TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP AND ITS INTERSECTION WITH CORNEL WEST'S INTERPRETATION OF PROPHETIC SPIRITUALITY

Transformative educational leadership portends, by the implication of its name, a substantive change in the very definition and implementation of traditional school leadership. It assumes an oppositional stance to the hegemonic forms of school leadership and promises a reformed, if indeed not a totally reconstructed, definition of this social construction. Implied in any notion of transformative leadership is the exchanging of some new theoretical frames and practices for the more orthodox and profession framing ones that have been touted as the fundamental grounding upon which educational leadership has been constructed.

Transformative leadership emanates from a context that demystifies the systemic realities of silencing and marginalization of those voices, which are peripheral to schools' hegemonic constructions. It forthrightly engages the existence of race, class, and gender inequalities present in schools as an agenda for institutional change. American schools, the institutions that are designed to systematically propagate and solidify the social constructions of the status quo, deliberately promote this positioning of marginalized and silenced voices. By this one means, schools serve as bastions of hegemony and perpetuate society's racial, gender, and class differentials through an a-critical curriculum and an uninspiring, dehumanizing pedagogy. It is this normative mind set that tacitly legitimates dual systems in school districts, one for the affluent and one for the poor, one that proficiently educates whites and one which under-educates people of color, one that celebrates maleness and one that denigrates femaleness; one that reifies conformity while

deligitimating difference. Transformative leadership demands that educational leaders critically assess the asymmetrical relations of power in the organizational context and deconstruct, through a critical hermeneutic, those practices and cultural artifacts that engender an anti-democratic discourse in organizations such as schools. One who is a transformative leader appreciates the fact that schools have been instruments of hegemony reproduction but is compelled nonetheless to propose an agenda of organizational reconstruction centered on practices of democracy and a politics of liberation and hope. Race, gender, and class serve as signifiers that draw the attention of transformative leaders. Essentially, the transformative educational leader is grounded in what Freire (1998) calls a universal ethic. He describes this ethical formation as one:

Not afraid to condemn the exploitation of labor and the manipulation that makes a rumor into truth and truth into a mere rumor. To condemn the fabrication of illusions in which the unprepared become hopelessly trapped and the weak and the defenseless are destroyed. To condemn making promises when one has no intention of keeping one's word, which causes lying to become an almost necessary way of life. To condemn the calumny of character assassination simply for the joy of it and the fragmentation of the utopia of human solidarity. The ethic of which I speak is that which feels itself betrayed and neglected by the hypocritical perversion of an elitist purity, an ethic affronted by racial, sexual, and class discrimination. For the sake of this ethic, which is inseparable from educative practice, we should struggle, whether our work is with children, youth, or adults. (p. 23-24)

Those who lead from a transformative frame clearly understand the inherent praxis of reconstruction following a critical deconstruction of the social creations schools have traditionally forged. Theirs is a praxis of resistance as well as the promotion of what Freire (1998) calls an epistemological curiosity. This process of learning demands a critical evaluation of the accepted knowledge, or the ingenuous curiosity, as Freire names it, with the clear understanding that a social reconstructivist agenda must be attached to the communal knowledge constructed by the student and the teacher. Transformative leadership is radical in its approach, it is interrogative in its engagement of the various constituencies of schooling and it critiques, with a keen exactitude, those social and political manifestations of discrimination and bias presently reproduced in our educational institutions. Transformative educational leadership accepts, as a priori, that the agenda for schools must be one of equitable educational access for all children as well as the creation of learning communities that celebrate difference rather than merely accommodating diversity. Transformative educational leadership stresses the academic and social growth of all children as well as the implementation of a social agenda that militates against further marginalization and silencing of voices deemed outside the hegemonic monotone currently legitimated in schools.

Quantz, Rogers, and Dantley (1991) define transformative leaders as, "those who are able to help others to clarify their own world, to develop a commitment to democracy and emancipation and to have the courage and desire to work for the empowerment of all people." (p. 104) They cite the work of Foster (1986) who maintains that transformative leadership must be a political and moral act of courage that works to empower followers to become leaders (p. 97). The crux of transformative leadership rests upon the critical

project of leaders and followers not merely deconstructing the vagaries of undemocratic decisions in schools but also enacting an agenda of reform and reconstruction. Quantz, et.al. ground transformative leadership in this reconstructive frame. Moreover, they assert:

To accept transformative leadership requires understanding how its adoption would affect the historically bureaucratic structure of schools and the traditional functionalist discourse used to describe them. It requires juxtaposing forthrightly its basic ideas against the traditional scientific, quantitative, technical, and hierarchy ideology which is driving today's calls for reform. In other words, it requires a candid grappling with the social, economic, and political dilemmas the schools are currently facing. (p.98)

Fundamental to the real exercise of transformative leadership is a belief that change in schools and their administration can occur. Quantz, et.al. further explore this notion of belief in change when they argue:

Before transformation can occur, school participants must engage in critique, but they must also believe that change can occur. Critical understanding requires a careful examination of the historical mechanisms which work against the achievement of societal ideals. Dialogue intended to bring critical awareness can, if not carefully considered, remain entrenched in a language of critique without possibility. The examination of class, gender, and race in American society and the ineffectiveness of schools to deal with these social problems for example, can lead to even further feelings of powerlessness than exist at the present time. When the contradictions between the lived reality and the ideology become evident, people often conclude that nothing can be done.

We reject an approach in which the language of critique is used when seeking critical understanding and the language of possibility is used when envisioning new structures. The language of critique should always contain the language of possibility and the language of possibility should always contain the language of critique. (p. 106-107)

They further propose that transformative leadership is constructed on the idea of lowering authoritarianism while raising authority and responsibility for each person engaged in the learning community. This necessitates a strong sense of self-advocacy. They maintain:

Any approach to transformative leadership must pay careful attention to self-articulation and democratic commitment. Administration, teachers, and students must become involved in dialogue designed for self-articulation, dialogue aimed at helping participants gain a critical understanding of their lives both in and outside of school. Only when many more school participants begin to realize the contradictions that exist between present lived reality and American ideals, between historical constraints such as class, race, and gender and constructed knowledge as taught in schools and the media-only then will students and teachers be in a position to act strongly on their own behalf. Teachers and students need to participate in their work and education, but they need to do so from a position of critical understanding. As we have stated, democratic transformation cannot come from above. Enlightened leaders cannot impose emancipation even if they want to; democracy must come from the people. (p. 111)

Three structural ingredients seem to be missing in the framing of this transformative leadership discourse however, especially where the notion of self-articulation is concerned. One is an obeisance to a prophetic spirituality as West (1999)

suggests, that is a combative spirituality, which frames the urgency for transformation. Another is the disclosed impact of reflection on the transformative leaders as espoused by Dewey (), Freire (), and Foucault (). And the final piece that appears to be sonorously silent in the discourse is a spirit-filled resistance that proposes a project or praxis for self and institutional change. It seems to me that we cannot fathom the implications of transformative leadership without first grappling with these three essential constituencies.

This essay will attempt to show how a prophetic spirituality not only informs transformative leadership but also is actually the lived reality of those who practice such leadership in schools. It will examine the salient features of transformative leadership as well as explore the combative spirituality that undergirds the liberatory praxis of African Americans and connect the two as part of the frame through which a transformative educational leadership is built.

Spirituality involves the platonic nature of humankind that imbues life and animation in our existence. It is that intangible dimension of ourselves that connects us with something greater than ourselves. It literally becomes the nexus of inspiration, motivation, and meaning making in our lives. The spirit is that part of humankind that compels us into community with others, it establishes and prods our sense of justice and fairness and it constructs for us our notions of calling, mission, or purpose. West's (1988) notion of prophetic spirituality is a nuanced construction that blends the idea of critically perceiving one's situationality in its unpolished context, that is the "as is," while at the same time transcending the political realities that construct that situationality to project a

different and in fact better "not yet." West (1999) offers helpful insight in his definition

of a prophetic tradition. He says that the whole issue of the prophetic:

…has a distinctive, though not exclusive, capacity to highlight critical, historical and

universal consciousness that yields a vigilant disposition toward prevailing forms of

individual and institutional evil, and unceasing suspicion of ossified and petrified forms

of dogmatism and a strong propensity to resist various types of cynicism and nihilism.

(p. 14)

The approbation of the idea of prophetic spirituality causes even one's perspective of

education to be transformed. This is a spiritual phenomenon as Carlson (1998) describes

it. He maintains that:

Education is, in the fullest sense, a spiritual experience. It changes the way we

experience our being in the world (to use Heidegger's phrase), it reconnects us to the

cosmos and it transforms us in ways that affect our everyday relations with others and

makes it possible for us to struggle and grow. (p. 197)

Carlson and Freire agree on the necessity to deconstruct our situationality in order to

construct a transformed one. This, however, is a very spiritual phenomenon. West

(1988) takes the idea of spirituality to a different level by introducing into the discourse

what he calls a prophetic spirituality. West defines prophetic in this way:

Prophetic thought and action is preservative in that it tries to keep alive certain elements

of a tradition bequeathed to us from the past and revolutionary in that it attempts to

project a vision and inspire a praxis that fundamentally transforms the prevailing status in

light of the best of the tradition and the flawed yet significant achievements of the present order. (p. 359)

He locates the whole concept of spirituality in what he terms three prophetic practices. These are a deep-seated moralism, an inescapable opportunism, and an aggressive pessimism. He positions the African American experience within the parameters of this prophetic spirituality and maintains that the prophetic modes of thought consist of protracted and principled struggles against forms of personal despair, intellectual dogmatism, and socioeconomic oppression. (West, p. 41) From this mind set emanate communities of hope. Communities of hope are those persons whom Freire (1970)

calls the oppressed that are coalescing to bring democratic practice to a marginalizing and silencing institution. The community of hope not only shares a discourse of critique but also aggressively develops a discourse of possibility. In fact, these communities of hope actualize the Greek language's notion of hope, being desire with expectation. The hope is not merely an ephemeral construction devoid of a pragmatic agenda; rather hope literally becomes praxis, that is, reflection- in -action. Therefore these communities of hope become the vehicle through which West's ideas of combative spirituality and the prophetic discourse take place. These prophetic practices call into question the orthodoxy of the American hegemony. The challenge is to maintain these protracted struggles in order not to become domesticated or absorbed by the hegemonic powers that have established the culture of dominance. West maintains that African Americans have subscribed to these prophetic practices in order to build a communitas or a community of healing, nurturance, and resistance. The spirit that motivates this prophetic behavior is

the source of strength and the call to revolution that undergirds African Americans' sense of tenuous well being and persistence in calling for societal transformation.

The deep-seated moralism is the first plank in the construction of the three prophetic practices. West posits:

Afro-American prophetic practices have been and, for the most part, remain ensconced in a moralistic mood: that is, they are grounded in a moralistic conception of the world in which the rightness or wrongness of human actions-be they individually or collectively understood-are measured by ethical ideals or moral standards. Like the Puritans, the first European Americans, black prophetic Americans have tended to assume that such ideals and standards ought to make a difference in regard to how individuals act and how institutions operate. In short, black prophetic practices assume that-after the most intense scrutiny-some ultimate sense of a morally grounded sense of justice ought to prevail in personal and societal affairs. (p. 41)

West describes the inescapable opportunism that is the second part of the prophetic spirituality discourse. He calls this the "unprincipled scrambling for crumbs". Intrinsic to West's argument is the clear understanding that the American socioeconomic system has inherent in its systemic nature asymmetrical relations of power as well as unequal access to the resources deemed to be characteristic of achieving the American dream. He argues:

The needs of black Americans are similar to those of most Americans; more control over their lives and destinies, better living conditions, health care, education, and the extension

of liberties for the effective exercise of their unique capacities and potentialities. The satisfaction of these needs are rooted in the quest for more democratic arrangements-in the political, economic, and cultural spheres-which facilitate more self-realization. (p. 41)

While West unabashedly maintains that African American prophetic spirituality is steeped in a deep-seated moralism, he juxtaposes that position with the fact that essential to the American system of unequal access and distribution or delivery of resources is a systemic inequality and a plethora of unfair competitive circumstances. These intentional practices inevitably lead to the uncanny necessity for those who are in marginalized positions of our society to use opportunistic methods to achieve even a minimum of the American dream. It is the discriminatory system of delivery that in West's mind necessitates this sense of inescapable opportunism. The pairing of a deep-seated moralism and an inescapable opportunism may appear to be duplicitous. However, inherent in this dyad is the understanding that the present hegemonic forms constructed by the social, economic, educational, and cultural systems are blatantly unequal and undemocratic. In fact the forms and functions of the American system are immoral. The inescapable opportunism becomes a strategy, therefore, to correct the wrongs, in a subversive way, to bring about equity and fairness in the system.   However, acting concomitantly with the deep-seated moralism and inescapable opportunism is a profound pessimism, the third piece of the prophetic discourse, regarding the fundamental transformation of the American social, political, and economic realities. Aligning an obdurate pessimism with a prophetic frame seems almost oxymoronic. However, West argues that African Americans use the exigencies of the American cultural dynamic as a source of motivation as opposed to banal resignation. He reasons:

The odds seem so overwhelming, the incorporative strategies of the status quo so effective-and the racism so deeply entrenched in American life. Yet most prophetic practices among black Americans have given this pessimism an aggressiveness such that it becomes sobering rather than disenabling, a stumbling block rather than a dead end, a challenge to meet rather than a conclusion to accept. (p. 42)

It is this duality that seems to highlight life for African Americans. It is this seeming antonymous relationship between joy and hopelessness that marks the combative spirituality that has maintained the engagement of African Americans with the protracted struggle to reform and reconstruct our society. West offers:

Despair and hope are inseparable. One can never understand what hope is really about unless one wrestles with despair. The same is true with faith. There has to be some serious doubt, otherwise faith becomes merely a dogmatic formula, an orthodoxy, a way of evading the complexity of life, rather than a way of engaging honestly with life. Therefore, for me as Christian and humanist, I am reminded of Harold Goddard's splendid book on Shakespeare, which says that the greatest poetry tends to portray the human condition as a citadel of nobility threatened by immense barbarism or a flickering candle in an infinite night. He doesn't say that in a self righteous way. He just means that the possibility of sustaining hope is always difficult. If you are fundamentally committed to human dignity-this is true from Sophocles and Aeschylus to Chekhov, Toni Morrison and John Coltrane-you know that you are cutting radically against the historical grain. Any fundamental commitment to decency, dignity, and democracy means that you are cutting even more fundamentally against the grain. You have to be aware of this.

You have to be willing to look at the worst to push for the best. This is the old Thomas

Hardy insight, stated in "Tenebrae." I always resonated deeply with that. It means

wrestling with despair and doubt but never allowing them to have the last word. (p. 554)

School leaders who embrace the notions of the prophetic spirituality West espouses will

find some helpful connections in their efforts to be transformative in their positions of

leadership. Prophetic spirituality is for African Americans, combative by nature. It

"accents a supernatural and subversive joy, an oppositional perseverance, and patience."

(West, 1988, p.43) If our spiritual selves seek the making of meaning for our lives then a

leadership grounded in West's prophetic or combative spirituality cannot help but to be

transformative. This kind of spiritual engagement compels the leader to craft a project

that pursues ontological arguments regarding schools, critiques the maintenance of

hegemonic forms and rituals through the work of schools, as well as expends energy in

the hermeneutic exercise of understanding the variety of political and social terrains in

which schools are located. This means that the transformative leader, grounded in West's

prophetic spirituality, will examine carefully the dissonance between what presently

happens in schools that propagates the status quo and what could happen in schools that

would bring about marked change in these institutions. This requires that school leaders

confront the curriculum that is being taught in schools as well as the pedagogy used to

deliver it. School leaders grounded in West's prophetic spirituality will also grapple with

the administrative structure and the social and political culture for which the curriculum

and pedagogy have been established.

There is a deeply spiritual exercise that undergirds such critical or deconstructive reflection. It is embedded in what Foucault (1994) refers to as exomologesis. This term, according to Foucault:

…designates an act meant to reveal both a truth and the subject's adherence to that truth; to do the exomologesis of one's belief is not merely to affirm what one believes but to affirm the fact of that belief; it is to make the act of affirmation an object of affirmation, and hence to authenticate it either for oneself or with regard to others. Exomologesis is an emphatic affirmation whose emphasis relates above all to the fact that the subject binds himself to the affirmation and accepts its consequences. (p. 81-82)

Foucault maintains that exomologesis is an act of faith where the subject not merely accepts the revealed truths, precepts, ritual, and dogma of a given institution but more importantly sees adherence to these codes as obligatory. The subject acquiesces to the authority that authenticates them and unquestionably accepts the consequences of their violation. Foucault adds that there is also an exomologesis of sins. He maintains:

The history of penitential practices from the second to the fifth centuries shows that exomologesis did not have the form of a verbal confession examining the different offenses along with their circumstances, and that it did not obtain remission from the fact that it was enacted in the canonical form before the person who had received the authority to remit them. Penance was a state into which one entered after a ritual and it was ended (sometimes on the deathbed) after a second ceremonial. Between these two moments, the penitent did the exomologesis of his faults through his mortifications, his austerities, his way of living, his garments, his manifest attitude of repentance-in short,

through a whole dramaticity in which the verbal expression did not have the main role, and in which the analytical statement of specific wrongs seems to have been absent. (p. 82)

Schools have traditionally attempted to establish the hegemonic codes, signifiers, and trappings of the dominant culture in all those who have attended them. As part of the systemic ritual, those who have aspired to formal positions of leadership in schools have either tacitly or overtly accepted the culture as monolithic as well as one to be unquestionably replicated. Most school leaders have accepted acquiescence to these hegemonic forms as obligatory and have therefore received the positive sanctions that have been afforded them for their quiet compliance. The present culture of school is inequitable and unjust; it betrays a fundamental principle that schools assist in preserving democracy. Therein lies the sin. Democracy may be equitably defined but it is unfairly meted out based upon race, gender, and class. So it would appear that school leaders must do the exomologesis of sins where they not merely verbalize their penitence for undemocratic practices presently occurring in schools but they more importantly operationalize that penitence through acts of reconstruction, redefinition, and reform. Foucault and West agree on the unique perspective such a spiritual discourse offers.

Prophetic spirituality is synoptic in perspective. It enables a leader to critically engage the present, propose an agenda or a project for transformation, and envision a better future. West (1988) offers more insight regarding the synoptic nature of the prophetic tradition. He posits:

Its synoptic vision speaks with great insight and power to the multiform character of human existence and to the specificity of the historical modes of human existence. Its moral vision and ethical norms propel human intellectual activity to account for and transform existing forms of dogmatism, oppression, and despair. (p. 371)

It is this synopticism that allows the transformative leader to, as West (p. 370) suggests, comprehensively grasp while at the same time construct an agenda of opposition to essential anguish, socioeconomic, cultural and political oppression and dogmatic modes of thought and action. The subversive joy transformative leaders experience is grounded in the fact that they understand and are pleased with their calling to the arena of educational leadership. They are joyous over the fact that they will be leading in the pursuit of change and reform in the educational process. West (1999) gives further clarity regarding this subversive joy. He says:

Subversive joy is the ability to transform tears into laughter, a laughter that allows one to acknowledge just how difficult the journey is, but also to acknowledge one's sense of humanity and folly and humor in the midst of this very serious struggle. It's a joy that allows a space, a distance from the absurd, but also empowers one to engage in the struggle again when the time is necessary. (p. 299)

Transformative leaders clearly understand their role as subversives called to bring resistance, rebellion, and ultimately revolution to the educational setting. These are they who understand what hooks (2000) maintains regarding the feminist movement. She writes:

New social orders are established gradually. This is hard for individuals in the United States to accept. We have either been socialized to believe that revolutions are always characterized by extreme violence between the oppressed and their oppressors or that revolutions happen quickly. We have also been taught to crave immediate gratification of our desires and swift responses to our demands. Like every other liberation movement in this society, feminism has suffered because these attitudes keep participants from forming the kind of commitment to protracted struggle that makes revolution possible. As a consequence, feminist movement has not sustained its revolutionary momentum. It has been a successful rebellion. (p. 161)

Because this moralism is deep-seated, transformative leaders are encouraged by the gradual changes in the systemic mechanics of schools. They embrace the words of Grace Lee Boggs as quoted by hooks:

Rebellion is a stage in the development of revolution, but it is not revolution. It is an important stage because it represents the "standing up," the assertion of their humanity on the part of the oppressed. Rebellion informs both the oppressed and everybody else that a situation has become intolerable. They establish a form of communication among the oppressed themselves and at the same time open the eyes and ears of people who have been blind and deaf to the fate of their fellow citizens. Rebellions break the threads that have been holding the system together and throw into question the legitimacy and the supposed permanence of existing institutions. They shake up old values so that elations between individuals and between groups within the society are unlikely ever to be the same. The inertia of the society has been interrupted. Only by understanding what a

rebellion accomplishes can we see its limitations. A rebellion disrupts the society, but it does not provide what is necessary to establish a new social order. (p.162)

West's notion of deep-seated moralism can be seen in a transformative leader's commitment to deconstructing the systemic realities of schools in order to discover those latent and influential forms and structures that endorse and perpetuate asymmetrical relations of power. This actually becomes a transformative leader's project of rebellion. The transformative leader accepts the challenge of not only uncovering traditions of inequality but also proposes a project to deal with them and to rid the organization of such cultural practices. A deep-seated moralism engages the abuses of power, the marginalizing of difference, and the propagation of cultural forms that continue to maintain race, class and gender differentials in schools. Transformative leaders are "called" to not only lead in those areas of traditional schooling ontology but to also propose ways to resist the forms and strictures of undemocratic practices in educational organizations. The issue for a transformative educational leader grounded in a deep-seated moralism becomes one of proposing organizational structures that are fair and just, as well as establishing policies and procedures that recognize and demystify asymmetrical power relations. This means that transformative leaders unravel the hierarchical organizational structure that propagates power differentials and unjust bureaucratic relations because such social constructions often breed immoral and dehumanizing results. Voices are summarily silenced, certain people are relegated to the periphery and those with legitimated power remain in positions of dominance. Leaving the voice of the "other" silent or even muted is unrighteous and unethical. Transformative leaders have the moral courage to grapple with such issues. How leaders

perceive teachers and their relationship to them as well as their perceptions regarding

students, parents, and the idea of the school community would be issues needing to be

explored by a transformative leader steeped in West's deep-seated moralism. Issues upon

which transformative leaders reflect can emanate from a deep-seated moralism. These

might include:

- Homogenous versus heterogeneous grouping in schools

- Tracking

- Gifted and talented classes

- Differential in expectations based upon race, class, and gender

- The conditions of building and other facilities in urban settings as opposed to

suburban more affluent ones.

- The placement of veteran versus inexperienced teachers

- The shared leadership responsibilities of teachers with principals in the learning

community.

School leaders who subscribe to West's notions of inescapable opportunism see the

learning process as a way to teach the rudiments of deconstruction through critical

exploration, inquiry, dialogue, and problem-posing pedagogy. They understand the

inherent games that exist in the economic and cultural system. They therefore facilitate

learning experiences in the community that lead participants in learning how to recognize

these systemic, exploitative functions in a historical as well as contemporary perspective

and then design an agenda to advance radical changes in the socio-economic system. In

fact, leaders who recognize the power of West's inescapable opportunism see curriculum

and pedagogy as terrains wherein these issues may be engaged. They reward the asking

of penetrating questions in the learning community which are designed to demystify

hegemonic forms, conditions and rituals embedded in the economic and social structures

that appear to be monolithic in nature. The inescapable opportunism answers learning

community participants' needs to see how the educative process becomes a vehicle for

the exercise of their unique capacities and personal potentialities. Teleological issues are

engaged in schools where leaders understand West's inescapable opportunism. Greater

questions regarding the future and one's active participation in its construction come

from this prophetic discourse. Participants in the learning community clearly understand

the mechanisms of the system, how they marginalize as well as the essential strategies

necessary to respond to these systemic iniquities. They are led to understand their role in

using their individual gifts to usurp the hegemonic authorities that have undergirded the

acts of dominance that have characterized socio-economic conditions for so long while at

the same time contributing to the establishment of a more democratic state for all people.

Finally, transformative leaders who subscribe to West's profound pessimism are

comfortable existing in dualities. They are fully cognizant of the present but somehow

foresee the present as only a temporary condition. In fact, overcoming the present with

the vision of an enhanced future is a challenge willingly faced by a transformative

leader. These leaders have the moral courage to embrace the unrighteous, immoral

organizational behaviors that are rampant in schools while at the same time inspire the learning community to create an agenda for change and reconstruction.

The discourse of transformative leadership must incorporate the syntax of the spiritual because its very nature presupposes a position that buttresses the techno-rational and positivist ideologies that have been the very foundation for traditional notions of educational leadership into a new affective and yet pragmatic, project-posing dimension. This occurs only as the transformative leader embraces the need to make meaning or to work within a context of knowing that what she or he does as an educational leader is actually providing fulfillment or a sense of personal satisfaction or contribution to something higher than her or himself. Making meaning demands a real transcendence from the daily tasks of leadership through contextualizing these in a broader sense of the greater good. Transformative leaders are not satisfied with the usual trappings of career approbation, i.e. salary increases, promotions, etc. They understand that their work is located within an agenda designed to bring radical change, equity, and democracy in the lives of those with whom they are engaged. Theirs is a mission to deconstruct those social and professional monoliths that militate against a pedagogy of liberation and democracy, the intent of which is to actually transform the lived realities of all those within the learning community. They clearly understand that their servant-labor as leaders is grounded in the context of a liberatory praxis and the lessening of those institutional and societal constructs that minimize and marginalize the voices of the "other" in schools. They are clearly committed to the education of all children and see that as the context for their professional behavior. For them, this agenda makes meaning for their professional lives.

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