



## The Ecology of Leadership

The ecological leadership model starts with the premise that human systems are just one small part of natural systems. In the [Web of Life](#), each person's actions, choices, values and beliefs impact the world environment.

### Basic Premises:

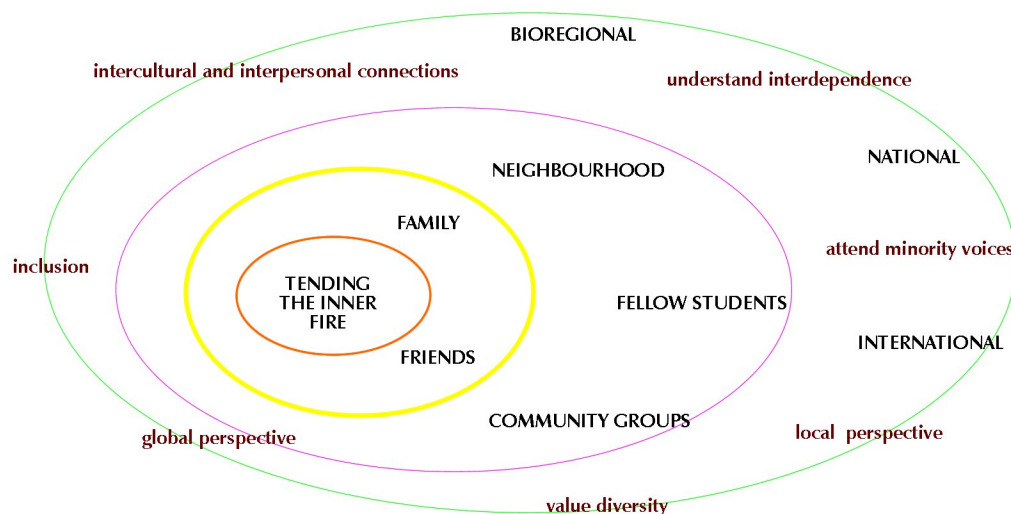
- Leadership can be thought of as a process rather than a position
- Leadership may be seen as the process of effecting positive change, both internally and for others.
- Leadership is intrinsically tied to one's core values, beliefs and convictions.
- Leadership comes in many forms and styles. Some leaders are more product- or goal-oriented, others more process-oriented.

### Leadership as a state of being

- Means that we are all potential leaders. Our every action has an impact, whether we are conscious of it or not.
- Means that leadership opportunities are everywhere in our lives. An ecological model of leadership recognizes the interrelatedness of all aspects of our lives/leadership.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE EVERYWHERE IN OUR LIVES

Our values and convictions weave throughout.



## Formal and Informal Leadership Roles

We have daily opportunities to provide leadership in informal ways.

- By example (living based on our values and convictions)
- In our communication/interactions that model and encourage respect and the unraveling of learned stereotypes and assumptions
- Taking a stand based on our convictions
- Being inclusive, motivating, urging others to work for community goals

And some of us have the opportunity to engage in formal leadership roles – lead a group or organization, teach, help build community through events, programs, action, etc...

## Models of Leadership

Models and styles of leadership reflect our diverse values, beliefs and life experiences. The models with which we are comfortable reflect our cultural identities (gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, group affiliations, etc.), our individual personalities and preferences, and our life experience.

Consider for example...

Inclusion/Motivation – can be achieved through competition, “proving one’s self to the group”, as well as by cooperation, encouragement. People at the margins, who challenge group culture, can be leaders of a group, or they can precipitate a collapse of group functioning.

Membership in a group can mean obeisance, and it can also mean participation. Groups can be structured hierarchically or circularly (as in the [Tipu Ake Model](#)). Participation can be central or peripheral.

The Success and purpose of a group – can be measured by the product created (goal oriented), and also by the process of achieving this goal...

Understanding, awareness and development of one’s VALUES are central to Leadership Development.
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*Adapted from Wendy Baxter, Fall Leadership Institute, University of California at Santa Cruz. Used with permission. Other acknowledgements may follow.*