**Preface**

**How and Why This Leadership Research Commenced and So What?**

Dr. Walter S. Polka

Professor of Professional Programs

Coordinator of the PhD Program in Leadership and Policy

Niagara University, New York

**Introduction to the People and Ideas of the Book**

In order to comprehensively appreciate the genesis of this research investigation and its significance to the literature about contemporary leadership, the authors contend that it is imperative to understand the students and the organizational nature of the PhD Program in Leadership and Policy at Niagara University. The students in the Niagara University PhD program are full time working professionals who come into the Niagara University intensive executive structured program with diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The PhD program is interdisciplinary in content orientation and cohort-based with only about 17 applicants accepted each year to begin the program. Cohorts commence every Fall semester and students take all 13 required core program courses with the other members of their cohort group. Thus, there is a strong bonding among highly motivated professionals all focusing on researching contemporary leadership and policy issues.

The procedures for admittance into this New York State approved PhD program are demanding and each student must have earned a masters degree and have at least three years of professional work experience in their respective chosen career field. In addition, each student must demonstrate their leadership acumen and policy awareness by presenting evidence of professional presentations, publications, and/or journal manuscripts related to leadership and policy development in their occupation. Furthermore, each applicant is interviewed regarding the congruence of their specific research goals relative to the Vincentian Mission of Niagara University to assist people on the margins of society and help them improve their lives.

The students in the program are diverse, committed, and successful professionals who have distinct leadership and policy research goals in mind based on their real world experiences. They willingly and intensively devote their time, energy, and money to study the theories of effective leadership and the appropriate development of organizational and institutional policies. The PhD program has drawn individuals who are established leaders from such diverse fields as: business, community services, education, engineering, entrepreneurism, environmental science, finance, foreign service, government service, human resources, law enforcement, manufacturing, medicine, mental health, military, politics, and religion.

**Genesis of this Contemporary Study**

It was on a cool day during the Spring 2013 semester at Niagara University that a group of enthusiastic doctoral students and I were discussing the trials and tribulations of contemporary leadership in diverse contexts throughout the world using various conceptual frameworks. During our interactions, I posited the concept that leading a major organization in today’s global experience is similar to Mark Twain’s perspective of the Mississippi River boat pilot when he penned,

*Two things seemed pretty apparent to me. One was,*

*that in order to be a Mississippi River pilot a man had got to*

*learn more than any one man ought to be allowed to know; and*

*the other was, that he must learn it all over again in a different*

*way every 24 hours* (Twain).

The above citation provoked a lively discussion about the impact of context upon personal leadership knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Accordingly, the students agreed that a contemporary leader needs to know more about the people, things, and ideas of their respective micro context, including themselves, and the macro and mega contexts of their organization, than any one person ought to know, and he or she must learn it all over again every day since the metaphorical turbulent currents of leadership rivers are constantly changing!

The group concluded that contextual awareness is most definitely a critical component of contemporary local, regional, and global leadership success. An effective and efficient leader needs to be cognizant of the ever-changing contexts of people, things, and ideas within their respective organizations and their relationships to each. Thus, there is a ubiquitous need for adaptability and flexibility in leadership approaches to contextual influences. However, questions began to emerge regarding the significance of the leader’s personal values and inherent dispositions upon the actions that the leader finally decides to pursue.

Subsequently, a consensus arose among the students who referenced the work of Kevin Cashman (2008) and his book, “*Leadership from the inside out: Becoming a leader for life”* that was a required reading in their “Leadership in a Global Society” Course. In addition, several students cited the works of leadership authors such as: Bolman and Deal, (1995, 2013); Collins (2001); Collins and Hansen (2011); Csikszentmihalyi, (1990*)*;Depree, (1989); Etzioni, (1996); Fullan, (2003); Jackson, (2012); Kotter and Cohen, (2002); Kouzes and Posner, (2007); Polka and Litchka, (2008); Quinn,(1996); Seligman, (2002) to support their perspectives of the role that personal values and intrinsic dispositions play in leadership behaviors.

That specific session concluded that, like Mark Twain’s riverboat captain, a contemporary leader needs, on a daily basis, to know more about the people, things, and ideas of their respective micro, macro, and mega contexts than any person ought to be allowed to know, but especially about themselves and their personal values and dispositions. Furthermore, the effective leader needs to daily learn it all over again. But the students adroitly believed that contemporary leadership success was contingent on the sage advice given by the classic Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, “Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is wisdom; acting on intelligence and wisdom is leadership.”

Subsequently, the students further proposed that both positive and negative dispositions within the leader come into play as the leader steers their contemporary organization ship. This perception gave rise to a discussion about the role that those innate dispositions like the seven deadly sins and the seven enhancing virtues have upon current leaders. It was concluded that each individual possesses both those sins and those virtues, and that both the sins and virtues are instrumental for sustaining leadership success in an ever-changing context.

Yet, too great of an influence from one or more of the seven deadly sins may cause a leader to be feared and ineffective, whereas too much goodness may foster great love for a leader but render him ineffective. The latter concept stems from an inability to achieve goals for the good of the whole at the expense of some which harkens back to that Machiavellian concept of being feared or loved as a leader. The inherent countervailing forces of the positive and negative dimensions associated with the sins and virtues became a central concern of the group.   
 Their summary discussions strengthened the belief that Mark Twain’s riverboat captain needed to take *pride* in his work as well as his previous successes in navigating the Mississippi River. But with too much pride, he may become arrogant and not responsive to input from others regarding impending dangers. However, too little pride or too much humility and the captain might not trust his own judgments and he may not make the quick decisions necessary to avoid surging currents.

*Envy* was also analyzed as a personal disposition that was important to a leader because it was a driving force ensuring that the riverboat captain was always striving to beat his competition to the port. But, too much envy and the pilot may take unnecessary risks and endanger his voyage, whereas, too little envy and the pilot may not constantly try to sharpen his advantages over others to ply the river faster.

*Greed* was another one of the deadly sins identified during this session as a key personal disposition for both leadership success and failure. Too much greed leads to a life of self-service with little or no regard for others, but too little of this disposition may cast the leader into a status quo type of approach to opportunities and, thus, limit not only personal but also organizational advancement. The riverboat captain and the contemporary leader both need to possess this disposition in accordance with their respective context to achieve the most for personal and organization satisfaction and survival. But, the leader needs to be cognizant of the insidious nature of greed and the other deadly sins and must maintain vigilance in maintain an acceptable and appropriate balance in all their dispositions.

The group decided that further investigations into the nature of the two countervailing dispositional dimensions of each of the seven deadly sins and their corresponding polar opposites, the seven enhancing virtues, would be an interesting and valuable study using contemporary well-recognized leaders as dispositional models. Current or aspiring leaders could use the study as a reference in balancing their inherent dispositions according to the context and desired outcomes. As students in the Leadership and Policy PhD Program at Niagara University, they could contribute significantly to leadership literature by analyzing case studies of the real-world lived experiences of selected conspicuous leaders whose unbalanced innate human dispositions have been prominently portrayed in the contemporary media.

**Organization of the Book**

As the enthusiasm to commence the investigations into leaders who displayed classical dispositional outliers in their behaviors, the students and I determined that we needed an organizing framework to provide structure and rationality to the study. All of the students in the PhD program at Niagara University were well aware of the two key research works coordinated by James Collins and his Harvard students as reported in the publications: *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap…and others don’t.* (2001) and *Great by choice: Uncertainty, chaos, and luck---why some thrive despite them all*. In these publications, the characteristics of organizations and their respective leaders who moved organizations from being, “Good” to being classified as “Great” were identified and analyzed.

My students believed that our team could replicate the Collins approach and study how some leaders who were classified as “Very Good” at one time in their respective careers fell from grace and went to “Despicable” due to their dalliance with one or more of the seven deadly sins that were not balanced in their leadership behaviors by their seven enhanced innate virtues. Accordingly, it was decided that the Chinese Taoist belief in *Yin* and *Yang*, or the balance between the evil or negative *Yin* and the good or positive *Yang*,would serve as an appropriate conceptual framework for analyzing the manifestation of leadership dispositional behaviors.

Subsequent meetings of our research team identified a veritable plethora of contemporary leaders we could employ as examples because they went from, “Very Good” to “Despicable.” It was decided that we would select at least one contemporary representative for each of the seven deadly sins whose personal story of their rise to and fall from leadership power and personal prestige was abundantly catalogued and carefully reported in the public media.

The following chapters examine the fall of nine contemporary leaders and the deadly sins that led to their demise:

***Very Good to Despicable: The Impact of the Seven Deadly Sins on Contemporary Leaders***

**Outline of Chapters**

**Preface**

**This Leadership Research Study---How and Why**

Dr. Walter S. Polka, Editor and Professor of Professional Programs, establishes the purpose and design of the leadership study that resulted in this book. The relationship between the key negative dispositions - seven deadly sins, and positive dispositions - the seven enhanced virtues, is generally reviewed and the concept of leadership balance as reflected in *Yin* and *Yang* concepts is presented.

**Chapter 1**

***The Perpetual Personal Yin and Yang of Leadership:***

***Seven Deadly Sins and Seven Enhancing Virtues***

Dr. Walter S. Polka, Professor of Professional Programs, and Rosina Mete, doctoral candidate, provide an analysis of the seven deadly sins and the seven enhanced virtues using historical, philosophical, psychological, and spiritual references. The significant impacts and ubiquitous nature of personal ***Yin*** and ***Yang***leadership dispositions are specifically articulated.

**Chapter 2**

***From Grace to Grass:***

***Rob Ford, “The Crack Smoking Mayor of Toronto”***

Dr. Amanda Fernandes, a Canadian educator and author, analyzes the over-exuberance of Rob Ford, the former mayor of Toronto whose political acumen was only surpassed by his personal ***gluttonous*** and bizarre behaviour that eventually cost him dearly.

**Chapter 3**

***Bernie Madoff: A Modern Day Midas Who Lost More Than His Touch Due to His Greed*** William Campbell, Captain in the US Army, provides an historical analysis of the rise and fall of Bernie Madoff who initially facilitated stock market reforms and helped others achieve financial success but eventually became corrupted by his own financial successes because his ***greed*** became all consuming.

**Chapter 4 *Here’s Looking at You---ENVY***

***Paris Hilton, Kim Kardashian West, et al.***

Amy Lynn Benjamin, a New York educator, uses several different examples of the manifestation of ***envy*** in the lives of the rich and famous as well as the not so rich common people who are driven by envy to do uncharacteristic things to attain what they perceive others have.

**Chapter 5**

***From Laurel Crowns to Criminal Charges:***

***The Wrath and Rage of Athletes is Difficult to Control***

Dr. Ruth Ann Buzzard, an American entrepreneur, Dr. Renee Collins, a Canadian Bank Executive, and Dr. Walter S. Polka, Professor of Professional Programs, present examples from athletic arenas of individuals who were well recognized in their particular fields but found it difficult to transition from the competitive life to “home life” because of their hyper-active and well-conditioned ***wrath*** disposition.

**Chapter 6**

***The Impact of Slothful Leadership on Climate Change: The Stephen Harper Canadian Experience***

Rosina Mete, a Canadian mental health professional, doctoral candidate, and concerned environmentalist, analyzes the continuous ***slothful*** treatment given to environmental issues and climate change in Canada during the tenure of Prime Minister Stephen Harper who was the leader of the Conservative Party federal government of Canada from 2006 to 2015. Canada is the second largest nation in land mass size in the world and home to over 35 million people who have a vested interest in their environment that has ramifications for climate change throughout the world.

**Chapter 7**

***Elliot Spitzer & Anthony Weiner: Meteoric Political Rise to Rapid Fall from Grace***

Dr. Jamie Lanier, US Government Agency Examiner, and Dr. Walter S. Polka, Professor of Professional Programs, present examples of two individuals who rose to positions of political power and prestige but fell from grace and positions due to their personal ***pride***that spurred their arrogant disregard for social mores and the law.

**Chapter 8**

***The Bill Clinton Saga: A Classic Example of Public Scrutiny of Private Affairs and Rebounding from Perceptions of Lustful Behaviors***

Captain William Campbell, Amy Lynn Benjamin, Dr. Marilyn Chapman-Allison, and Dr. Walter S. Polka present an analysis of Bill Clinton’s political career that has been spotlighted through the lens of his perceived lustful behaviors. However, Clinton, who was close to being impeached as President of the United States and was negatively perceived in the court of public opinion, was able to rebound and maintain his political power and place in history. The authors of this chapter evaluate the Clinton rebound success and the role played in it by controlling his ***lustful***dispositions.

**Chapter 9**

***Domestic Queen to Convict and Back:***

***Martha Steward’s Rise, Fall, and Resurrection***

Dr. Ruth Anne Buzzard, American entrepreneur, presents a compelling analysis of the rise, fall, and resurrection of Martha Stewart. Stewart amassed a personal fortune and magnanimous social recognition but let her ***greed*** for just “a little more” trump her career trajectory. However, she served her time in prison and has been able to regain a significant amount of her pre-trial popularity and economic power.

**Chapter 10**

***Controlling Your Perpetual Personal Yin and Yang Dispositions: How Contemporary Leaders Can Keep Themselves on the Virtuous Leadership Side***

Dr. Walter S. Polka, Rosina Mete, doctoral candidate, and Dr. Marilyn Chapman-Allison synthesize the authors’ findings from the previous chapters and offers recommendations to practicing and aspiring leaders for their sustained success and correlates those findings with other contemporary leadership literature and research.

**Final Thoughts**

The leadership researchers who contributed significantly to the various chapters of this book present a collage of final thoughts about the perpetual personal ***Yin*** and ***Yang*** of leadership. The authors posit their final reflections about how and why some contemporary leaders transitioned from being “Very Good to Despicable” because of their dalliance with one or more of the *Seven Deadly Sins* and what they can be done to maintain balance in the personal leadership *Yin* and *Yang* dispositions for personal and professional success.