

Most generally, the Relational Leadership Model focuses on five concepts which govern relationships between people who have united in order to bring about positive change (Komives 74). These areas are purpose, inclusion, empowerment, ethics, and process. Three defining features of this model are that it is designed for contemporary groups (Komives 74), it is aspirational in the sense that it does not describe leadership in all groups (Komives 75), and it is “vision-driven” rather than “position-driven,” meaning its ultimate goal is to unite people in achieving a shared vision rather than providing titles and creating a hierarchy of positions (Komives 76).

The Relational Leadership Model’s emphasis on purpose involves clearly defining a socialized vision, working toward a common goal, and bringing about positive change (Komives 80–81). In contrast to a personalized vision, which is projected onto a group by an individual member, a socialized vision is one that all members of a group can relate to and help create (Komives 81). In relation to working toward a common goal, this goal must be adequately communicated to all members of the group and participation in the quest to achieve this goal demands equal participation from all members. Two important aspects of bringing about positive change are first, the intention behind it; in other words, meaning to bring about positive change is better than accidentally bringing about change. And secondly, a movement from the status quo to a new position (Komives 84); in other words, moving away from, or “unfreezing” (Komives 84) the way things are is a positive way to make progress.

An example of a time our Wiki group was purposeful was when we did the small group brainstorm exercise in class related to each of the five aspects of the Relational Leadership Model. Our group was actually charged with summarizing the concept of purpose to the class, so when we first got into our group, we set a goal to answer the questions from the PowerPoint related to the concept, communicated about this goal with one another, and made sure everyone had a chance to provide their point of view. Therefore, we were ‘purposeful about describing purpose’ to the rest of the class.

The Relational Leadership Model’s emphasis on inclusion involves making every member of the group feel welcome, equal, comfortable, and listened to. It also means encouraging and providing an opportunity for group members to develop skills and knowledge related to their strengths and using language that does not exclude anyone (i.e., using ‘we’ instead of ‘I’) (Komives 87). Similar to how an important aspect of ‘purpose’ is equal participation, an important aspect of ‘inclusion’ is equal involvement (Komives 89). Including each and every individual in the most robust way possible is necessary in groups because the group is made up of and represents the individuals that are a part of it; if individuals are not feeling included, then the group as a whole will suffer. Komives states this same idea by saying that “individuals are important because they concurrently represent and influence the whole” (86). Valuing individuality and diversity, having the ability to look at a situation from multiple perspectives, respecting others, and listening with empathy are also a part of a group’s commitment to inclusion (Notes 2–19–08). Although it may be surprising, part of being inclusive means acting inclusively to people outside of the group, as well. For example, groups need people who are not members to support and advocate for them (i.e., groups should identify shareholders and stakeholders (Komives 88)). This means groups must educate others about their goals, values, projects, etc.

An example of a time our Wiki group acted inclusively was when we first started our project and we were trying to decide what would be the best way to go about completing it. Everyone provided input and in return, provided feedback relating to

everyone else’s input. At the end of our creating an action plan, everyone agreed that they felt comfortable with the timeline and goals we had set.

Despite what many may think, delegation (i.e., simply sharing responsibility and telling others what to do) is different than empowerment (Komives 96). The Relational Leadership Model’s emphasis on empowerment involves creating a learning–conductive climate or environment which allows and encourages all members of a group to recognize that they have a right and even responsibility to take ownership in all that the group is doing (Komives 90). A leader’s individual power is not as strong as the power which lies in the group as a whole (Komives 91) and this group–based power should be shared with members who do not hold a formal position with an official title (Komives 93). This relates to the fact that “power over (autocratic approaches)” is less productive than “power with (collaborative approaches)” and “power alongside (collegial approaches)” (Komives 91). Furthermore, those who do in fact have formal positions with official titles have a responsibility to “empower others to do and to be their best” (Komives 91). In other words, helping members reach their full potentials as group members is a goal leaders of a group should take on. Although it may seem obvious, it is important to note that making members feel as if they do not matter or making them feel humiliated or marginalized are contradictory to empowerment, and therefore, should be avoided at all times (Komives 95).

5 Sources of Power

<u>Expert Power</u>	Power of information or knowledge which may come through professional development and formal education, possessing specific information, or extended experience.
<u>Referent Power</u>	The nature and strength of a relationship between two or more people (i.e., a senior member of a group whose words carry great weight in the group discussion).
<u>Legitimate Power</u>	This results from the formal role a person holds, usually because he or she has the responsibility and authority to exert some degree of power; however, legitimate power is fragile.
<u>Coercive Power</u>	Influences individuals or groups through imposing or threatening punitive sanctions or removing rewards or benefits, which results in behavior change but also great costs to relationships.
<u>Reward Power</u>	Influences behavior through the ability to deliver positive outcomes and desired resources.

The final important part of this aspect of the Relational Leadership Model is self–empowerment. As mentioned previously, it is important for each person to recognize she has a right and even responsibility to take ownership in all that the group is doing. One should never settle for something less than what she deserves in a group.

An example of a time our Wiki group was empowering was when we sat down together and began looking at the format of each of the parts of our project that had

been completed. Some of them were appealing to look at but needed grammar improvement, while others included a lot of in-depth text, but no pictures or charts. At this group meeting, everyone admitted their strengths and weaknesses when it came to group projects and asked for help in areas that they were struggling from those people who they recognized as someone who was skilled in those areas.

The Relational Leadership Model's emphasis on ethics implies that it is a model dedicated to virtue, morality, and values. There are many definitions of words such as ethics, virtue, morality, values, etc., but the underlying themes of all these definitions is that (1) they all involve pursuing that which "is good...in nature" (Komives 97), following "rules or standards that govern behavior" (Komives 98), and not only knowing the difference between right and wrong, but attempting to pursue what is right as much as possible (Komives 98). In relation to the latter, Komives states that "our challenge today is to close the gap between our expectations of ethical leadership and the reality of frequent breaches of ethical conduct by our leaders" (Komives 99). One way leaders can begin working toward closing this gap is to take responsibility of their own actions and lead by example; the more frequently leaders live out their personal values and the values of their organizations on a daily basis, the more successful they will be at 'modeling the way' and the more others will follow in their footsteps. Although leading by example can be difficult, it is vital when it comes to ethical leadership.

Throughout this whole project our Wiki group has been participating in ethical leadership by taking seriously and being cautious about plagiarism. Each member has upheld our responsibility as students to cite our sources correctly and give credit to those whose ideas we have utilized to become better 'virtual leaders' through this project.

Finally, the Relational Leadership Model's emphasis on process shows the importance in the 'hows' of groups (i.e., "how the group goes about being a group, remaining a group, and accomplishing a group's purposes...how the group makes decisions, and how the group handles the tasks related to its mission and vision" (Komives 103). Being process-oriented involves making action plans, outlines, charts, etc. (Komives 104). Similar to the above discussion of 'purpose,' it is also vital for processes to be conscious and intentional; meaning, again, purposely participating in a certain process is better than accidentally participating in that same process, even if both scenarios result in the same positive outcome (Komives 103). With process, groups cannot always concentrate on an end goal; rather, they also have to pay close attention to how to get there (Notes 2-19-08).

Key Essential Processes

Collaboration	Coupled with cooperation, this process is far more conducive to creating an environment of achievement and productivity than competition because it brings about less fear, anxiety, and coercion (Komives 107-07).
Reflection	Momentarily stopping and stepping back from a situation (i.e., getting up on the balcony); also, actively discussing processes of a group (Komives 109-11).
Feedback	Seeking constructive criticism, input concerning what was done well, and advice on how to improve similar situations in the future.
Civil Confrontation	Similar to the Social Change Model's Confrontation with Civility.
Community Building	Relates to empowering others and acting inclusively.
Meaning Making	Cognitively and emotionally understanding the world and one's place in it, as well as the diverse realities others may see; also, the meaning or value (Komives 108-09).