocateurs have been Ellis and Bochner, who have both published prolifically in the field (e.g., Ellis & Bochner (2006; 1996); Bochner & Ellis (2002); Ellis (2009, 2004) dating back to the early 1990s, and are arguably the most visible exponents of the art. Evocative autoethnographers rely on the “‘impact personal stories have’” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 430) to do their work in a less concrete,

\(^{126}\) All autoethnographers do not fall clearly within the constricts of this simple dichotomy. For example, Denzin (1996) attempts to identify the similar strains running through both, although he ultimately casts his lot with the evocative crowd.
subjective way. According to Ellis (2009) “accomplished autoethnomgraphers do not proclaim how things are or how life should be lived, but instead strive to open up a moral and ethical conversation with readers about the possibilities of living life well” (p. 17).

Evocative ethnographers have also “developed new forms of autoethnographic texts … such as performative, artistic, and poetic” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 435). “Performative Autoethnography” (Spry, 2011, p. 497) has especially gained momentum in recent years. Spry (2011) argues that, “Performative Autoethnography can interrupt master narratives that become ‘stuck in time’” (p. 501).

Let us shift now to the conflict that often arises between analytics and evocateurs. Both methods include several of the same concepts. In fact, even Ellis and Bocher (2006) concede that, “The only real point of contention is [Anderson’s] commitment to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena” (p. 437). However, they provocatively articulate their impassioned disagreement on this one point. For example, they feel that taking the analytic road causes a reader to “become a detached spectator … [with] only a head, cut off from [his/her] body and emotions” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 431). Moreover, they describe evocative Autoethnography as more of a means rather than an end (analytic Autoethnography).

We (the evocateurs) think of ethnography as a journey; they (the analytics) think of it as a destination. They want to master, explain, grasp. Those may be interesting word games, but we don’t think they’re necessarily important. Caring and empathizing is for us what abstracting and controlling is for them…. We want to dwell in the flux of lived experience; they want to appropriate lived experience for the purpose of abstracting something they call knowledge or theory. (p. 431)

That is just the beginning of their criticism. They go on to castigate analytical Autoethnography as not being Autoethnography at all. “‘Why does he [Anderson] want to call this Autoethnography? It’s just another genre of realist ethnography’” (Ellis &
Bochner, 2006, p. 432). She (Ellis) conceded that the analytics do “‘make… a case for including the author in the text’” (p. 432), but points out that “‘good realist ethnography already positions the author. So I have to wonder how analytic Autoethnography will be different!’” (p. 432). He (Bochner) added: “‘Certainly it would have helped to see at least one extended example’” (p. 432). Since laying down this challenge in 2006, Anderson has produced an explicit example of what he was describing theoretically in his 2006 paper (see Anderson, 2011). Whether or not is represents an “extended example” is open to discussion. To Bochner, Ellis, and all other evocative-based (or other) autoethnographers: I have tried to produce an “extended example” of analytic Autoethnography in this dissertation. I invite you to search it thoroughly in order to weigh the benefits and/or drawbacks of an explicit, analytical approach, which also happens to possess an evocative flair through certain poetic and other literary tools of expression.

**Autoethnography: Generally Speaking**

At least one voice (Denzin, 2006) appears to highlight the common ground between these two divergent movements in the field of Autoethnography. While he ultimately disagrees with Anderson (2006) and joins with Ellis, Bochner and the other evocateurs, he does, however, lend credence to what he calls “the CAP school,” (p. 422), a concept developed by Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) and stands for “creative analytical processes” (p. 962). Among their key premises is that “any dinosaurian beliefs that ‘creative’ and ‘analytical’ are contradictory and incompatible modes are standing in the path of a meteor; they are doomed for extinction” (p. 962). This sounds like something Anderson (2006) might agree with. The problem is that they share the
premise of the evocateur, which holds that “there is no such thing as ‘getting it right,’ only ‘getting it’ differently contoured and nuanced” (p. 962). Anderson would disagree, and conclude that there are elements of objectivity that can be analytically drawn from authoethnographic research. His would be a vote for triangulation (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005), whereas the evocateurs embrace a concept that Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) term crystallization (p. 963), which “combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and are altered, but they are not amorphous” (p. 963). Therefore, we still find a rather mired dichotomy between evocative and analytic Autoethnography.127

Having now discussed the two primary modes of autoethnographic inquiry, let us rejoin the field-at-large to discuss some of the general features of Autoethnography. In so doing, consider a few additional definitions and/or descriptions that shed further light on what Autoethnography actually consists of that may apply more or less to either evocative or analytic Autoethnography. Probably the majority of what is to follow will fall in line more closely with the more prominent evocative strain of Autoethnography; however, this does not necessarily discount all points from being potentially usable in the analytic strain, for to quote Ellis and Bochner (2006) once again: “The only real point of contention is [Anderson’s (2006)] commitment to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena” (p. 437).

Wall (2008) describes “Autoethnography [as] an intriguing and promising qualitative method that offers a way of giving voice to personal experience for the

127 A goal of this dissertation is to introduce a third alternative that legitimately incorporates both evocative and analytic Autoethnography in an attempt to derive the best of both worlds in terms of overall benefits for readers. I call this analytically evocative Autoethnography and introduced it in Chapter One.
purpose of extending sociological understanding” (p. 38). She goes on to say that, “Autoethnography … allows the author to write in a highly personalized style, drawing on his or her experience to extend understanding about a societal phenomenon. [It] is grounded in postmodern philosophy and is linked to the growing debate about reflexivity and voice in social research” (2006, p.1).

Russell (1999) speaks of a man (Walter Benjamin’s) for whom “a sense of the self emerges that is thoroughly grounded in experience and observation … throughout his various autobiographical writings.”

Muncey (2010) states:

Autoethnography is a research approach that privileges the individual. It is an artistically constructed piece of prose, poetry, music or piece of art work that attempts to portray an individual experience in a way that evokes the imagination of the reader, viewer or listener. (p. 2)

Through Autoethnography, we can, according to Muncey (2010), “discover… the constituent parts of [ourselves]” (p. 10) in order to better understand how our “personal worlds form part of a larger social world … and … are enmeshed together in a complex process of mutual definition and construction” (p. 15).

Chang (2008) who has a “personal fascination with self-reflection, introspection, intrapersonal intelligence, and self-analysis” (p. 11) explains that, “Autoethnography is affirmed as an ethnographic research method that focuses on cultural analysis and interpretation” (p. 10). Chang also affirms the implicit autoethnographic element of all literature in the sense that “every piece of writing reflects the disposition of its author” (p. 10).

---

128 P. 1 of electronic printout.
An outgrowth of ethnography, Autoethnography is part of what some call “‘new ethnography’” (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p. 18) and include opportunities to express oneself through literary and other vehicles not typically endorsed by traditional social science. Denzin (2006) explains:

These new writing practices include Autoethnography, fiction-stories, poetry [e.g., the “sociopoetic” (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p. 199)], performance texts, polyvocal texts, reader’s theatre, responsive readings, aphorisms, comedy and satire, visual presentations, allegory, conversation, layered accounts, written stories, and mixed genres. Creative nonfiction, performance writing, mysteries, memories, personal histories, and cultural criticism can be added to this list of narrative forms that can be used by the creative analytic ethnographer. (p. 420)

Sometimes autoethnographic writing can be hard (painful) to read. Ellis, writing in Ellis and Bochner (1996) clarifies that, “Our main purpose isn’t to make readers suffer but to help them learn how to converse with and use these stories” (p. 25).

Ellis (2004) describes in great detail what autoethnographic projects look like:

The interpretive, narrative, autoethnographic project has the following distinguishing features: the author usually writes in the first person, making herself or himself the object of research. The narrative text focuses on generalization within a single case extended over time. The text is presented as a story replete with a narrator, characterization, and plot line, akin to forms of writing associated with the novel or biography. The story often discloses hidden details of private life and highlights emotional experience. The ebb and flow of relationship experience is depicted in an episodic form that dramatizes the motion of connected lives across the curve of time. A reflexive connection exists between the lives of participants and researchers that must be explored. And the relationships between writers and readers of the texts is one of involvement and participation. (p. 30)

Autoethnography, among other “ethnographic projects … blur the boundaries between social science and literature” (Bochner & Ellis, 2002, p. 1). To illustrate, Ellis (2004) cites the work of Wolcott (1995) to describe ethnography as being “part art and

---

129 I employ many of these tools in this dissertation, and especially in chapters three and four (i.e., autoethnographic representation through poetry, aphorisms, conversations (specifically through interviews), creative nonfiction, personal history, and cultural criticism.
part science, but it is also something all its own” (Ellis, 2004, p. 31). She used a Venn Diagram to illustrate the triadic connection. She then built on Wolcott’s concept and applied the same point to Autoethnography. “As a form of ethnography, Autoethnography overlaps art and science; it is part *auto* or self and part *ethno* or culture” (p. 31). She then presented a similar Venn Diagram that interconnected “Autoethnography,” “autobiography” (or “self”) and “Ethnography” (or “culture”) (p. 31) to clarify the connection.

According to Daniel and Peck (1996a): “The presence of the literary in anthropology is best described as ‘uncanny’—a nonscientific drive lodged in the heart of a putative science, a presence both desired and dreaded, a Freudian *unheimlich*” (p. 1). In the next section, criticisms and defenses, respectively, of Autoethnography will be put forth wherein we will take a closer look at just why this “putative science [is] a presence both desired and dreaded” (p. 1).

**Criticisms of Autoethnography**

Perhaps the biggest problem Autoethnography faces is its relative marginalization in the academe, where it remains more or less “controversial” (Nash, 2004, p. 5). Doloriert and Sambrook (2011), for example, recently wrote of the inherent difficulties of pursuing autoethnographic research at the doctoral level. Said they:

Writing innovatively under the umbrella of Autoethnography for a PhD can conflict with the formal institutional requirements of a thesis … [because] academic faculty often perceive students who choose Autoethnography for their postgraduate research as less credible, less serious, and less academic than those taking the more conventional positivist route. (p. 606, 608)

In one of her earliest publications, Ellis (in Ellis & Flaherty, 1992) conceded that “researchers who write about their own emotions risk being seen by colleagues as
emotional exhibitionists” (p. 3). In addition, Holt (2003) says that, “Those who produce Autoethnography are at risk of being over narcissistic and self-indulgent”\textsuperscript{130} (p. 26).

For many reasons, … researchers in schools of education [among other fields] have grave doubts about the rigor of SPN\textsuperscript{131} scholarship [or Autoethnography in general]. Some have called it soft. Others think it touchy-feely. Still others describe it as easy. A few think it is anti-intellectual. Some question its reliability and validity. (Nash, 2004, p. 4)

One of Anderson’s (2006) key arguments in favor of analytic Autoethnography is that it retains certain elements of traditional ethnographic research and academic writing, which he feels is more likely to be taken seriously among the academic intelligentsia. As a criticism of the evocateurs, he adds that, “They remain largely marginalized in mainstream social science venues, due to their rejection of traditional social values and styles of writing” (Anderson, 2006, p. 377).

In speaking about ethnography, Hammersley (1998) points out that, “As a set of methods, ethnography is not far removed from the sort of approach that we all use in everyday life to make sense of our surroundings. It is less specialized and technical in character than approaches like the experiment or the social survey…” (p. 2). Perhaps this is one of the reasons that Autoethnography, which tends to be even less scientific than ethnography, would be criticized as merely a quasi-science, if not an outright non-science.

Another criticism includes “the self-indulgence charge” (Bochner in Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p. 24), or the tendency of autoethnographers to become narcissistic and self-absorbed in writings that are necessarily focused on the self. The goal of

\textsuperscript{130} However, in the same sentence, Holt (2003) also asserts that, “There does seem to be a place for research that links the personal with the cultural” (p. 26).

\textsuperscript{131} SPN is an acronym coined by Nash (2004) meaning scholarly personal narrative, a phrase that describes various, written autoethnographic endeavors.
autoethnographers is to be “self-reflexive but not self-obsessed” (Denzin, 2006, p. 421).

I have discovered in conducting my own autoethnographic research that the line between appropriate self-disclosure and self-indulgent narcissism is fine, and can easily be crossed. The best antidote I have found to avoid this trap is to solicit feedback of others who can review the text with an eye of greater objectivity for the material than I possess. During the process of receiving feedback on my autoethnographic vignettes, four out of five members of my dissertation committee agreed that some elements of the presentation of my autoethnographic data had begun bleeding into the realms of narcissism and were either unnecessary or irrelevant to meeting the academic purposes set forth in the work. I was grateful for such input, and trimmed literally scores of pages and visual aides in an attempt to avoid crossing this fine line.

Delamont (2007) was particularly vocal and truculent in her “arguments against auto-ethnography” in an article that she herself called “a deliberately controversial paper [wherein she] develop[ed] a series of arguments against Autoethnography” (introduction). Citing the field’s rapid growth in the past decade, Delamont is unapologetic in sharing her view that such developments are “almost entirely pernicious.” According to Delamont, “Autoethnography is essentially lazy – literally lazy and also intellectual lazy.” She then goes on to enumerate six specific objections. Among them are concerns about ethics and the lack of anonymity among subjects portrayed in autoethnographic writings. She also criticizes the non-analytic nature of the field: “Autoethnography is all experience, and is noticeably lacking in analytic outcome.” She claims that Autoethnography “abrogates [the academic’s] duty to go out and collect data,” and asserts that, “‘We’ are not interesting enough to write about in journals, to

132 There were no page numbers available for this electronic article.
teach about, to expect attention from others. We are not interesting enough to be the subject matter of sociology.” In conclusion, she states emphatically that, “Our duty is to go out and research the classic texts of 2050 or 2090 – not sit in our homes focusing on ourselves.”

While Delamont’s criticism is not unfounded, I hold that Anderson (2006) and other analytic autoethnographers, like myself, possess a legitimate counter argument to her claim that Autoethnography is void of “analytic outcome[s].” Moreover, the tone of her article, which is strident, if not indirectly snide and condescending, relies extensively on biased opinions, which clearly hold little, if any, regard for the field.

**Autoethnographic Apologetics**

The list of autoethnographic apologists is growing. In the words of Muncey (2010), there is a “growing acceptance of the individual in research” (p. xii). Muncey (2010) acclaims the field in part because of its potential personal benefits to the researcher’s mental hygiene. In her words, “There is a therapeutic or emancipatory element associated with participating in research [because] in order to reconstruct a narrative or ‘lived experience’, the researcher provides the participant with a cathartic experience during the collecting of the data” (p. xii).

While it may be accurate to describe the field as fledgling, it could be equally portrayed as burgeoning, and if current trends continue, it is not unlikely that Autoethnography may, in coming years and decades, become one of the most commonly utilized research methodologies in the arena of qualitative research. Delamont (2007) gives an example of this rapid growth. A vocal critic of the field, she does, nevertheless,
concede the fact that since the mid 1990s “there has been an explosion in auto-
ethnography.” She goes on to specifically cite the growth:

In the first edition of Denzin and Lincoln (1994) there was one index entry for Autoethnography, in the second (2000) edition there were thirteen with a chapter by Ellis and Bochner (2000), while in the third (2005) edition the number had grown to thirty seven, and there was a dedicated chapter by Jones (2005).

As for the wealth of criticism from traditional academics toward the field, Pelias (2003) dishes it right back by arguing:

That academics function as ethnographic tourists in that they, like tourists, like ethnographers, never get beyond the surface of things, even when they spend a lifetime at their sites ...[and that they] often only manage to get to the surface of any area of inquiry they pursue, in part because of the nature of what constitutes full understanding and in part because of the [demanding task oriented] habits of academic life. (p. 371, 369)

The accusation is ironically reciprocal, and basically accuses academics of being guilty of a similar charge they often make toward autoethnographers, on top of presenting material that is insipidly boring. According to Ellis (in Ellis & Bochner, 1996), “The walls between social sciences and humanities have crumbled. In the 1970s and 1980s postmodernists, poststructuralists, and feminists challenged us to contemplate how social science may be closer to literature than physics…. We not only began to question the usefulness of boundaries between disciplines, but some of us became downright hostile toward our own discipline” (p. 18).

An enthusiastic and vigorous apologist of the field, Ellis (2009) emphasizes what autoethnographies are not, as well as what they are.

Effective autoethnographies are not victim tales; on the contrary, writing autoethnography well produces survivor tales for the writer and for those who

---

133 No page number available.
134 In the most recent version of Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the number of autoethnographic inclusions has remained approximately static. However, this is not necessarily indicative of a leveling off of the field as numerous other publications have arisen in between 2005 and 2013.
In addition, Ellis and Bochner (1992) explain that, “By making intricate details of one’s life accessible to others in public discourse, personal narratives bridge the dominions of public and private life. Telling a personal story becomes a social process for making lived experience understandable and meaningful” (p. 79-80). Such meaning has the potential to grow and spread when these same compelling stories are shared through the medium of the written word. When published (as a book or otherwise), it has the potential to influence an outside audience. The potential power of such influence cannot be underestimated (Zinn, 2009).

I think books [can change people’s lives]. And if a book changes somebody’s life by changing consciousness, it is going to have an effect on the world, in one way or the other, sooner or later, in ways that you probably cannot trace. (p. 16)

We can gain insight from reading even if what we are reading is only a story, and even if the insight is merely implicated rather than explicitly stated. Such insights can have a significant impact on us as individuals, and that impact comes from more than the mere acquisition of knowledge (storing away new facts in our brains); it comes from any potential we may have to feel something about what we are reading. In the process of acquiring knowledge, such feeling-based learning tends to move and shake us far beyond the realms of mere thinking-learning (Zinn, 2009 see p. 17-20). For those who are uncomfortable with the concept of personal “stories” in academic literature, Ellis and Flaherty (1992) implicitly suggest viewing “lived experience as an interpretive rather than a casual story” (p. 5).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) write that, “Many now argue that we can study only our own experiences” (p. 645, italics added). Ellis and Bochner (1992) add: “By making
intricate details of one’s life accessible to others in public discourse, personal narratives bridge the dominions of public and private life. Telling a personal story becomes a social process for making lived experience understandable and meaningful” (p. 79-80).

Others, like Vesperi and Waterston (2009), hold that the telling of certain stories is a necessity even in the face of uncertain outcomes: “These are stories that must be told, sometimes at the risk of personal rejection or professional failure” (p. 1). McClaurin (2009) puts it this way: “We have taken upon our shoulders an enormous responsibility that is beyond any allegiance we might owe to the academy or any desire for tenure. We hold in our words real people’s lives” (p. 123).

Fortunately, for both writers and readers of Autoethnography, “a lot of people have expressed gratitude for being exposed to stories that historically have been shrouded in secrecy. They think of these stories as gifts” (Ellis in Ellis & Bochner, 1996, p. 25). According to Bochner (in Ellis & Bochner, 1996), “They are gifts, at least to the extent they make it possible to converse about previously silenced and unspeakable topics and prepare us to appreciate and deal more humanely with the diversity of human experience” (p. 25).

Recognizing the criticism academics are prepared with to dish out to “public intellectuals,” Nash, a traditional academic himself, emphasizes that, “SPN\textsuperscript{135} writers [or autoethnographers] are ‘public intellectuals’ … in the very best sense of the term” (p. 8, italics added). He (Nash, 2004) further indicts traditional scholars as being fearful of investigating broader means of scholarly inquiry by claiming that, “deep down, [they] … are afraid to … reexamine … the ways in which [they] were trained to be respectable researchers and scholars” (p. 9). Pelias (2003) takes Nash’s claim a step further by

\textsuperscript{135} Scholarly personal narrative.
positioning traditional academics as metaphorical “tourists, [who] never see the world beyond its surface level” (p. 372). His rather audacious claim implicitly suggests that Autoethnography, despite its ample criticism from said “tourists,” possesses power to accomplish what traditional sociological research and inquiry alone cannot. Rather than focusing primarily on an inflexible scientific method, “Autoethnography centers attention on how we should live and brings us into lived experiences in a feeling and embodied way” (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 439).

**Autoethnography as Qualitative Research Method**

Having laid the groundwork for what Autoethnography *is*, let us now shift focus toward *how* it is actually *done*. In other words, what are the steps in employing Autoethnography as a bona fide research method in the qualitative sciences? Because of the enormous flexibility, generally speaking, afforded to autoethnographic research approaches, there are few explicit examples of scholars who offer a detailed approach that covers all details of the process. Muncey (2010) talks about some of the general components of writing a successful “autoethnographic account” (p. 54) such as: “writing strategies and tactics” (p. 55, 57), “creativity” (p. 55), “artistic tools” (p. 56-65), a “technique to stimulate imagination” (p. 65-68), “writing phases” (p. 73-76), and other writing tips (p. 76-82). She also provides “a complete autoethnographic account” (p. 112-131) and a chapter on “the autoethnographic process” (p. 132-146). This general presentation of the process, with the added benefit of including a finished piece of autoethnographic composition, is one of the “how-to” guides available. The other (Chang, 2008) is more specific and sequence oriented when it comes to an organized and coherent, step-by-step process for actually moving from start to finish. This 7-step
process provides an organized sequence involving two primary goals: “collecting autoethnographic data” (p. 59), and “turning data into Autoethnography” (p. 113).

**Collecting Autoethnographic Data**

The process of collecting data for autoethnographic composition involves preparation by identifying a research topic, making decisions about where to place yourself and others in the narrative (Chang, 2008), and as Nash (2004) advises, to also decipher the level of self-disclosure one feels comfortable engaging in throughout the narrative. While Nash prefers the term **scholarly personal narrative** (SPN) to Autoethnography, consider the following quote and its applicability to comfort levels as they relate to self-disclosure in autoethnographic writing.

An… important challenge… of doing cogent SPN writing is to know where our comfort level lies in describing all of those crises and opportunities [relevant to a project]. This comes with practice in developing what for all SPN writers is a very special gift: scrupulous self-monitoring based on an honest self-assessment. To know just how much we can tolerate in telling our secrets and making ourselves vulnerable is the first order of business in doing any kind of SPN writing. (p. 31)

Once the preparation phase has been completed, the process of data collection can begin. The primary source for data collection is one’s personal memory (Chang, 2008). The autoethnographer then begins to chronicle the past (p. 72-74) by utilizing various tools such as autobiographical timelines (p. 73) and routines (categorized by chronological duration such as yearly, seasonally, monthly, weekly, daily, hourly, et cetera) (p. 74-75). Then, one can begin a self-inventory where the researcher organizes and evaluates data points that have been collected.

---

136 (Chang’s phrase, 2008, p. 59).
137 Extant personal records, such as journals, diaries, calendars, etc. can be useful tools in data collection, and may be more reliable than one’s raw memory.
Part of “inventorying self” (Chang, 2008, p. 75) is to consider various “thematic categories” (p. 76) to which data points can be organized. Chang offers five examples of said points (although many more exist): “proverbs, virtues, and values, rituals, mentors, and artifacts” (p. 76). Next, Chang discusses the visualizing of self through various pictorial representations such as kinship diagrams and free drawings, which are essentially visual outlining tools aimed at further organizing loose “bits of data” (p. 81) into a coherent picture “intend[ed] to help stir your memories and organize loosened memory fragments into a visual structure such as a diagram, chart, or drawing” (p. 81) in preparation to eventually morph those same pictures into their written equivalent (Chang, 2008).

So far, we have dealt with data points derived from the past. However, “autoethnographic data [can] come from [one’s] present as well” (Chang, 2008, p. 89). “Raw data from the present are … useful to the autoethnographic study because, unlike personal memory data, they enable you to preserve vivid details and fresh perspectives” (p. 89). Examples of data derived from the present include that which is concluded from self-observation, including “occurrence recording” which involves the regular documentation of thoughts, speech, and/or actions including time, location, and others involved in the same (Chang, 2008, p. 92). Other tools in collecting “self-reflective data” (p. 95) include: 1) Writing in a field journal (“used to record researchers’ private and personal thoughts and feelings pertaining to their research processes” [p. 95]), 2) Analyzing one’s personal preferences and values, and 3). Reflecting on “cultural identity and cultural membership” (p. 97).
In some cases, interviewing other people may play a role in completing one’s own Autoethnography, as it does in this present study. In so doing, ethical consideration must be taken into account, including IRB approval if applicable (Chang, 2008). Other external data, such as official documents, textual artifacts, photographs and video, and literature that are relevant to the study may be tapped for inclusion as a means of framing one’s study within a given context (Chang, 2008).

**Turning Data Into Autoethnography**

According to Chang (2008), once the data has been collected and organized, it is time to start engaging in the autoethnographic writing process. The first step involves organizing, labeling, and classifying the data. The next step is to refine the data by eliminating less important and/or repetitive details, and magnify key points to sharpen the research focus. Analysis of the data can then begin, which involves coding and sorting to assist in interpretation whereby conclusions can eventually be drawn. Chang makes a vital point worth keeping in mind throughout the research process:

> The autoethnographic research process is not linear in the sense that one activity leads to the next one and so on until you reach the final destination. Instead, research steps overlap, sometimes returning you to previous steps. One activity informs and modifies another…. In the same way, the data collection process is often intertwined with data analysis and interpretation. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation activities often take place concurrently or inform each other in a cyclical process. (p. 121-122)

When analyzing and interpreting autoethnographic data points, Chang (2008) suggests several different strategies, ranging from looking for cultural themes and connecting the past with the present, to analyzing relationships between self and others and comparing and contrasting your situation with someone else’s (p. 132-136). In

---

138 (Chang’s phrase, 2008, p. 113).
addition, broad contextualization of the subject matter at hand, as well as comparing the
situation(s) with other constructs in social science, and framing within other established
theories (p. 136-137), can all be useful integrative critical thinking tools to consider when
analyzing and interpreting the data points.

When the researcher is ready to begin the actual process of writing the
Autoethnography itself, one must decide which compositional typology to employ.
Chang (2008) covers four specific typologies that can be used for autoethnographies:
*descriptive-realistic*, *confessional-emotive*, *analytic-interpretive*, and *imaginative-
creative*. Lastly, Chang emphasizes the importance of “developing your own style” (p.
148), which may involve combining one of the above-mentioned typologies, or (as seems
implicit in her point) perhaps something else altogether. The key is for the individual
autoethnographer to do what works best within a context of one’s individual research
project. “Like the principle of adjusting data collection, analysis, and interpretation
strategies to your research, I cannot overemphasize the importance of developing a style
that fits your research purpose and your writing strengths. After all, self matters in
Autoethnography” (p. 149).

**Goals of Autoethnography**

Ellis and Flaherty (1992) pose several questions one can pose to help determine if
an autoethnographic text is accomplishing its goals. At the same time, these questions
assist in identifying what some of those goals might be. While this is certainly not a
comprehensive list of possible goals, it does provide food for thought to all potential
autoethnographers.

- “Have we made subjectivity more intelligible?
• “Do readers experience something akin to the emotions, thoughts, and bodily sensations we attempt to convey?

• “Does the prose evoke cognitive, emotional, or physical response or identification?

• “Were readers reminded of similar situations or different situations but with similar conditions?

• “Have readers redefined a personal problem as a public issue as a result of reading our texts?

• “Do readers have some increased understanding of the connection between subjectivity and sociocultural dynamics?

• “Do readers recognize themselves—their feelings, thoughts, and everyday experiences—in the texts?” (p. 11)

In the spirit of Anderson’s (2006) analytic autoethnographic approach, I posit that some other questions are also worth asking, such as: “Does the writer intend for readers to do anything because of reading one’s Autoethnography?” If so, what does the writer intend for the reader to do? Moreover, when, where, why, and how is a reader going to do it? Finally, who might be impacted by those actions, and what is the purpose of the desired impact or influence?

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) “Stand firmly behind the belief that critical qualitative inquiry inspired by the sociological imagination can make the world a better place” (p. x). I argue that Autoethnography represents a bona fide element and tool for engaging productively in critical qualitative inquiry, and likewise holds potential to make the world a better place. It is in this hope that I have determined to produce my own Autoethnography.
PART THREE. ACTION RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Part Three

Before applying Action Research to the self in order to properly introduce the concept of *Self-Action Research*, we must first take a look at *Action Research* by itself. Part three of Chapter Two provides a brief literature review of Action Research. This review is intentionally *brief* because of the supporting role that Action Research plays in this dissertation.

What is Action Research (AR)?

According to Kuhne and Quigley (1997): “Action Research, as an approach to research, is essentially a systematic process of practitioner problem posing and problem solving” (p. 23). It is “located within the family of collaborative research methods” (Quigley, 1997, p. 14), and “uses a kind of trial-and-error approach when seeking to both understand and resolve practice-based problems and issues” (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997, p. 23). This is the simplistic view of the concept, but it goes deeper than that because “it incorporates systematic procedures that combine analysis, observation, and data collection into the process [and] the systematic use of analysis, observation, and data collection procedures gives Action Research the potential to achieve useful answers to practice problems” (p. 23).

Other verbatim definitions and/or descriptions of Action Research include:

- The very essence of AR is encapsulated within its name: it represents a juxtaposition of action and research, or in other words, of practice and theory. (McKay & Marshall, 2001, p. 46)

- Action Research is a participatory process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together
action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities. (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 4)

- Action Research has proven its utility, with growing recognition of its breadth as a field of research practice and its depth as a discourse of theoretical insight. (Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart & Zuber-Skerritt, 2002, p. 125)

- Action Research (AR) theory suggests that the AR process starts with a notion in the practitioner’s mind that a change in practice is justified. (French, 2009, p. 187)

- Action Research is a family of practices of living inquiry that aims, in a great variety of ways, to link practice and ideas in the service of human flourishing…. Action Research challenges much received wisdom in both academia and among social change and development practitioners, not least because it is a practice of participation…. (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 1)

- Action Research … has been defined as research that involves practical problem solving which has theoretical relevance. (Mumford, 2001, p. 12)

- Action Research is emancipatory, it leads not just to new practical knowledge, but to new abilities to create knowledge. In Action Research knowledge is a living, evolving process of coming to know rooted in everyday experience; it is a verb rather than a noun. (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 5)

- [Action Research] is a value-driven, cyclical, and transformative process. (Cunningham, 2008, p. 1)

- First-person Action Research/practice skills and methods address the ability of the researcher to foster an inquiring approach to his or her own life, to act choicefully and with awareness, and to assess effects in the outside world while acting. First-person research practice brings inquiry into more and more of our moments of action – not as outside researchers but in the whole range of everyday activities. In our Action Research practice, first-person inquiry provides a foundational practice and disciplines through which we can monitor the impact of our behaviour [sic] (Marshall and Mead, 2005…). (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 6)

- Do you have a disposition toward analytic examination? Do you desire a continuous refinement of the teaching/learning process? Then you no doubt will be interested in Action Research. (Schoen & Bullard, 2002, p. 36)

Action Research is probably most commonly utilized in education (see Diana, 2011; Noffke & Somekh, 2009; Cunningham, 2008, McBee, 2004; Mills, 2003; Shoen &
Bullard, 2002, Glanz, 1999; and Noffke & Stevenson, 1995), and business (see French, 2009; and Whitehead, 2005); however, its conceptual application is universal (see Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart, and Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). There are many features of Action Research. For example, McIntosh (2010) interprets Elliott (1991) to point out that, “The nature of Action Research … is reflective… For Elliott, Action Research is fundamentally about the transformation of practice. Its role is not purely philosophical…. It is an empirical approach to the importance of data in reflectively improving practice” (p. 34).

Another feature is found in the following distinction drawn by Hedrick, Bickman, and Rog (1993) regarding a related topic—applied research:

Applied research planning is both a science and an art. There are basic tenets to which one must adhere, there is a general order to the activities, and there are definite mistakes that can be made; however, good planning also involves creativity, flexibility, and responsiveness. (p. 11)

One last feature worth mentioning is that “Action Research is a lived practice” (Carson & Sumara, 1997, p. xiii), meant to be “include[ed] … in one’s life.” This feature creates a natural connection to Autoethnography and Self-Leadership, a triadic connection this dissertation seeks underscore and magnify. One Action Researcher (Luce-Kapler, 1997) has even written, albeit not on purpose, an autoethnographic account of her experiences with Action Research. In her article, she poses a fascinating autoethnographic based question about Action Research.

Can research ever be anything more than a subtle form of writing the self? Or not so subtle? Perhaps it is time to reveal the writer of the research as much as the data. The writer is the data; the data is the writer. The writer who initiates the research, creates the space, becomes implicated. The research bespeaks her; she bespeaks the research. (p. 188)
One of the mediums through which Luce-Kapler (1997) writes is poetry, and she comments: “My writing, my poetry can’t stay out of this research. My writing is the research; the research the writing…. It seems that research is even more like poetry than I thought” p. 192, 195). In the words of Carson & Sumara (1997):

Luce-Kapler has created a new genre for reports of Action Research … [that] captures the fullness of remembered and lived experience. As an example of poetic hermeneutic phenomenology, this text, as a form, situates the reader in a multi-layered experience. Not only do we learn about the research that Rebecca is describing but, as well, we come to understand the complex relations among memory, identity, writing, and interpretation. Most important, we learn that the researcher is always complicit in the interpretation. (p. xxviii)

In a similar vein, Pushor and Clandinin (2009) argue for “the interconnections between narrative inquiry and Action Research” (p. 23), suggesting just one of many potential links to Autoethnography. Zeni (2009) states that, “Action Research is intrinsically engaged” (p. 254), and Noffke and Somekh (2009) include “12 chapters that focus on the work of those whose Action Research places special emphasis on reflexivity and exploration of the self. In this sense their overarching focus in personal” (p. 250).

**FIVE STEPS to Action Research**

Schmuck (2009) incisively provides the following definition for Action Research in educational settings:

Educational Action Research … entails planned and continuous observations of one’s own professional practice and of one’s trials of new practices to enhance outcomes. It unfolds through a spiral of cycles: reflecting, planning, acting, collecting data, and reflecting again. … Educators use such spirals to find out how they should practice differently to be more effective. (p. 1)

Kuhne and Quigley (1997) reiterate Schmuck’s (2009) approach, but simplify the process slightly:
Based on [the theories of John Dewey and Kurt Lewin] Action Research can be understood as an approach to problem posing and problem solving that proceeds through four distinct processes: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. These four basic processes in turn create a cycle of research efforts…. Action Research often leads to multiplied cycles of problem posing and problem solving that progressively enable [us] to successfully address the issues and problems [we face]. (p. 24)

The four-steps of Action Research as illustrated above is an improvised model based on Kuhne and Quigley’s (1997) four-step process of Action Research: Planning, Acting, Observing, and Reflecting (p. 25).
STEP ONE: Planning & Preparation

Step one, planning & preparation, involves “deciding how to deal with a problem” (Kuhne & Quigley, 1997, p. 25). This is the stage where the researcher(s) identifies the problem to be researched, defines the project, and determines how one/they will measure the results. It is the stage where blueprints for the Action Research study/project at hand are drawn up.

STEP TWO: Taking Action

Step two, taking action, involves “implementing your plan” (p. 25) by taking action. The acting stage is where the plan to research becomes actual research.

STEP THREE: Observation

Step three involves “paying attention and recording what is happening” (p. 25) throughout the course of the Action Research project. It involves noticing what is going on throughout the research process, and recording accurate notes of one’s observations.

STEP FOUR: Reflection and Analysis

Step four involves “analyzing outcomes and revising plans for another cycle of acting” (p. 25). In other words, it means analyzing the data already retrieved and then deciding whether another cycle needs to be engaged or not. If it does, then the researcher returns to the planning stage.

STEP FIVE: Repeat Cycle as Needed

Following observation and analysis, the Action Researcher returns to step one to begin again the four-step process of planning and preparation, action, observation, and
analysis. The goal of subsequent cycles of Action Research is, of course, to make improvements based on the previous cycle’s observation and analyses. In some cases, multiple cycles may be required to achieve targeted objectives. There is no limit to how many times the cycle can be repeated.

**Data Gathering Techniques**

Kuhne and Quigley (1997) also encourage the use of a journal, among other “data-gathering techniques” (p. 32) such as *anecdotal records, field notes, documents analysis, logs, portfolio, questionnaires, interviews* (structured, semi-structured, and open), *audio and video recording*, and *tests of learner performance* (p. 32-33).

**Conjoining Action Research with Self-Leadership**

Action Research and Self-Leadership share a common connection. This connection is found in the honest self-awareness and focused personal effort that is required to effectively engage Action Research that gets results. For example, Kuhne and Quigley (1997) explain that, “It is not uncommon for the practitioner to have to face the possibility that he or she is part of the problem” (p. 29), nor “is [it] uncommon for the process of defining … the actual problem to take quite a bit of time” (p. 29). Effective Self-Leadership practices will be required to both identify and successfully troubleshoot problems and transcend personal and/or other obstacles that may lie in the way of persons engaged in Action Research. Moreover, discipline, diligence, determination, persistence, and patience (Self-Leadership virtues all) may be required to realize research objectives.
Gauging Success

How can Action Researchers gauge their success? Kuhne and Quigley (1997) suggest asking several questions to help determine one’s success, or lack thereof, in an Action Research project.

- How will the new approach be compared to the old approach?
- On what basis will the results be evaluated at the project’s end?
- What type of change will be deemed a success?
- How will action and change be observed and documented?
- How will you observe the project in a systematic way?
- With whom can you discuss this plan along the way and assess it at the conclusion. (p. 31)

In conclusion, Action Research affords researchers enormous possibilities to effectively identify and successfully solve problems facing individuals, work teams/groups, and organizations. In the words of Kuhne and Quigley (1997):

Action Research provides the basic research tools to move ahead on common concerns. Action Research widely shared offers the promise of real empowerment and professional development for long-term impact in [y]our field of practice…. Think through an issue or problem, discuss it with a friend, and begin today to develop new effectiveness in problem posing and problem solving within your practice. (p. 39)