

EXERCISE

*Exploring
Leadership
Beliefs*

- Task:** Class members reflect back on the accumulation of explicit and implicit messages they have accumulated about the nature of effective leadership as well as the probable origins of these beliefs.
- Group Size:** Class members break into small groups (e.g., 3 to 5 persons).
- Materials Needed:** Newsprint (flip chart pages) for each group; masking tape.
- Time Required:** Approximately one hour in class.
- Procedure:** Break the class into small groups (e.g., 3 to 5 persons). Ask them to brainstorm all the things that they "know" about leadership (e.g., "Leaders are born, not made.") from earlier coursework, life experiences, and work situations. Have each group list these on a page of newsprint. In a separate column, ask them to code each statement to indicate its likely source, such as W.E. (work experience), S.E. (social experience), F.L. (family life), P.C. (prior coursework), P.R. (popular reading), or O. (other). After about 20 minutes, ask the groups to report their results to the larger class. Using a show of hands, ask class members to indicate whether they basically agree with each of the statements.
- Discussion Questions:**
1. What are the common beliefs about leadership that appear in more than one group's report?
 2. By scanning the coded origins of leadership beliefs held by the class members, from where do most of them originate?
 3. How valid are each of these beliefs about leadership? What is their source?
 4. Assuming that these beliefs are not derived from substantive research, what can we do to help ourselves and others "let go" of these beliefs during this course?

TABLE 1 Beliefs about Leadership

Belief Statement	Origin
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____