

## 2) Relational Leadership

In one sentence, the relational leadership model is about *putting the relationships you have with people first*. The model urges you to really think about the way in which you are going about accomplishing your goals rather than a strong focus on the physical goal itself. When I discuss my educational philosophy, it being student-centered, it directly correlates with the relational model, of putting student needs before the “curriculum” or those of the teacher.

### What is the Model?

At the heart of the model is the understanding that: *“leadership is viewed as a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change”*. The model also *“provides a frame of reference or an approach to leadership in contemporary organizations”*. Overall this model emphasizes that in all endeavors you participate in you should place the relationships with people first.

The model suggests that there are things you need to know, believe, and do; across 5 different domains of inclusiveness, empowerment, purpose, ethics, and process-oriented.

### RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP IS

#### \* Purposeful

-Having a commitment to a goal or activity

#### \* Inclusive

- Breeds new leadership and creates a positive cycle that sustains the quality of an organization over time

#### \* Empowering

-The sense of self that claims ownership, claims a place in the process, and expects to be involved

\*Ethical

- Driven by values and standards and leadership that is good-moral-in nature

\*Process- Oriented

- The process is the most important step, it is how all of the other components fit in

“Leadership is always dependent on the context, but the context is established by the relationship we value” (as cited Wheatley, 1992, p.144)

What is relational leadership?

“..The ability of the leader to create positive relationships within the organization,” (as cited in Wheatley, 1992, pg. 144)

**Application:**

Independent from the classroom, throughout college the most common use of the relational leadership model has been throughout group projects or work done through professional organizations. While in these types of settings it is far more important to value the interaction and the ‘process’ rather than an extreme focus on the goals or outcomes of the organization. 1) It is important to be **inclusive**: making sure that all members in the group have shared and have a voice in the proceedings of the group. 2) For the group members to be **empowering**: of themselves, other group members, and of the common goal. 3) Realizing that the process needs to be **purposeful** and accomplishment oriented; that all members of the group have a commitment and a focus on accomplishing the groups goals and individual duties. 4) Knowing that the goals of the organization must be feasibly accomplished through **ethical** means, and to be sure that they are driven by good nature and core values. 5) Keeping in mind that the **process** is the most essential part of the group’s proceedings, and that the main focus is how you got there, not what you have when you get there.

With the relational model, I constantly see applications of the model in my daily life and in my leadership style. How can you be an effective leader, without being inclusive of others? One thing that the model has taught me is to always be open and receptive to the opinions of others. It is important to realize that everyone has something to offer, and more opinions in the matter will just strengthen the end result. It is also important to be purposeful and process oriented. I try to do this in my daily life by staying organized, and always making sure I am committed to completing whichever task I set my mind to. Being an Ethical leader forces you to really 'practice what you preach' at all times. This model has really been what has influence my practice of leadership most in my journey. Because the model, I make a concerted effort to include all in the "process" and step back and serve as a facilitator. Over the years I have really tried to allow others to shine rather than always trying to steal the spotlight. I do this through being empowering of others, to make them have a stronger desire to be confident and comfortable so they can be sure to be successful. I am purposeful in what I do as well, but have a firm belief that the process often means more than the overall result, thus I have put a big emphasis on really embracing the 'process' when working with others, and allow the ultimate goal and content to come later. Ethics serve as the moral code for my leadership, to make sure I am accomplishing my goals in a professional and responsible way. And finally being constantly process oriented, always looking ahead at the "big picture" and what I can accomplish in the future.

## **References**

Komives, S.R., Lucas, N., McMahon, T.R. (2007). *Exploring Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.