

# Developing a Virtuous Aspect of Leadership

*A Case Study of The Virtues Project's  
Approach to Leadership Development*

Inga-Lisa Tahirih Dahl Hessel



Master Thesis in Education  
Department of Educational Research  
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# Abstract of Master Thesis in Education

**TITLE:**

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## Purpose and Research Questions

This thesis is meant as a contribution to the scholarly field of leadership development in connection to virtues, by mapping a concrete initiative that seeks to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership (The Virtues Project™). This thesis postulates that the view of human nature must be a fundamental part of any discourse on the nature, purpose and development of leadership, and offers one perspective of the view of human nature, as a contribution to this discourse. The view of human nature that this thesis is founded on is that humans have the virtues in potential and the purpose in life is to develop these virtues and to contribute to the welfare of society. This view is based on the writings of Bahá'u'lláh which is in line with the view of human nature The Virtues Project basis its strategies on.

The main and overarching research question of this thesis is “How does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?” The questions “What is a virtuous aspect of leadership?” and “Why seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?” will also address.

## **Methods and Sources**

To answer the first question a case study of The Virtues Project’s approach to leadership development is conducted and a Pathway map of this approach is made. This map is based on the information gathered from the written material of The Virtues Project and interviews with four Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project from Australia, Canada, Fiji, and Norway, who have experience with implementing The Virtues Project in organizations and with developing leadership. To answer the two later questions I conduct a literature review of the literature that seeks to connect the fields of leadership and virtues.

## **Results and Main Conclusions**

The following are the main conclusions:

- The validity of the ideas presented in this thesis, is based on where or not someone agrees with the view of human nature presented in this thesis.

What is a virtuous aspect of leadership?

- The innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character (virtues) should be taken into consideration when an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (leadership).

Why seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?

- Developing the virtues is the true meaning and purpose of life, therefore fulfilling this purpose is reward enough in itself.

How does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?

- The strategies of The Virtues Project; speaking the language of the virtues, recognizing teachable moments, setting clear boundaries, honoring the spirit, and offering companionship, are both what The Virtues Project seeks to develop and how they seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. These strategies are meant to complement and enhance the structures, systems, and methods that already exist, by adding a new and deeper, more meaningful dimension and understanding.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The number of corporate and political scandals that happened during the beginning of the twenty-first century has caused widespread concerns about leadership. Several rapidly growing areas of leadership scholarship have sought to respond to the shortcomings of mainstream leadership research and practice. Because assessments, codes of conduct and regulations have failed to control and limit the wrongdoings of leaders, several leadership researchers are starting to study the virtues in order to find how the ethical behavior of leaders can be better nurtured and sustained. As the study of combining the fields of virtues and leadership is still in its infancy, this thesis will hopefully make a contribution to this growing field. (Hackett & Wang, 2012)

This thesis is a part of a Masters Degree in Pedagogy, and will explore how to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. There is a lack of focus on how to develop these new areas of leadership, also the areas that draw on the field of virtues. Therefore his thesis explores the nature of an initiative that seeks to develop the virtues in organizations around the world and how it goes about developing a virtuous aspect of leadership. This initiative, The Virtues Project™, is a global grassroots initiative to inspire the practice of virtues in everyday life. The strategies developed by The Virtues Project to inspire the practice of virtues, are being used in families, schools, communities, and organizations around the world.

The main and overarching research question of this thesis is “How does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?”, I will also address the questions “What is a virtuous aspect of leadership?” and “Why seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?”. To answer the first question I conduct a case study of The Virtues Project’s approach to leadership development and analyze it through a specific mapping technique (Pathway mapping), based on the information gathered from the written material from The Virtues Project and interviews with Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project from around the world. The findings from this are presented in the “Presentation of findings” chapter. To answer the two later questions I conduct a literature review of the literature that seeks to connect the fields of leadership and virtues, the findings from this are presented in the “Theoretical and conceptual framework” chapter.

This thesis postulates that the view of human nature must be a fundamental part of any discourse on the nature, purpose and development of leadership, and offers one perspective of the view of human nature, as a contribution to this discourse. The view of human nature that this thesis is founded on is that humans have the virtues in potential and the purpose in life is to develop these virtues and to contribute to the welfare of society. This view is based on the writings of Bahá'u'lláh which is in line with the view of human nature The Virtues Project basis its strategies on. The reason for picking this perspective of human nature, other than that it corresponds to that of The Virtues Project, is that to my knowledge the leadership discourse has for the most part ignored the fact that the greater majority of the world's population view themselves as moral beings concerned with spiritual awareness and purpose, rather than simply as material beings responding to material exigencies and circumstances (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2009 in Ciarrocchi, 2012). This perspective of human nature is presented and compared to other similar approaches to human and leadership development in the “Theoretical and conceptual framework” chapter.

In the methods chapter I present and justify the research methods I use and the choices I have made in detail, in order to show how I obtained and verified the knowledge I presented in this thesis. Specifically the challenges of my affiliation with the case and different ways of creating an analytical distance are discussed.

In the discussions chapter I discuss the assumptions on which the view of virtues and leadership is based and the research questions regarding what a virtuous aspect of leadership is and why we should seek to develop this aspect of leadership. I then discuss the research question regarding how The Virtues Project seeks to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership, by discussing the strategies used by The Virtues Project to develop this aspect and whether or not these strategies actually do develop leadership, by drawing on the literature in this field.

# 2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I will present the view of human nature this thesis is founded on, define virtues and leadership and explore some of the considerations on which these definitions are based. I also explored how and why I combine the fields of leadership and virtues, and reviewed some of the literature regarding how to go about developing virtues and leadership. I draw on literature from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and The Virtues Project to present the view of human nature used in this thesis, and then comparing this to relevant literature from other perspectives, in order to create an analytical distance to this view.

## 2.1 Purpose and Human Nature

As stated in the introduction this thesis postulates that the view of human nature must be a fundamental part of any discourse on the nature, purpose and development of leadership, and offers one perspective of the view of human nature, as a contribution to this discourse. I will therefore start by presenting this view.

Jackson and Parry (2011:113) emphasize the need to bring purpose into the discourse of leadership:

Purpose is so fundamentally tied up with leadership that it is almost invariably subsumed or taken for granted by leadership scholars... there has been too little discussion on the nature of purpose and its relationship with leadership and this has profound implications for practicing managers. The fundamental 'leadership for what?' question is probably the most important yet also the most difficult question to answer.

How we view the purpose of our lives affects our every interaction with the world and those around us. It also affects our view of leadership and development and their purpose. My view of the purpose of our life is inspired and highly influenced by the teachings and writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 1817-1892. It is this view of human nature that will be employed in this thesis. The following quote by Bahá'u'lláh (1983:260) describes the essentials of his view of human nature: *“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.”*

This quote sets forth that human beings are born noble, rich in gems of inestimable value. These gems, or virtues are innate, we are born with them, they are a potential inside us, and they can be revealed. This also means that in some cases this potential inside is not revealed.

The imagery used in this quote and other places in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh indicates that these 'gems of inestimable value' are the virtues. According to the teachings of Bahá'ulláh, virtues are the qualities and attributes of God, that human beings can reflect. Human beings do not "own" the virtues, but can reflect them to different degrees – the more authentic and pure the motives behind the virtues are, the stronger the virtues are reflected. We all have these virtues as a potential; some are easier to reveal than others, but they are there. Because we are different, some virtues are easier to reflect and come more naturally to some people than they do to others. (Bahá'u'lláh, 1983)

The second sentence of the quote states that only education can cause us to reveal these virtues. As we already possess the virtues, this education is not to give us something we do not have, but to help us discover and develop what we already possess. This implies that the purpose of education is to help us reveal our virtues, talents and strengths, and develop them. As the Bahá'í International Community (BIC:1994) states in their statement *The Role of Education, Media and the Arts in Social Development* that all educational programs and initiatives should "have at their heart the moral development of the individual, emphasizing virtue as the foundation for actions that foster individual and collective spiritual and material well-being." (BIC, 1994:2)

The last part of the quote explains the purpose of revealing and developing the virtues; for the benefit of mankind, those around us and society at large.

From this one can in turn conclude that our purpose in life is twofold: to develop the virtues and to contribute to the welfare of society. These two processes are intimately linked; developing one's potential and working for the welfare of society cannot be separated, because a person's moral standards and behavior shape his or her environment and are in turn molded by the structure of society. (Ruhi Institute, 2009)

## 2.2 Virtues

Youssef and Luthans (2008:142) state that *“as with all concepts in the social sciences, the definition of virtuousness is far from being consensual.”* The definition of virtues used in this thesis is closely linked to the understanding of human nature outlined above. I will now exploring the definition of virtues and their qualities based on the literature of Bahá’u’lláh (1983), The Virtues Project (Popov, 2000, 2004 and 2007), Virtue Ethics (Sterba, 2009, Ciarrochi, 2012), Positive Psychology, and other individuals (Hackett & Wang, 2012) who have attempted to bring the fields of virtue and leadership together.

As there are several references to positive psychology in this thesis, I will shortly introduce this field here. The positive psychology movement was launched by Martin E. P. Seligman in 1998. He argued that both a discipline and as an applied practice, psychology had been too focused on the study of what was wrong with people, ignoring the much bigger question of understanding and enhancing what was right with people (Linley, Harrington & Garcea, 2010). K. Manz et. al. (2008:133) state that, *“By examining strengths, capabilities, healthy and functional attributes and behavior the potential is established for learning what might be pursued, emulated, and developed as opposed to avoided, treated, and attacked.”* Those I reference to that are a part of this movement is Avolio & Gardner (2005); Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing & Walumbwa (2010); Cameron (2008); C. Manz, Cameron, K. Manz & Marx (2008a); K. Manz, Marx, C. Manz & Neal (2008); Peterson & Seligman (2004); Whetten (2008); and Youssef & Luthans (2008).

### 2.2.1 Virtues Defined

The following definition of virtues will be used in this thesis:

**Virtues are the innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character.**

This definition is based on the literature of Bahá’u’lláh, The Virtues Project, Virtue Ethics Positive Psychology, and other individuals who have attempted to bring the fields of virtue and leadership together.

The view of human nature and the virtues presented by The Virtues Project is based on their research of all sacred traditions and is therefore in line with the view in the writings of Bahá’u’lláh, presented above. According to the Virtues Project the virtues are the essence of

who we are, the very meaning and purpose of our lives, the innate qualities of our character and the truest expression of our souls (Virtues Project International, 2006), ([www.virtuesproject.com](http://www.virtuesproject.com)).

Much of the literature on virtues connect virtues to our character. Hackett & Wang (2012) gathered 22 definitions of virtue from the ethics literature, 12 of these definitions treated virtue as a character trait and/or disposition. They state that “*virtues are the character traits that make up good character*” and enable people to be “good” (Hackett & Wang, 2012:886). Also Aristotle defines virtues in connection to character; “*a state of character which is a mean between two vices, one of defect, the other of excess*” (Sterba, 2009:15), as does Confucius “*a virtue is a state of human character...that guides people to do ‘good’.*” (Hackett & Wang, 2012:870). Several of these definitions also connect virtues to something “good”. Ciarrocchi (2012) states that virtues are praiseworthy human qualities, C. Manz et. al. (2008a:3) writes that “the concept of virtue captures the highest aspirations of human beings”. K. Manz et. al. (2008) understands virtuousness as what individuals and organizations strive to be when they are at their best. Cameron (2008:17) says that virtues and virtuousness “*have been associated with the best of the human condition, the most ennobling behaviors and outcomes, the excellence and essence of humankind, and the highest aspirations of human beings*”.

Hackett & Wang (2012:874) chose to define character as the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Audi, 1999) does “*character is a comprehensive set of ethical and intellectual dispositions of a person.*” Google.com defines character as “*the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual*”. From this I understand the virtues as our praiseworthy ethical/moral and mental/intellectual qualities.

In the following I will elaborate on some of the qualities of the virtues, which can be found in various definitions of virtues. These qualities of virtues are; universally valued, interrelated and balanced; intrinsically motivated and self-reinforcing; expressed through seeing, hearing, speaking and acting; contextual; and the foundation of ethics, morals and values. In order to leave the definition of virtues short and simple, I have left these qualities out of the definition.



## 2.2.2 Universally Valued, Interrelated and Balanced

The virtues are central to geographically and culturally diverse philosophical, religious, and spiritual wisdom traditions (Ciarrocchi, 2012). According to C. Manz et. al. (2008a:5) virtues are as old as recorded history. They may be practiced differently from culture to culture, but are universally valued (Popov, 2007).

Ciarrocchi (2012) states that the concept of unity among the virtues is an ancient one, even though there are disagreements on how they are integrated. Also Hackett & Wang (2012) argue that the six virtues they have identified (courage, temperance, justice, prudence, humanity, and truthfulness) are interrelated, interact with each other, and are often demonstrated simultaneously when required. According to Ciarrocchi (2012) positive psychology views virtues as independent from each other and focuses on people developing signature strengths. Ciarrocchi (2012) refers to Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) who liken this to a physical fitness buff overdeveloping one set of muscles disproportionately to his body as a whole.

As mentioned earlier, Aristotle defines *“virtue as a state of character which is a mean between two vices, one of defect, the other of excess”* (Sterba, 2009:15). Also Ciarrocchi (2012) holds that virtue ethics maintains virtue is a mean between extremes. Ciarrocchi (2012) is quite critical to positive psychology’s view of virtues as qualitative accumulations. According to his view on virtue ethics it is not about developing a greater amount of whatever the person happens to be strong in, but rather on the right disposition at the right time to the right degree (ibid).

The virtues can help to balance each other; a virtue can be balanced with a complementary virtue. For example an excess of assertiveness can be balanced with humility, and vice versa; an excess of generosity can be balanced with modesty, and so forth (Popov, 2000). The Virtues Project states that *“No matter how much we bring ourselves into alignment with these qualities [virtues], we can always be a little more -- patient, caring, kind, just and wise.”* (WellSpring International Educational Foundation, unknown:2) This is more in line with positive psychology than with Ciarrocchi’s (2012) view of virtue ethics. I do not see a dichotomy between virtues being a mean between two extremes and trying to develop as much of a virtue as possible. Because the virtues are a mean between extremes, then developing more of a virtue is actually developing more of a mean between two extremes, and

does not, as Ciarrocchi (ibid) suggests, become a vice of excess. This is to say that virtues taken to excess are not virtues at all. Assertiveness taken to excess can be belligerence, which is a vice. Humility taken to excess can be self-abasement, which is also a vice. Therefore moderation, harmony and balance between the virtues is part of the very definition of what a virtue is.

### **2.2.3 Intrinsically Motivated**

People can be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to be virtuous. Virtues are intrinsically motivated when someone is being virtuous as an end in and of itself, while virtues are extrinsically motivated when someone is being virtuous as a means to an end. (Ciarrocchi, 2012)

Youssef & Luthans (2008:142) view virtues as having “*inherent value, rather than merely being a means toward others ends.*” They go on to say that, “*There is a sense of 'fulfillment' associated with virtues. This fulfillment results in the terminal value of virtues beyond any other intrinsic or extrinsic rewards. The practice of virtue requires conscious choice and the investment of effort.*” Viewing virtuous acts of worthy in and of themselves, and not as a means to an end, is according to Ciarrocchi (2012) the foundation for virtue ethics, while is opposed to the mainstream psychological research tradition.

Also Hackett & Wang (2012) highlight that virtues are expressed through voluntary, intentional and intrinsically motivated actions; the virtuous actions are neither coincidental nor compelled by external forces, and do not arise from the desire to gain personal advantages. Accordingly, someone is being virtuous only when they are intrinsically motivated; only then is it a true expression of the virtue. This means that the intention behind a virtuous act determines to what extent we are actually being virtuous. Using the definitions set out earlier, we would then say that our intentions determine the extent to which we truly reflect the virtue. A person is virtuous out of the desire to be virtuous, to develop to be a good human being, and to be of service to the people around them. If this is not the intention, then it is not a true expression of the virtue.

In the book *Character Strengths and Virtues – A Handbook and Classification*, positive psychologists Peterson & Seligman (2004) set out to create a classification of virtues and character strengths with the intention of being able to assess people’s virtues. The view that it

is the intention behind the act and not the act in itself that determines if an act is virtuous of nature, takes away the possibility to measure to what extent we reflect a virtue. No one knows our intentions, except us, and even to ourselves this intention may be unclear. As the authenticity of the virtue is determined by the motive behind the action that shows the virtue, it is difficult for others, and even at times also ourselves, to judge to what degree we are reflecting a virtue. The focus turns then from assessing others towards ourselves, and working to make our own intentions purer.

#### **2.2.4 Expression of Virtues and Contextual**

Whetten (2008) writes that organizations consist of people and that virtues originate from how we interact with and treat each other. According to Cameron (2003 in C. Manz et. al., 2008a) virtues are experienced behaviorally, cognitively, and emotionally. The Virtues Project's definition of virtue stands out in its focus on being and not doing:

The Divine Virtues and Spiritual Qualities we have included are those that we can "BE" and not just do. To us, these are all states of being, and ways of being in the world that spawn a thousand righteous deeds. They are not achievements or accomplishments. (WellSpring International Educational Foundation, unknown:2)

Popov (2004) shares that, "*The virtues...are first about being and then reflected in our actions.*" Virtues can be expressed through seeing (seeing the virtues in others and in ourselves); hearing (using our listening skills); speaking (to acknowledge, guide, correct and thank); and acting (Popov, 2000). In the literature on virtue ethics and on using virtues towards leadership there is an over emphasis on the action and behavioral dimension; virtue is expressed through actions. Hackett and Wang (2012:885) state that "*It is a long-standing belief of virtue ethics scholars that virtues guide people to behave ethically.*" According to them virtues make up "good" character and character provides the moral foundation of our actions (Hackett & Wang, 2012). They state that virtues can only be fully understood when considering the context of the virtuous act, because the same behavior can be interpreted differently in different situations; in one situation the behavior might be interpreted as reflecting a particular virtue, while in another situation it might not be. Also Ciarrocchi (2012) states that virtues are called for in specific situations; what it is right to do in a specific situation.

The added dimensions of seeing, hearing and speaking virtues is one of the important additions the Virtues Project introduces to the theoretical framework of how to develop

virtues. They especially emphasize the speaking dimension, where they see the virtues as universal vocabulary of character, a new language, to learn and use in our interactions with others and ourselves, that enables people to integrate spirituality into everyday life, whatever their belief system (Popov, 2004).

In *The Language of Virtues: Toward an Inclusive Approach for Integrating Spirituality in Management Education* K. Manz et al. (2008) suggest that personal sources of virtuous behavior in organizations can have religious, spiritual, philosophical, ethical, legal, and humanistic origins. These personal sources have their own private, exclusive language. They suggest that the language of virtues is a way of speaking and communicating that offers a more public, inclusive language that honors the individual origins of virtuousness. The language of virtues includes the individual sources of spirituality at work and translates these virtues into sources of actions that can be implemented by the organization as a whole. Yet K. Manz et. al. (2008) do not elaborate on how they use the language of virtues. (K. Manz et. al., 2008)

### **2.2.5 Virtues, Ethics, Morals and Values**

There is not much consensus on what ethics, morals, values and virtues are, and there are many different definitions. For the purpose of this thesis I have chosen to adopt the definitions used by The Virtues Project, as these definitions also make clear the distinction between ethics, morals, values, and virtues, which is what I am looking for. Dan Popov (2001) states that there is a lot of confusion about ethics, morals, values, and virtues, and that these concepts are often used interchangeably. He writes, *“Each one points to the same goal – the right way to be or to do something and each uses a different criterion. It is their basis or criterion by which success or failure is judged that makes them different.”* (Popov, D., 2001:3)

According to Dan Popov (2001) ethics are designed and developed by various communities to establish standards of minimum acceptable behavior required to remain a member of the community. They are based on fundamental principles that all the members of the community agree to live by. According to Dan Popov (2001:13) the most enduring principles are the virtues, and a community can chose certain virtues as the fundamental principles to base their ethics on, stating that *“the application of the virtue may change from time to time while the core virtue remains the same.”* (Popov, D., 2001)

According to Dan Popov (2001) morals define what is good and right and what is bad and wrong. He states that most moral frameworks are based on religious text, and therefore are not subject to alteration, even though the interpretation and application of them vary from age to age. Dan Popov (2001) found the virtues running through all the religious texts ‘like a silver thread’, as the teachings that did not vary from age to age. He states that the virtues are what it always means to be good, although the emphasis may shift somewhat. (Popov, D., 2001)

C. Manz et. al. (2008a) state that virtues and values are sometimes confused. Hofstede (1980:19 in C. Manz et. al., 2008a:5) defines values as “*a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others*”. Ciulla (2004 in Hackett & Wang, 2012) differentiates values and virtues by stating that someone can hold values without practicing them, while virtues must be practiced and expressed behaviorally. The Virtues Project is very clear that they are focusing on virtues and not values, this is an important distinction for them. As Linda Kavelin-Popov (2007:4) puts it, “*Values are whatever people consider of worth, from material success to the importance of ethics.*” She further explains that values vary from person to person and could be anything, while virtues are universally valued by all cultures (Popov, 2000). Virtues “*may be practiced differently from community to community but at the core will be the same virtue. They may not be the only values but they will always find a place among them*” (Popov, D. 2001:17). For example, one culture may view it as sign of respect to not look the other person directly in the eye, while in another the exact opposite is a sign of respect. The importance of showing respect towards others, however, may be equally emphasized by both cultures.

According to The Virtues Project, virtues are similar to ethics, morals and values in that they show the right way to be and how to live. Virtues are, however, simpler, more elemental and fundamental than the others because they can form the foundation for each of them (Popov, D., 2001).

## **2.2.6 Leadership Virtues**

As shown in the table below there are several scholars that pick a certain number of virtues to focus on in connection to leadership.

Table 1: *Scholars that pick a certain number of virtues to focus on in connection to leadership*

Peterson & Seligman (2004)	wisdom and knowledge	courage	humanity	justice	temperance	transcendence
Havard (2007)	prudence	courage	humility	justice	self-control	magnanimity
C. Manz et. al. (2008a)	wisdom	courage	compassion	justice	integrity	faith
Hackett & Wang (2012)	prudence	courage	humanity	justice	temperance	truthfulness
Kilburg (2012)	wisdom	courage		justice	temperance	reverence

Peterson & Seligman (2004) distinguish three conceptual levels, where virtues is the overarching level, with character strengths as *“the psychological ingredients – processes or mechanisms – that define the virtues”* (ibid:13), and situational themes as *“the specific habits that lead people to manifest given character strengths in given situations”* (ibid:14). They identify six classes of virtue (see table above) consisting of 24 measurable character strengths. For example Peterson & Seligman (2004) characterize the virtue of wisdom by the character strengths of creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, and perspective.

Ciarrocchi (2012) problematizes Peterson & Seligman’s (2004) classification of placing certain character strengths under the virtues, as several of these ‘character strengths’ are defined by others as virtues. For example Hackett & Wang (2012) have both temperance and prudence as ‘cardinal’ virtues, while Peterson & Seligman (2004) classify prudence as a character strength under the virtue of temperance. Ciarrocchi (2012:429) especially points out how spirituality is classified under transcendence, arguing that *“spirituality is a form of meaning making that describes the whole point of the good life, rather than a single virtue among others that constitutes the good life.”* Ciarrocchi (2012) also refers to Schwarts & Sharpe (2006) and Annas (1993) saying that practical wisdom guides a person’s decision in choosing which specific action is good for the person in this specific situation, and therefore it is not ‘just’ one for the six major virtues.

Whetstone (2001, 2003 in Hackett & Wang, 2012) concludes that it is presumptuous to adopt any a priori list of virtues to define character qualities of leaders, because of the various definitions of virtues offered by researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds. Which virtues are needed differ from culture to culture, individual to individual and situation to

situation, and it is therefore problematic to pick a limited set of virtues and focus on them as what is needed for leadership.

The Virtues Project takes another approach to defining virtues. They identified over 1000 divine virtues and spiritual qualities (which they define as states of being and ways of being in the world) in the world's spiritual and philosophical writings and scriptures. Seeking to balance various virtues which are keys to success in all aspects of living and relationships, they narrowed the list to 100 virtues, which they have defined (see Appendix 1). This allows for individuals and organizations to determine themselves what virtues they seek to focus on, assess and develop. In my questionnaire to Linda Kavelin-Popov I asked if the Virtues Project classify any of the virtues as 'cardinal', she answers:

We have not written about this specifically but do acknowledge that some are cardinal virtues, again based on the emphasis they receive in various wisdom traditions: Truthfulness, Trustworthiness, Integrity, Love, Peace, Justice, Compassion, Detachment, Trust, Unity and Excellence are among the most foundational virtues.

I note that the purpose behind both Peterson & Seligman (2004) and Hackett & Wang's (2012) selection is in order to develop a scale to assess the virtues, their presence in an individual. The purpose of The Virtues Project on the other hand is to offer tools with which one can develop the virtues no matter how developed they are in any individual or organization, at anytime and anywhere.

I have defined the virtues as the innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character, and looked at the following qualities of the virtues; universal, interrelated and balanced; intrinsically motivated and self-reinforcing; expressed through seeing, hearing, speaking and acting; contextual; and the foundation of ethics, morals and values. I have also chosen not to limit my focus on a certain number of virtues. For the purpose of this thesis I base the definition of virtues on the 100 promoted by The Virtues Project (see Appendix 1). I will now define leadership before combining these two fields.

## **2.3 Leadership**

Most people participate in a leadership relationship in the course of their lives, as leadership takes place on all levels and in all human spheres (van Velsor, McCauley & Ruderman, 2010). Leadership is widely seen as both the problem and solution to all manner of contemporary issues, and has been referred to as 'an essential ingredient for personal and

social change' (Jackson & Parry, 2011), (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Leadership is a highly valued phenomenon that is very complex, and the study of leadership can be traced back to Aristotle (Northouse, 2004). Yet there is still active debate and disagreement about what leadership actually constitutes. According to Bennis & Nanus (1985) leadership is the most studied topic in the social sciences, but also the least understood. As Stogdill stated in 1974 and Bernard Bass repeated in 1990 "*there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it*" (Northouse, 2004:2). Grint (2005 in Jackson & Parry, 2011) states that leadership has traditionally been understood in four quite different ways: leadership as person, as result, as position and as process. I have also found leadership defined as skills and as a relationship.

I chose to adopt Northouse's (2004:3) definition of leadership; "*Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.*"

According to Pearce, Waldman & Csikszentmihalyi (2008:212) many definitions of leadership focus on the "*influence processes used in pursuing a goal or set of goals*". They explain how some recent definitions of leadership emphasize that the influence process contains a relationship component (Pearce et. al., 2008). For example Avolio & Gardner (2005:332) state that "*all leadership is relational*", and emphasize the relational nature of leadership and focus on the development of these relationships. Leadership then involves a relationship between a leader and the collaborators.

The focus of my thesis is this relationship between the leader and the collaborators, and specifically the development of the virtuous aspect of the leadership relationship. I am therefore specifically looking at the relationship between the individual(s) that influences a group and the group of individuals that are being influenced, where the purpose of this relationship is to achieve a common goal. The process of leadership is created in the interactions between those influencing and those being influenced. Throughout my thesis I chose to call the individual(s) that influences a group "leader(s)", and the group of individuals that are being influenced "collaborator(s)".

Based on Bahá'u'lláh's (1983) writings all humans are of equal worth and importance. This affects the view of the worth and importance of the leader(s) and the collaborator(s), as both are then viewed as equally worthy and important for the leadership process. As van Velsor et. al. (2010:22) write "*it is the willing action of others to respond to orders, coordinate with*



*others as they are told, and react positively to praise that equally contributes to an effective process.*” Leadership is seen as co-produced and both leaders and collaborators are involved together in the leadership process (Northouse, 2004), (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Therefore the quality of the leadership relation is dependent on both the efforts, actions and attitudes of the collaborators and that of the leaders, and both leaders and collaborators are responsible for the development and quality of the leadership process. Based on Northouse’s definition of leadership, the leadership relation is by default one where the one part influences and the other is being influenced. Often it is the leader who initiates and establishes the relationship, creates the communication linkages, seizes the attention, sparks further interaction, and carries the burden for maintaining the relationship (Northouse, 2004), (Burns 2003 in Jackson & Parry, 2011). In addition to being effected by the individuals engaged in the leadership process, leadership is also affected by the quality of the culture, structures and processes in the organization (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), (Avolio et.al., 2010).

According to Hanum, Martineau & Reinelt (2007) early understandings of leadership focused almost exclusively on the capacities, characteristics and traits of individual leaders. van Velsor et. al. (2010) admit that they have shifted their understanding of leadership from leadership as primarily an achievement of individual leaders to leadership as an achievement of the collective, and that the early focus on individual leader development can be understood as rooted, like much of Western psychology, in values of individualism and achievement, and that there has been a natural tendency to place less emphasis on the communities and forces outside the individual. Also Grint (2005 in Jackson & Parry, 2011) states that we have become overly preoccupied with individual leaders, when we should be focusing more on leadership. There is growing focus on leadership as a collective phenomenon, a process where all members of the organization contribute, on the relationships between people and their ability to act upon a shared vision (Hanum et. al., 2007). Moving from leader to leadership and from leader development to leadership development, gives a broader perspective on what leadership is and effects the targets and methods of leadership development (van Velsor et. al., 2010).

An organizational member with a supervisory capacity will often be both leading and managing, as this refers to two different processes. According to Northouse (2004) management and leadership are different concepts that have a considerable amount of overlap. In fact there are four processes – management, leadership, command and governance – that all

must be properly developed and allowed to make a contribution to the vitality and sustainability of all organizations (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Traditionally, the distinction between managers and leaders have been that managers focused on ensuring the accomplishment of activities and tasks, monitor progress, master routines and solve problems, whereas leaders focused on developing vision and commitment, and driving changes by influencing others (Kotter, 1990 in Carbone, 2009), (Northouse, 2004), (Zaleznik, 1977 in Jackson & Parry, 2011). According to Bennis and Nanus (1985) management controls, arranges and makes sure that things are done the right way, while leadership unleashes energy and sets the vision so people do the right thing. It is important not to create an unneeded dichotomy as somebody with a supervisory capacity in an organization will often be trying to make sure the right thing is done the right way.

The reason why I chose to focus on leadership instead of management is that management development is often concerned with how to develop skills and abilities in managers in order to manage tasks more efficiently, while leadership development is often concerned with how to develop the relationship between leaders and collaborators in order to lead towards a vision more effectively. As leadership is affected by both leaders and collaborators, leadership development can be directed towards all members of the organization, and is concerned with organizational culture and learning. Management is the responsibility of the managers, hence management development is directed towards the managers and is concerned with issues such as finance and marketing, performance and results.

The focus of my master thesis is the development of the relationship between leader and collaborator within the leadership process; therefore I will be using the term leadership. I will draw on literature that refers both to leadership and management as the terms are used interchangeably and not consistently in the literature.

## **2.4 Combining the Fields of Virtues and Leadership**

### **2.4.1 Leadership Towards a Higher Purpose**

As pointed out in the introduction the number of corporate and political scandals that happened during the beginning of the twenty-first century has caused widespread concerns about leadership. This has caused a series of efforts, within the field of leadership scholarship,

to rehabilitate and invigorate leadership, with renewed emphasis on authenticity, ethics, morals and virtues. Several rapidly growing areas of leadership scholarship have sought to respond to the shortcomings of mainstream leadership research and practice. Some of these approaches to leadership theory and practice are; Authentic Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Moral Leadership, Servant Leadership, Strength-based Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Value-based Leadership, Virtuous Leadership. (Jackson & Parry, 2011), (Hackett & Wang, 2012), (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santona, 2008)

Each is trying to separate themselves from the others, as something more holistic that can be an overarching theory for the rest, adding a unique perspective. Most of the literature focuses on three things: creating a theoretical conceptual model of what their leadership perspective is, developing an instrument in order to measure the construct of their leadership perspective, and exploring the potential outcomes of their leadership perspective. Most of the approaches are theoretical and relies on what Northouse (2004) calls the descriptive and anecdotal writings of a few individuals, and the theory lacks empirical support.

I also find little discussion and empirical findings on how to develop the type of leadership they propose. As Avolio and Gardner (2005:317) acknowledge, “*There has typically been no attention to development*” when creating new leadership theories. Each perspective strives to be ‘the answer’; ‘the leadership theory’ that will be ‘the remedy’ of today’s problems. It is therefore puzzling that there is very little in the literature on how to develop these aspects of leadership. Jackson & Parry (2011) refer to the ‘research’ activities with in the field of leadership as seeking to understand what constitutes good and bad leadership and, in light of this knowledge, to make recommendations about how to promote better leadership. The ‘development’ activities of this field should then take into account this knowledge and seek to create ways to improve leadership through a variety of interventions and learning processes (Jackson & Parry, 2011). The literature I have reviewed on the leadership approaches towards a higher purpose, reveal that they are concerned with the ‘research’ and assessment of leadership, and less with the ‘development’ of leadership. The Virtues Project on the other hand is less concerned with the ‘research’ and assessment of leadership and more with the ‘development’ of leadership.

The approaches are very similar. Most of them share a concern for others that is rooted in altruism, they focus on the integrity of the leader, and they highlight the importance of role modeling (Brown and Trevino, 2006 in Jackson & Parry, 2011). They differ by varying

disciplinary roots and approaches, and what they choose to place right at the heart of effective leadership: ethics, moral, spirit, virtues, honesty, humility, values, or vision, etc. I see this as different aspects of the leadership relation, all of which contribute to our understanding of leadership as something more than a means to earning money, status or power. They support the notion that there is more to us human beings, that we are also spiritual, moral, ethical, virtuous etc., not just material. We have a higher purpose, and this must also be addressed in the workplace and in leadership development.

Like Ciulla (2005) I do not think that leaders should live by higher moral standards than the rest of us, but because their behavior impacts many lives, they should have a higher compliance rate. The leadership relation is characterized by the leader trying to influence the collaborators, and part of a leader's job is to help other people recognize their own moral obligations and make them care about something bigger than themselves. It is therefore imperative that leaders treat collaborators and their ideas with respect and dignity, in order to engage collaborators to accomplish mutual goals. Leaders must be particularly sensitive to the values and ideals they promote as they play a major role in establishing the ethical climate within their organization (Northouse, 2004). Within the leadership relation the leaders often have more power than the collaborators, which brings up issues of the temptation this power can bring and how they chose to exercise it. Leaders also often have moral obligations towards, and relationships with, many different people, people they might not like or even know. Therefore leaders have an enormous ethical responsibility for how they affect other people. (Ciulla, Price & Murphy, 2005), (Northouse, 2004)

#### **2.4.2 Why Combine the Fields of Virtues and Leadership?**

I will be specifically looking at how to develop a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation. So why focus on the virtues out of all these aspects of leadership? The main reason for this is that virtues, as defined in this thesis, are the foundation of ethics, morals and values. As stated earlier; virtues are simpler, more elemental and fundamental than values, ethics and morals because the virtues can form the foundation for each of them. According to Thun & Kelloway (2011:272) "*leadership has deep roots in virtue*". As Hacket & Wang (2012) point out several leadership researchers are starting to study the virtues in order to find how the ethical behavior of leaders can be better nurtured and sustained, because assessments, codes of conduct and regulations have failed to control and limit the wrong-doings of leaders. Also

Havard (2007) states that increased government oversight, reform of corporate governance, and revision of code of ethical conduct, miss the essential point that the leaders who commit the wrong-doings, invariably know that what they are doing is wrong, but do it anyway. According to Havard (2007) this is a failure of character and the content of character is the virtues. K. Manz et. al. (2008:132) state that we must move beyond seeing legal and policy enforcement as “*the primary impetus for motivating and sustaining ethical behavior in organizations*”, because the motivation to behave virtuously can originate from philosophy and religion.

### **2.4.3 How Combine the Fields of Virtues and Leadership?**

There are several ways to describe the relationship between the fields of virtues and leadership. I will specifically look at the difference between viewing virtues as an aspect of leadership and as the goal of leadership.

As presented earlier, I define virtues as the innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character. I also choose to define leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. If I were to look at virtues as the goal of leadership I would define leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to develop the innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character. The goal of leadership would then be to develop the virtues of every member of the organization in order to contribute to the well-being of society. The focus of my thesis would then be virtuous leadership.

Putting the virtues at the heart of leadership and creating a ‘new’ leadership style called ‘virtuous leadership’ would be following the trend of the other approaches mentioned in the previous section. Instead of trying to differentiate between the different styles, I chose to see them as different approaches to leadership. I do not wish to dichotomize, between my approach to leadership and other approaches, as I think there is a lot to win on integrating them and seeing them all as different aspects that together give a picture of what leadership entails. I therefore do not follow the trend of creating a new ‘style’ of leadership by defining virtuous leaders as a type of leaders, and then attempting to explain what makes this type of leaders different from other leaders, how to identify who is a virtuous leader and who is not (how to measure virtuous leadership), and state the benefits of having virtuous leaders in the organization. Instead I view virtues as an aspect of leadership. Viewing the virtues as one of

several aspects of leadership, acknowledges that developing virtues cannot be the only goal of leadership. It is therefore possible to combine this view with other goals for leadership.

A virtuous aspect of leadership is that the innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character (virtues) should be taken into consideration when an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (leadership). Acknowledging the virtuous aspect of human beings effects how one interacts with other humans, seeks to motivate and influence them, and how one communicates with them.

Combining the field of virtues and the field of leadership raises several issues. Some of these will be discussed in the discussion chapter.

## **2.5 Developing the Virtuous Aspect of the Leadership Relationship**

Pearce et. al. (2008:218) state that *“it is possible to manage environmental cues such that they are in support of virtuous leadership.”* They define environmental cues as very clear cues about what is appropriate behavior. They look at three of these cues; leadership selection, leadership development systems, and reward systems. The focus of my thesis is the environmental cue of leadership development. According to Pearce et. al. (2008) leadership development systems can signal the importance of virtuous behavior and educate the members of the organization in virtuous approaches to leadership. (Pearce et. al., 2008)

### **2.5.1 Developing**

I understand development as positive change that can include learning, and can be brought about through teaching. Development can be to acquire new or a change in knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, identities, behaviors, capacities, relationships, activities, and actions. The changes can take place on different levels; individual, organizational and societal. Grove, Kibel & Haas (2005:7) discern between *“three fundamentally different, yet interrelated forms of change that leadership development programs seek”*: Episodic changes (for example: knowledge gained), developmental changes (for example: a sustained change in individual behavior), and transformative changes (for example: substantial shifts in viewpoint or vision, or new organizational directions). Onwards I will be using the term development for all these types of changes. According to Hanum et. al. (2007) leadership development is a complex and

ongoing process and is not something that we can fully know in a short period of time, as its outcomes rarely fall into a neat, linear progression. They say that, sometimes profound change can happen very quickly (Hanum et. al., 2007).

The whole notion of development is based on the assumption that humans have the power to change the way they act and think, that they can learn and grow (Seligman, 1999 in Thun & Kelloway, 2011). This is something that happens when individuals learn from experience and reflecting on the experience (Kolb, 1984). van Velsor et.al. (2010) acknowledge that although leaders learn primarily through their experiences, not all experiences are equally developmental, and that combining assessment, challenge, and support make the developmental experiences more powerful.

Avolio et.al. (2010) emphasis the importance of reflection for the development of leaders. They write that, *“Greater leader self-awareness offers opportunities for enhancing the leader’s self-knowledge and capacities for self-regulation.”* (Avolio et.al., 2010:41) Self-awareness involves learning about one’s strengths, limitations, and developmental goals, and can be induced through training exercises and self-reflection. They define self-reflection as a *“conscious and deliberate process of thinking about and interpreting experience in order to learn from it. The process is not automatic, but takes place in response to experience and with a definite purpose”* (Avolio et.al., 2010:41). They differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive self-reflection, preferring the adaptive self-reflection which *“arises out of an intrinsic curiosity and non-judgmental desire to learn about oneself as a leader”*, is a constructive process and focuses on what is “right” with situations and people. It occurs *“when a leader engages in non-judgmental observation of their own thoughts, attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and the outcomes of their behaviors.”* (Avolio et.al., 2010:42)

In addition to factors that affect learning, like the variety of the experiences, the amount of challenge, the quality of feedback, the learning environment and culture, and the ability and willingness to learn (Jackson & Parry, 2011), (van Velsor et. al., 2010). Avolio et.al. (2010) highlight the importance of developmental readiness. It refers to the level of capacity, sensitivity, and motivation to develop leadership. They state that those leaders that have high developmental readiness will *“embrace trigger events and even experience more trigger events since they seek out positive learning opportunities for leadership development. They are investigators of such triggers and recipients of their effects.”* (Avolio et.al., 2010:42) Jackson & Parry (2011) recognize that we can help leaders develop certain skills and

behaviors that can assist individuals in leading others. They especially bring forth the ability to keep learning from experiences, and say that education can play a role in providing new and challenging ways of looking at and conceptualizing our and others' experiences. (Jackson & Parry, 2011)

Teaching is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills, and habits are transferred from one person to another (Dewey, 1916). Even if something can be learned, does not necessarily mean that it can be taught; the process of learning could be too complex, unconscious, or non-replicable to teach (Doh, 2003 in Jackson & Parry, 2011). If teaching does not result in learning then all teaching activities would be of little value (Carbone, 2009). I would suggest that most aspects of virtues and leadership can be learned and some aspects of it can be taught (Doh, 2003 in Jackson & Parry, 2011), (Gunther & Neal, 2008). Virtues and leadership are primarily learned through experience and there are no short-cuts when it comes to experience, it can not be speeded up (Jackson & Parry, 2011), (Hackett & Wang, 2012), (Harvard, 2007).

van Velsor et. al. (2010) assume that leader development can be enhanced by intervening in the change, growth, and learning process of individuals. That by understanding which factors contribute to the development process, it can be enhanced by influencing these processes (van Velsor et. al., 2010). They suggest three strategies for enhancing leader development; Provide assessment, challenge, and support through a variety of integrated developmental experiences; enhancing people's ability to learn from experience; and align leader development with the leadership context (van Velsor et. al., 2010:19).

## **2.5.2 Developing the Virtues**

Gunther (in Gunther & Neal, 2008) thinks that virtues can be taught and learnt, and that both individuals and organizations can be virtuous. Several of the definitions of virtues that I have found include in them by what means virtues are developed. There are two of these that are often repeated; education and repetitive practice.

Virtues are acquired, developed and sustained through continuous practice; repetitively practicing them until they are developed into a habit. Learning a virtue is usually difficult at first, but becomes easier with practice over time until it becomes a habit. A virtue can be "lost" if a person stops exercising it for some time. If "lost" virtues can be "re-acquired" through practice and self-learning. (Hackett & Wang, 2012)



Ciarrocchi (2012:430) emphasizes the role reflection has on developing the virtues. He quotes the ancients; *“The unexamined life is not worth living”* who realized that only self-examination could reveal the answer to fundamental questions about what is the goal of our life and how to work towards these goals.

Virtues are also taught and developed, but not maintained, with education and self-learning (Hackett & Wang, 2012), (Seligman, 1999 in Thun & Kelloway, 2011).

Many of the definitions state that a virtue is an acquired human quality (MacIntyre in Sterba, 2009). Other definitions of virtue, including the one that is adopted in this thesis, states that virtues are innate, that we are born with them, and we reveal them, not acquire them. This is in line with both Confucius and Aristotle (in Hackett & Wang, 2012:870 & 872) who state that *“virtues are present to some degree at birth”*. Also Linda Popov (2004:78) offer’s this view on virtues; *“These great treasures have been with us since the dawn of time”* she goes on to say that *“it is only in bringing them to the forefront of our awareness that we can tap into this great inner reservoir of spiritual power.”* Based on this, the purpose of the education of virtues is to bring the virtues to the forefront of peoples awareness, and help them discover and develop what they already possess, not give them something they are lacking. It is then up to the individual to choose to use the virtues; *“we can awaken a virtue by choosing to live it”* (<http://virtuesproject.com/virtues.html> on the 5th of March, 2013). If there is behavior that is not virtuous, it is because of a lack of a virtue and this behavior can be improved by developing the virtue; being reminded of the choice to reflect the virtues. Reflecting the virtues will lead to more virtuous behavior.

Ciarrocchi (2012:428) adds a dimension to the development of virtues by showing how it is possible to have three focuses when developing virtues; focus on developing the virtues that are lacking; focus on developing the virtues that are strong; and focus on the virtues that are strong in order to develop the ones that are lacking *“use the signature strength as a motivational tool for engaging in practices that can develop the essential virtue”*.

Avolio et. al. (2010) uses a term ‘core positive psychological resources’ similarly to how the virtues are defined in this thesis. These resources, or virtues are developed by becoming more self-aware of one’s current level of these virtues, and focusing attention on how one demonstrates positive leadership behaviors every day, which again can triggering self-reflection and succeeding change of behaviors. They refer to recent empirical work that shows

that these positive psychological resources can be authentically developed with focused training interventions. (Avolio et.al., 2010)

### **2.5.3 Developing the Leadership Relationship**

As mentioned earlier I distinguish between leader and leadership. Day (2000 in Jackson & Parry, 2011:143) has distinguished between ‘leader development’ which focuses on building human capital, developing the individual capabilities of leadership enhancing self-understanding and building individual identities, and ‘leadership development’ which focuses on building social capital, developing reciprocal relations and commitments helping people understand how to relate to others, coordinate their efforts, build commitments, and develop extended social networks (Day, 2001 in Carbone, 2009). This distinction is important since a lot of the literature on leadership development is actually leader development according to the definitions above.

Jackson & Parry (2011) recognize that leadership is co-produced, and argue that one should extend leadership development activities to include collaborators as well as leaders. Also van Velsor et. al. (2010:26) state that the leadership culture is the target for leadership development, rather than the individual leader; leadership development “*encompasses the development of the connections among individuals...and the development of the culture and systems in which individuals...are embedded.*” Also Avolio and Gardner (2005) view leadership development as more complicated than developing leaders, because it also involves the development of the relationship between leaders and collaborators. The leadership relationship is between individuals and is dependent on these individuals and what they contribute to it, therefore developing individual motivation and skill is critical, and individual development remains an important aspect of leadership development (van Velsor et. al., 2010). Avolio and Gardner (2005) state that this is a complex process that is “*unlikely to be achieved simply through a training program*” (Avolio & Gardner, 2005:322). Leadership development involves an ongoing process whereby leaders and collaborators develop individually and develop the relationship between them. According to Avolio and Gardner (2005) this may in part be shaped and impacted by planned interventions such as training. We should therefore not dichotomize between leader and leadership development, as there is a need to develop both human and social capital when developing leadership, and developing a better understanding of self will help understand others.

Avolio et.al. (2010:43) view the promotion of adaptive self-reflection, self-awareness, and subsequent development of core positive psychological resources, or virtues, as being an integral part of what they refer to as authentic leadership development. Avolio et. al. (2010) argue that leadership interventions that seek to develop leadership will also develop the followers, and also the climate in which the leaders and collaborators interact. They describe that leadership development of leaders and collaborators is a reciprocal process, where they develop each other, and forms the basis for developing the leadership climate. Avolio and Gardner (2005) state that through increased self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive modeling, leaders can foster a similar development in their collaborators. This development of the collaborators, Avolio et. al. (2010) state, reinforces the development of the leader.

When an individual changes it effects the relationship this individual has with other people. Therefore when an individual develops, the relationship develops, which again develops others involved in that relationship, which again can develop the environment and culture around. Developing the leadership relationship entails the development of both individual (leader and collaborator) and the relationship between them. The development of individual and relationship goes hand in hand, and it is not possible to develop the one without it affecting the other. Leadership development should therefore focus on developing both the individuals, relationship between them and the environment and culture around them.

In this chapter I have presented the view of human nature this thesis is founded on, based on the literature from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and The Virtues Project and compared this with similar approaches to human and leadership development. From this the questions arise as to how do the informants view human nature, the virtues and leadership, and how do they seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. I will present the findings of these questions in the presentations of findings chapter, but first I will present and validate the methods I have used to answer these questions.

# 3 METHODS

As presented in my introduction I have three research questions. The main and overarching research question is “How does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?” but, as stated in my introduction, in order to address this question I find it logical to first address the questions “What is a virtuous aspect of leadership?” and “Why seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?”. I chose to answer these two sub-questions through a literature review of the current literature in this field, including the books written by the Founders of The Virtues Project, my findings from this review are presented in the chapter “Theoretical and Conceptual Framework” and are discussed in the “Discussion” chapter. To answer my main research question: “How does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?” I conduct a case study of The Virtues Project, using pathway mapping as my analytical tool.

In this chapter I will present and justify these research methods and the choices I have made in detail, in order to show how I obtained and verified the knowledge I present in this thesis.

## 3.1 Identifying Concepts and Theories

There were few theoretical contributions to the specific theme I am researching (The Virtues Project in connection to leadership development) so I had to rely on more general theories about spiritual and virtuous leadership and so on. Thus my research will be explorative and by using the method of pathway mapping I will have a heuristic device to structure my arguments. I am producing a theory about developing a virtuous aspect of leadership by looking at the assumptions, methods, and outcomes of The Virtues Project’s approach to leadership development.

## 3.2 Developing the Research Questions

Based on my contact with the ‘International Virtues Project Research Network’ I knew there had been some research on The Virtues Project in connection to schools, but none in connection to the workplace. As a master student of pedagogy I am interested in the development of leadership, not just leadership in general.

Inspired by the method of Pathway mapping I formulated research questions like “What is the contextual analysis for the program of The Virtues Project in connection to Leadership? What is the program’s strategic focus? What are the program’s actions and activities? What are the program’s intended outcomes? (short-term and long-term improvements) What are the program’s core assumptions that underlie the connections between the above answers?” These were put in more general terms: “What is a virtuous aspect of leadership?”, “Why seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?”, and “How does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership?”. The rationale behind these changes is that I saw that creating yet another style of leadership was not the purpose of my thesis. I saw that the virtues are just one aspect of many aspects to leadership.

My literature review of research on leadership suggested that this field in connection to virtues is very young and consists of a handful of research and books. Hence I had very little theory to base my research questions on, and the object of my thesis became to contribute to the scholarly field of leadership in connection to virtues. My approach was one of creating theory instead of testing theory; inductive and not deductive. My research questions are meant to describe something rather unknown instead of testing something known.

Based on the timeframe and resources of my research I have consciously chosen to have research questions that describe a phenomenon, instead of explaining causes and consequences of a phenomenon. I therefore do not have causal research questions. I felt it was necessary to first map out what The Virtues Project is in connection to the development of leadership before attempting to measure what effect it has. This is therefore the object of my thesis.

## **3.3 Methods of Data Collection**

### **3.3.1 Choosing Methods**

Both Bryman (2012) and Dalland (2007) are quite clear that the choice of method is dictated by the research questions. Guided by my research questions I conducted a review, of the current literature in this field, including the books written by the Founders of The Virtues Project. For my last question I conducted a case study of the Virtues Project, using pathway mapping as my analytical tool. I wanted to hear from those working on developing a virtuous

aspect of leadership describing how and why they go about doing this. I therefore interviewed people with experience in this field in order to gain this information. As I found little literature about this field I also asked the interviewees questions to help me shed light on the first two research questions. Being able to partake and observe this development could also give insights that could help answer the last question. Because no development of this kind is being conducted in Norway at this time, but I did not have the resources or time to travel to other countries to observe and partake in this development. I did however join an introduction course to The Virtues Project, which was of a general nature for implementing The Virtues Project in our daily lives, with our interactions with ourselves and others, including in the organizations where we work.

I found that my methods of choice are closer to the qualitative research methods than that of the quantitative, as the approaches offered by the qualitative methods were more suitable to answer my research questions. I do not dichotomize between qualitative and quantitative research methods as both approaches have their own strengths and weaknesses in answering different questions (Bryman 2012), (Dalland, 2007). I chose the methods that would best answer my research questions and felt free to mix approaches. A qualitative approach is often more suitable when you want to describe new themes and when you want to do case based or ideographic research with the intention to create not test theory.

### **3.3.2 Case Study Design**

Bryman (2012:66) says that a case study is *“the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case”* and is *“concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question.”* For me The Virtues Project is my case and it is the object of interest in its own right, my aim is therefore to provide an in-depth description of the unique features of The Virtues Project. As I am studying The Virtues Project in relation to fields like organizational and leadership development, and because I interview several people, located in different places, that have experience with this, I am conducting an embedded case study (Yin, 2003). Looking at Bryman’s (2012) classification of different types of cases, I see that the choice of my case was based on its uniqueness, providing a context that has not been studied before.

According to Bryman (2012:68) case studies often favor qualitative methods, like participant observation and unstructured interviewing, *“because these methods are viewed as particularly helpful in the generation of intensive, detailed examination of a case.”* Based on

this examination, case researchers then conduct a theoretical analysis in order to generate theory about the case. This suits my research as there is very little literature and research in this field and about The Virtues Project in connection to leadership development. (Bryman, 2012)

### 3.3.3 Pathway Map

A central question for me when I started my research was how to go about studying and generating systematic knowledge of what The Virtues Project is in connection to leadership development.

As a starting point for my analysis I used Tyler's (1949:1) outline of "*four fundamental questions which must be answered in developing any curriculum and plan of instruction*". I adapted these questions in order to map what The Virtues Project is:

1. What educational purpose is the Virtues Project seeking to attain?
2. What educational experiences is the Virtues Project providing to attain these purposes?
3. How is the Virtues Project organizing these educational experiences?
4. How does the Virtues Project determine whether these purposes are being attained?

These questions are similar to the Theory of Change approach to leadership development evaluation, presented by Gutiérrez and Tasse (2007). Their approach is a heuristic device for evaluation of leadership development programs, that emphasizes making the underlying theory of programs clear in order to evaluate them, by creating a pathway map. The basic elements of a pathway map are; a contextual analysis for the program; the program's strategic focus; its actions and activities; and its intended outcomes. In addition the map includes the program's core assumptions that underlie the connections between the basic elements of the pathway map. (Gutiérrez & Tasse, 2007). To create a pathway map, they recommend three steps:

- review of written program documents
- interview key stakeholders of the program
- series of work group meetings with key staff and other individuals

Gutiérrez & Tasse (2007) advise to ask questions such as:

1. What is the contextual analysis for the program?
2. What is the program's strategic focus?
3. What are the program's actions and key activities?
4. What are the program's intended outcomes?
5. What are the program's core assumptions that underlie the connections between the above answers?

These two approaches guided me when attempting to map what The Virtues Project is in connection to leadership development. Also Prokopenko (1998) gives a detailed step by step guide on how to create and what to consider when creating a development program. This gave me insights to details that could be of importance when mapping what a developmental program is, and informed some of the questions in my interview guide and questionnaire.

### **3.3.4 Literature Review**

According to Bryman (2012:14) a literature review is "*a critical examination of existing research relating to the phenomena of interest and of relevant theoretical ideas*". I conducted a literature review in order to identify relevant information, to get an overview of the literature, to help me identify methodology and research direction, to help me formulate interview questions, and to help refine my research questions. I tried to critically examine the sources.

I started off reviewing literature on methodology, leadership, leadership development, and virtues. I then reviewed the literature of The Virtues Project as the first step of the Pathway mapping.

When searching for literature I used [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (Google), [ask.bibsys.no](http://ask.bibsys.no) (Bibsys - The Library Database for higher educational institutions, other research institutions in Norway, public administrative institutions and the National Library of Norway), [ovidsp.uk.ovid.com](http://ovidsp.uk.ovid.com) (ERIC - International literature database in pedagogy; includes articles, reports, monographs, dissertations etc.), and [apps.webofknowledge.com](http://apps.webofknowledge.com) (ISI-Web of Knowledge - Multidisciplinary international literature database). After searching a few times I felt that I got more and updated results from ISI-Web of Knowledge, than the others, and often looked there



first when trying new search words or looking for literature referred to in literature I was reading. I also reviewed the literature from my study, the database of Master Theses at the University of Oslo, and looked in the University Library and the bookstore on campus for interesting books.

In finding more literature on virtuous leadership I first set out to find if there were any approaches to leadership that were similar to that of The Virtues Project. I got in contact with Derek Patton, Associate Coordinator for the International Virtues Project Research Network. He sent me several research papers connected to The Virtues Project and wrote that the approach of Authentic Leadership was close to that of The Virtues Project.

I therefore looked for material about authentic leadership. In Jackson & Perry's (2011) popular review I found literature on both authentic leadership, ethical and spiritual leadership. As I started searching more on the literature referred to in Jackson and Parry's book, I found other approaches to leadership as well; Servant and Moral Leadership. I looked for differences and similarities between these approaches and that of The Virtues Project, a general definition of leadership, and other literature regarding the difference between leadership and management, and how to develop leadership. Initially, I found very little on virtues in connection to leadership and very little about development in connection to leadership. Although I found a lot of research on leadership and on virtues (in virtue ethics) separately, I found little research that combined these two fields, and even less on the aspect of development of virtues in leadership. I combined literature from the fields of virtue ethics and positive psychology and compared it to the understanding of the virtues by The Virtues Project. I especially drew on Ciarrocchi (2012), Hackett and Wang (2012) and C. Manz, Cameron, K. Manz & Marx (2008b). For theories on leadership I used the popular book of Jackson & Parry (2011) and a more scholarly work by Northouse (2004). Also a connection between authentic leadership and positive psychology (Linley et al, 2010) was established. Linda Popov later confirmed that this movement has a lot in common with The Virtues Project. The Positive Psychology movement has branched out also to the field of leadership, which has given a focus on character strengths and virtues in leadership (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). It focuses, however, on classification and assessment of virtues and character strengths as opposed to that of classifying psychological illnesses and not on the development of these virtues. I also found two books about Virtuous Leadership; Harvard (2007) and Kilburg (2012).

The first step Gutiérrez & Tasse (2007) recommend for creating a pathway map is reviewing the written program documents. Therefore my first step in attempting to map The Virtues Project's approach to leadership development was to reviewed the books written by the Founders of the Virtues Project and the material on the Virtues Project's official website, as well as previous research conducted on the Project. While reviewing these documents, I identified the key activities of the program; the short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals; and the assumptions about how and why the program should cause the desired goals to occur.

### **3.3.5 Questionnaire and Semi-structured Interview**

The second step Gutiérrez & Tasse (2007) recommend for creating a pathway map is interviewing key stakeholders of the program, including those who designed the program. Gutiérrez & Tasse (2007:61) advise asking questions like why the program was originally designed, why or how the set of program activities was decided upon, what are the program impacts that the interviewee has witnessed or heard about from those who have participated in the program and what are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the program (see also 3.3.3).

I chose to conduct a semi-structured interview over a structured interview in order to leave room for the interviewee to lead the conversation towards what they believe is the most important. This is because they are the expert on this subject. Since I had a fairly clear focus on specific aspects, I did not choose unstructured interview.

### **Sampling**

My sampling approach was strategic in order to answer my research question, because not just anyone off the street could answer it. I wanted to interview the founders of The Virtues Project and some of those who have experience with implementing it in organizations and with developing leadership.

My sampling had two sources: first the informants were identified based on my knowledge of their experience and the tips from Linda Kavelin-Popov, these I contacted myself directly through e-mail. The other was through self-selection since The Virtues Project International sent an e-mail request to five individuals that work with organizational leadership in connection with The Virtues Project. Only one responded and he was interviewed.

My strategic sampling approach turned out to be more of a snowball sampling approach and I interviewed those I got a hold of. In the end I interviewed four Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project who have experience with implementing the Virtues Project in organizations. These Master Facilitators are from Australia, Canada, Fiji and Norway and have used the Virtues Project in communities, schools, organizations, and corporations – from private to governmental organizations, from indigenous communities to multinational corporations. I have also received answers to a questionnaire from the founder of the Virtues Project; Linda Kavelin-Popov.

The letter of introduction to the founders and the letter of request for interview with consent were developed based on Jacobsen (2003), Kvale (2009), Dalland (2007) and the guidance on NSD's website (both can be found in the Appendix II & III).

### **Interview Guide**

Originally I planned to have a rather open interview with the founders of The Virtues and let their responses form the basis for the interviews with the Master Facilitators, that had used The Virtues Project in organizations and with leadership development, to gain practical examples of what the founders had shared. For different reasons I sent Linda Kavelin-Popov my questions written so that she could answer them in her own time. This, however, took away the whole notion of letting them guide the questions, as I was the one guiding them. The questionnaire (see Appendix IV) was comprised of open questions without alternative answers. My interviews were guided by the questionnaire with some more questions on how than why. Also one of the Master Facilitators I interviewed wanted to answer a questionnaire before partaking in an interview. The interview with her afterwards was based on her answers in the questionnaire. The interviews therefore became more structured than initially intended.

My interview guide was a list of topics with questions under each (see Appendix V) and without predefined alternatives for answering. I used the guide flexibly with great attention to the initiatives of the interviewees. I referred back to the interview guide if the interviewee did not address the topics I wished to address. By large I tried to touch upon all the topics and most of the questions were asked with similar wording. I also allowed room to pursue topics of particular interest to the interviewees. (Bryman, 2012:471)

I tried to formulate interview questions and topics that would help me answer my research questions, in this I also strived to ask short, simple, open and non-leading questions. My semi-

structured qualitative interview turned out to be more structured than I had originally planned. Maybe this had a bit to do with my lack of experience with interviewing, so I over planned the interview with a detailed interview guide.

The questions in the questionnaire to the founders of The Virtues Project involved; the knowledge, experiences and assumptions the Virtues Project is founded on; how the Virtues and Five Strategies of the Virtues Project were identified and defined; how and why the Virtues Project is used towards organizations and leadership development; what are the expected outcomes, why, where and when; how to measure the acquisition of Virtues and evaluate the effect of the Virtues Project. (See appendix IV for full questionnaire)

During the semi-structured qualitative interviews I asked questions about the interviewees background, their view of leadership, human nature and learning. I was interested in getting a hold of how and why they implement The Virtues Project in organizations and leadership development, and what outcomes and impacts they have experienced the Project having on individuals and organizations. Also what thoughts they have about this approach towards leadership development compared to other approaches and theories they know of. (See appendix V for full interview guide)

### **Practical Considerations**

There were especially two practical considerations that I prepared beforehand: digital recorder and settings for the interview. I had already decided to use HyperTranscribe to transcribe the interviews, because it allowed me to keep my hands on the keyboard while transcribing without the use of extra hardware such as a pedal or a special transcribing machine, and allows for short cuts for words that are often repeated. I believed this would save time while transcribing. HyperTranscribe only supports a limited number of different types of sound files. After several test recordings I found a compatible application that I downloaded from Google Play on to my android mobile telephone. I also practiced how to record and transfer the recordings on to a computer and then into HyperTranscribe before I had the first interview and checked the quality of recording a Skype conversation. I did this because I wanted to make sure I used a good-quality recording machine and microphone, and that I was thoroughly familiar with the operation of the equipment I was going to use before I started my interviews.

The second practical consideration was the setting of the interviews. Because the interviewees were from around the world, the interviews were done over the telephone (Håkonsen from Norway) and Skype (the other interviewees). In the last case we used webcams in a couple of the interviews. One of the Skype-interviews, with Lucas, had such a poor quality that it was hard to transcribe. Luckily Lucas looked over the transcribed interview and helped me fill in the gaps.

According to Bryman (2012) it is useful to conduct the interviews over the telephone when dealing with dispersed groups, which is the case in my research. He shares some research that shows that there are few differences in the kinds of response that interviewers get when asking questions by telephone compared to asking in person. Bryman (2012) refers to Struges and Hanrahan (2004) that state that the responses face-to-face and on the telephone were similar in quantity, nature and depth. While Irvine et al. (2010 in Bryman 2012) found that when face-to-face interviewees tended to talk for longer than over the telephone. Irvine et al. (2010 in Bryman 2012) also found differences in the behavior of the interviewer, face-to-face the interviewer was more likely to give vocalized responses to show that she understood, more likely to not finish fully her questions, and the questions were less likely to be grammatically correct. Bryman (2012) points out the following issues that can arise when interviewing over the telephone; long interviews over the telephone can be more tiring than in person; it is easier to terminate the interview than when meeting in person; it is not possible to observe body language; and technical difficulties can arise when recording the interview, for example. the connection might be poor. Body language is important for my ability to discern discomfort, puzzlement, confusion, or that they need time to think. I especially noticed the difference when I went from interviewing on the telephone to interviewing on Skype with the interviewee's video camera on. Bryman (2012) concludes his section on telephone interviewing by saying that the method is regarded as highly efficient as it saves time and travel costs, as well as that it proves to generate detailed and considered replies.

### **Conducting the Interviews**

I will now present how the interview took place and the disturbances that may have influenced the conversation. Before starting the interview and the digital recorder I made sure that the interviewee was familiar with the content of the consent form they signed, that they knew the purpose of the interview and knew how their answers would be treated afterwards. I

use follow-up, depth and specifying questions as well as silence as much as possible, unless it was time to change topic. I mainly listened and gave either "mh" or "mhm" or "hm" sounds to acknowledge that I was listening or when I had a webcam I nodded with my head. I noticed when I had a webcam I would nod more and make less confirming sounds than when I didn't. I noticed that with providing silence and confirming "mhm"s the interviewees were themselves good at coming with concrete examples and elaborating on what they meant. At times I also ask for clarifications and used interpretative questions in order to control and confirm my understanding of what they had said. When changing the topic I would use direct and structuring questions. (Kvale, 2009)

Because I recorded the interviews it allowed me to focus more on listening to the interviewees and less on taking notes. This made it easier for me to follow up on interesting points they made without being distracted by having to concentrate on getting down notes on what they said. I noticed that I took more notes when I was on webcam than when I wasn't, this could be because I also used my taking notes as a jester towards the speaker to show that what they were saying was of interest. Two of the interviews lasted one hour, another lasted one and a half, and the last interview went over two meetings, with a week apart, each lasting an hour.

All interviews ended with an opening for me to contact them for additional information if needed, except one, where we planned the next time of the follow-up interview. Each time I ended by thanking them for taking the time to answer my questions. In several cases we gave each other a virtues acknowledgement. One of the interviewees also sent me an e-mail after the interview asking what was most meaningful to me, which is also an element in the Spiritual Companionship process of The Virtues Project.

### **Transcribing the Interviews**

According to Bryman (2012:482) transcribing the interviews *"helps to correct the natural limitations of our memories and of the intuitive glosses that we might place on what people say in interviews. It allows more thorough examination of what people say. It permits repeated examinations of the interviewees' answers."* He does however warn that it is very time consuming to transcribe and it also requires a good-quality recording device (ibid).

Before I started to transcribe each interview I first listen through them once. This was in order to identify if there were sections that didn't need to be transcribed because they were

irrelevant for my project. I decided to transcribe all the interviews in full as I didn't want to miss things that I later might find informative and relevant for my project. I transcribed the interviews myself using HyperTranscribe. Even though it was very time-consuming it brought me closer to the data, it encouraged me to start to identify key themes, and I became aware of similarities and differences between the different interviewees' answers.

I transcribed the interview word by word, and used [??] to indicate parts that I could not pick up from the recording. In my thesis I have edited the transcriptions by taking away verbal 'tics' such as "you know", I have also corrected the statements grammatically and removed "ah", "mhm", "hmm", "ehm", "hm", "mh", false starts, pauses and laughter. I have also removed sentence parts that they didn't finish, and parts that they correct immediately afterwards. I edited out these digressions for the sake of length and ease of understanding. I felt this was appropriate as I am not analyzing the conversation, but interested in the information they shared.

I am aware that it is not unproblematic to translate the spoken into written and that I may hear wrong. I checked the quality of the transcription by reading over the transcription while listening to the recording several times, especially the parts I was unsure about. I also sent the transcriptions to the interviewees so that they could also correct and add things I missed to the transcriptions.

### **3.4 Methods of Data Analysis**

Now that I have outlined how I collected the data I will look at how I managed, organized and systematized, analyzed and interpreted the data.

As stated above I have recorded all the interviews in their entirety and transcribed them. After this I checking the data for obvious flaws, such as possible hearing mistakes, both from myself and from those I interviewed.

Thematic analysis is one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis. According to Bryman (2012:580) a theme is a category identified by me through my data that relates to my research questions, that build on codes identified in transcripts and other data, and provide me with the basis for a theoretical understanding of my data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus. Gutiérrez & Tasse

(2007) approach to pathway mapping guided both my data collection and my data analysis. Knowing that the end product in my thesis would be a pathway map with elaborating and explanatory text, gave guidelines for how I analyzed the data. I undertook a thematic analysis, using the categories the Pathway map approach provided as themes to categorize my data (assumptions, methods and outcomes).

Grouping the textual material into categories of themes (codes) helped me reduce the amount of data and made it easier to analyze. In addition to the categories provided in the pathway map approach I also identified themes in the questions I asked the interviewees, as well as themes that I saw emerged during thorough reading and rereading of the transcripts, questionnaire answers, and the written material of The Virtues Project, that were relevant for my research questions. I identified themes and codes based on identifying ideas and topics that were repeated in my data. Themes could be recurring both within a data source but also across data sources. The themes that I made based on the data were found in most of the interviews and this felt reassuring. I organized the data into these themes with the help of coding through NVivo 10. Writing the first draft of the “Presentation of Findings” chapter helped me reflect on my initial codes and the links between them.

Based on the initial document review and stakeholder interviews, I drafted a preliminary pathway map. The third step, Gutiérrez & Tasse (2007) recommend for creating a pathway map, is holding series of work group meetings with key staff and other individuals, in order to review the draft and come to agreement on a list of critical activities, the short-term and long-term goals, and the assumptions concerning why certain activities will lead to certain outcomes. Gutiérrez & Tasse (2007:62) state that *“the working group sessions are the most in-depth and critical component of the pathway map development process.”* As I and those I interviewed all live in different countries, meetings in person was not possible. I did however send my preliminary pathway map to those that I have interviewed and the founders of The Virtues Project. They were then given the opportunity to share with me their input, which was used to make the final version of the pathway map.

When creating the Pathway Map, I have emphasized the answers and writings of Linda Kavelin-Popov, and her son, Christopher Kavelin-Popov, this because I seek to map what The Virtues Project is, not the views of those that use it. I noticed while interviewing Kavelin, that he lives and breaths the strategies of The Virtues Project, he has it in his blood and has grown



up with it. The information shared by the other interviewees was very useful in seeing how The Virtues Project is being used around the world in organizations.

### **3.5 Research Quality**

I will now attempt to assess the quality of my research. Bryman (2012) writes that research quality is about how to do good research. According to Bryman (2012) quality is relevant in all stages of the project, but especially in the data-collection procedures. There are several schemes of criteria for assessing research quality in relation to qualitative investigation (Bryman, 2012). Concerning the question of *“how well the case study fares in the context of the research design criteria...depends in large part on how far the researcher feels that these are appropriate for the evaluation of case study research”* (Bryman, 2012:69). I will therefore be looking at those criteria for assessing the quality of research that I find are relevant and applicable to the research I have conducted; reflexivity, reliability, construct validity, credibility, transferability, confirmability, and relevance.

#### **Reflexivity**

In this section I will look at how my background, values and biases, may have affected the knowledge I have collected and how I present it and their effects on my relationship with the interviewees.

Since I have to be selective in all the phases of designing and conducting the research, I need to be conscious about how my values, biases, decisions and the methods I chose effect the knowledge I generate. (Dalland, 2007), (Bryman, 2012)

Lincoln and Guba (1985 in Bryman, 2012) propose trustworthiness as a criterion of how good a qualitative study is. They have onwards divided trustworthiness into four sub criteria; credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability. Confirmability is about whether or not I have allowed my values to intrude to a high degree (Bryman, 2012). To keep an objective distance was maybe the most challenging for me. Bryman (2012) emphasizes the importance of being non-judgmental and not indicating agreement or disagreement with the interviewees as this may distort later answers, this is possible flaw in my research. In my transcriptions I could read myself saying "mhm" regularly and "wow" twice. I may not have

been challenging enough during the interviews. This has also been a challenge during presenting my findings and in my discussion of the findings.

As a Bahá'í I have the same religious standpoint as the founders of The Virtues Project and at least two of those I interviewed, who clearly stated that they were Bahá'ís during their interview, with the two others it didn't come up. When I started off I knew little about The Virtues Project itself, but took a lot of the foundation and assumptions it is built on for granted as I accept them as well. I have therefore been working on getting a more conscious relationship to these assumptions throughout my research. At times it has been challenging to keep a distance and critical view towards what I am researching, as this is something that really interests me. One of the reasons why I am writing my master about this is because I find that there is a need to enhance the consciousness about the virtuous aspect of human nature and its effects on the leadership relationship. I have therefore struggled with keeping a distance to the field I am studying, and to present it instead of preaching it.

One question that I have been faced with is to what extent am I a part of the field that I am studying. There are several reasons why I feel associated to The Virtues Project, even if I have never partaken in its courses, meetings or activities, before I started this research. I think that my nearness to the field has been a strength when it comes to getting a hold of the people and the information I seek. At the same time I have tried through my literature review and the use of the pathway analysis to create an analytical distance. And as pointed out by Kvale (2009) the interviewees may have adjusted their responses to what they expected I wanted to hear. (Dalland, 2007)

## **Reliability**

Having a thought out plan for the research and good reasons is important regardless of type of research. It is important to be precise, avoiding bad categories, poor selection and sloppy analysis processes. (Bryman, 2012)

Dalland (2007) states that the better the researcher masters a method, the better the results will be. I gained some experience in being able to listen and catch up on key concepts that I then asked them to elaborate. The times I did lose sight of the research topic during the interviews I noticed the interviewee shared relevant information for my project, and therefore did not feel that this was in vain.

According to Bryman (2012) the reliability of the categorization and coding is dependent on; my skill, knowledge and experience; having clearly defined rules for encoding; and the degree of ambiguity in the data. When it comes to my knowledge I noticed that the more I worked with my data and the more I read about The Virtues Project the easier it was to categorize the data. I used the approach of pathway mapping in order to have clearly defined guidelines for encoding and analyzing the data. As I had prepared the interview guide based on the approach of pathway mapping, this was the type of data I collected and it was therefore easier to analyze the data in this way.

I strived to increase reliability by examining several sources; the founders of The Virtues Project, Master Facilitators that have implemented The Virtues Project in organizations, other research on The Virtues Project, books written about The Virtues Project, The Virtues Project's website, and by attending an Introduction Course to The Virtues Project.

## **Validity**

Validity refers to whether you are studying what you are claiming to study (Bryman, 2012). What kind of conclusion I want to make, decides what type of validity is applicable. I will specifically look at construct validity. According to Bryman (2012) construct validity applies primarily to quantitative research and deals with the relationship between theoretical concepts and their operationalization, the question is whether the operationalized concept(s) correspond to the theoretical concept we want to study.

The theoretical concepts I am studying are highly contested and have many different definitions. As Youssef & Luthans (2008:142) state that *"as with all concepts in the social sciences, the definition of virtuousness is far from being consensual."* There is also active debate and disagreement about what leadership actually constitutes. I therefore used these terms and asked those I interviewed to specify how they understand them.

Using the approach of the pathway map I was trying to get a hold of the methods they use, the outcomes they have witnessed and the assumptions underlying these. In relation to construct validity the question is if the questions I asked in the questionnaires and interviews actually captured the methods, outcomes and assumptions of The Virtues Project's approach to leadership development. Especially trying to get a hold of the assumptions was tricky as just asking for assumptions will just get the assumptions they are conscious of, not the un-

conscious ones. A weakness is that I got the assumptions I asked about, and there may be other (more important) assumptions that I missed. The assumptions I asked for were based on what I had read about The Virtues Project. I asked about view of human nature, how humans learn and develop, what leadership is, and how to develop leadership. To minimize the chance that I have left out important assumptions I sent the first draft of the pathway map and the "Presentation of Findings" chapter to those I had interviewed and the founders, for feedback. To get ahold of methods I asked them to describe the process of implementing the Virtues Project in organizations, and what the key activities and elements are. To get ahold of outcomes I asked what program impacts they had witnessed or heard about from those who have participated in the program, this so I would not get ideal outcomes and goals.

In order to raise the construct validity I choose a semi-structured interview. To ensure that certain aspects of the research questions were considered and thus I had prepared questions in advance.

Threats to validity can be that I ask about things that are not relevant to the research questions. For example I asked about experience and thoughts about evaluating The Virtues Project, this was not relevant for my research questions. Another threat is that I do not ask about things that are relevant to the research question. For example I did not ask how they define virtues, though several answered this throughout the course of the interview. In order to minimize the chance of these threats I also asked at the end of the interview if they had any additional information that they thought would be of value for my project.

### **Credibility**

Credibility is about how believable the findings are. Is the account I give of social reality acceptable to others? Have I correctly understood the social world? (Bryman, 2012) In order to enhance credibility I used respondent validation and triangulation.

Regarding respondent validation I provided the interviewees with an account of my findings, because I wanted to ensure that there is a good correspondence between my findings and the perspectives and experiences of the research participants. I did this by asking if I had understood things correctly during the interview. I also sent all the interviewees a copy of the transcribed interview and the first draft of the "Presentation of Findings" chapter, marked with the places where I use or refer to them or their utterances, for comments and corrections.

Bryman (2012) outlines several practical difficulties that can arise from respondent validation, such as the respondents reacting defensive and asking for censorship. This approach may also result in research participants developing a relationship with me of 'fondness and mutual regard' that may lead them to be reluctant to be critical. This also goes the other way around, as the increased contact with the respondents can increase the likelihood that I develop a relationship with them of 'fondness and mutual regard'. Bryman (2012) also raises the question of whether participants can validate a researcher's analysis. I believe that in my research the participants can validate my analysis, as they are the experts on what The Virtues Project is, and this is what I am attempting to map. (Bryman, 2012)

Triangulation can help build credibility. I did this by using different theoretical perspectives; Positive Psychology, Virtue Ethics, the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and The Virtues Project. I also used different approaches to my research question; Pathway mapping and literature review. I used different methods; literature review, questionnaire, and interview. And I used different sources; different interviewees and literature.

The fact that I chose to connect the utterances to the names of the interviewees could affect what information the interviewees share and the way they share it, as they don't want to share things that might hurt their reputation. There could be a tendency either to want to share what they think I want to hear or to convey a good impression of themselves. Also what they answered could affect the reputation of The Virtues Project, this may also effect what they share and how. (Bryman, 2012)

### **Transferability**

Transferability is about whether or not the findings from one context can apply to other contexts (Bryman, 2012). Bryman (2012) is very clear in his statement that a single case cannot possibly yield findings that can be applied more generally to other cases. It is not the purpose of my research to transfer my findings to other cases or to populations beyond the case, like to other leadership development programs. For me the question regarding transferability is about transferring the statements made by a few of those that have implemented The Virtues Project in organizations to also be applicable for all those that have implemented The Virtues Project in organizations. Can what a few people say about the case be generalized to represent the whole case? I have not interviewed all those that have implemented The Virtues Project in an organization, only those I got a hold of and who were

willing. Someone else interviewing others may get other data. According to Bryman (2012) showing how people were selected to participate in my research is crucial for transferability. This is why I explained how I sampled and why it was so important for me to also have the voice of the Founders even if it was as answers to a questionnaire rather than an interview.

In addition I have not based my pathway map only on what they have answered but also on the literature of The Virtues Project, which is the bases of the implementation of The Virtues Project in different settings. It is therefore likely that most people that use The Virtues Project in organizations will have based their implementation on this literature, and that those things that are similar between those I have interviewed, will be similar for others. A strength here is also that I have interviewees from around the world, which takes into account how different cultures may affect the implementation of The Virtues Project in organizations.

According to Bryman (2012:71) “the crucial question is not whether the findings can be generalized to a wider universe but how well the researcher generates theory out of the finding.” Can my findings be generalized to a general theory? This is why finding a method to help me generate theory about a development program was so important to me. I used the pathway mapping as a device. It seemed like a logical approach that resonated with the literature from my didactical study and my initial thoughts about getting a hold of the assumptions underlying the program, the goals it seeks to achieve and which methods it uses to achieve these goals.

### **3.6 Consent and Permissions**

All excerpts from The Virtues Project books, materials, and websites were used with permission from Virtues Project International (see appendix VI for permission).

I believe it is important that those reading my thesis know the source of the collected information, and have therefore obtained consent from all interviewees to use their full names in my thesis, and connect their names to their utterances. This consent has been given orally in some cases and written in others. This was an informed consent based on the information they got in the information and consent form (see appendix III). As I have mentioned earlier the interviewees were given the possibility to read over the transcription of their interview(s) and the first draft of the “Presentation of Findings” chapter. The project was approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD, see appendix VII).

# 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The structure of this chapter is first a presentation of the Virtues Project, Founders of The Virtues Project and four Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project that I interviewed. Next The Pathway map I have created of the approach The Virtues Project has towards developing a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation, is presented. And third is an elaboration and explanation of this map with relevant quotes from the written material from The Virtues Project, as well as the interviews and questionnaires I have conducted with the Founders of The Virtues Project and four Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project from around the world.

## 4.1 The Virtues Project and Informants

The Virtues Project is a global grassroots initiative to inspire the practice of virtues in everyday life. It was founded in Canada in 1991 by Linda Kavelin-Popov, Dr. Dan Popov and John Kavelin. Today facilitators of The Virtues Project can be found in over 95 countries. The feature of The Virtues Project is its five strategies for bringing the virtues to life and the definition of 100 virtues, these are taught through talks, workshops, consultations, books, reflection cards, music and other material, in addition to several websites and a mobile phone app. ([www.virtuesproject.com](http://www.virtuesproject.com))

When developing a virtuous aspect of leadership The Virtues Project starts with enhancing the participant's awareness of the virtuous aspect of the human character and offers concrete strategies for how to take the virtues into consideration in this process of influence. Through workshops, books and other materials they explain the strategies and give exercises that allow the participants to practice them.

Those that assist others in gaining a deeper understanding of the strategies of The Virtues Project are called Facilitators. Normally to become a facilitator you first go through the introduction workshop called: "Introduction to the Virtues Project - Awakening the Gifts Within", this is normally a two-day workshop. Then they go through the facilitator workshop called: "The Virtues Project Facilitator Program - Deepening in the Virtues", which is normally a three day workshop, this gives the person the tools to facilitate the introduction

workshop. Some facilitators are appointed Master Facilitators which means they are certified to provide Facilitator Programs. ([www.virtuesproject.com](http://www.virtuesproject.com))

The training in the five strategies normally takes place in workshops. Verona Lucas explains that during the workshops they go through each of the strategies, with exercises. And these exercises give the participants experience with how each strategy works. She also explains what happens after this:

They use the skills that they've learnt just in that one day with their family. And they come in the next day and they say "wow, you know this is what happened when I did all this stuff that we learnt yesterday." So it's the application of the strategies that empowers people to make a difference and it's important to witness it in their lives happening for themselves.

There are several exercises and suggestions on how to use each of the Five Strategies of The Virtues Project in everyday life. *The Virtues Project Educator's Guide* (Popov, 2000) has a lot of suggestions that are directed to the school, most of these can easily be adjusted to also be used in organizations and with adults, and are used by facilitators of The Virtues Project's workshops with adults around the world.

Acres et. al. (unknown) mentions talks, personal sharing, exercises, discussion, small group exercises, large group, pairs, personal reflection, music, videos, overhead, experiential learning, step-by-step demonstrations, guided practice, sharing success stories, art projects, games, role plays, mini-lectures, and creating personal plans.

Based on my own experience with the one introduction workshop and reading Acres et. al. (unknown) it seems the following structure is used for teaching each strategy: Starting with an explanation of what the strategy is; this can include a demonstration, either through storytelling, drama or showing a video of the strategy, this is normally done in plenary. Then there are exercises to practice how to use the strategy and to get a feel of it, this is normally done in smaller groups of 2-5. Then everyone comes back together in plenary and shares experiences and reflections, and has the possibility to ask questions.

In addition to the books and material available on their official website, I collected information through attending an introduction course of The Virtues Project, and through a questionnaire to Founder of The Virtues Project, Linda Kavelin-Popov, and interviews with four Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project from around the world who have experience with implementing it in organizations and with developing leadership; Barry Lewis Green,



Hans-Olav Håkonsen, Christopher Jones Kavelin, and Verona Lucas. Below is a short description of their background, relevant for the focus of my thesis.

Linda Kavelin-Popov is one of the Founders of The Virtues Project. She worked 20 years as a psychotherapist in community mental health and private practice, community healing and development among indigenous communities worldwide. She has also worked for years as an organizational development consultant doing assessment, training, organizational improvement for clients such as Office of Health and Human Services and General Accounting Office of US Government, many banks, corporations such as Hallmark and General Motors.

Barry Lewis Green lives in Canada. He has spent over 20 years in cooperate and organizational training development and teaches Human Resource management at College. When it comes to facilitating The Virtues Project in organizations he mostly had experience with coming into organizations for short presentations, he has anything from one-hour keynotes in front of the whole organization to two day workshops with a team within the organization. He also has held a seven-week program for community leaders. He combines The Virtues Project with a piece about Unity and a piece about Personality Dimensions.

Hans-Olav Håkonsen lives in Norway. He has trained managers and organizations for 30 years. When facilitating The Virtues Project in organizations he works with corporations over one to three years, in close collaboration with the top manager. He calls his approach "Value-based learning organization training" and as an element of the communications training he uses The Virtues Project, the other elements are training in open-questions and consultation.

Christopher Jones Kavelin lives in Australia. He has facilitated The Virtues Project in private and public and governmental organizations. When sharing experiences with me in our interviews he mostly drew on examples from his work with indigenous communities and teaching a course called "Spirituality and social transformation" in the global leadership program at Macquarie University. Kavelin relies on the companioning process to determine what, if anything, he combines The Virtues Project with, and co-creates the program with those attending. He also carries the communities he works with onwards in order to always be on the lookout for where he can find solutions to their needs.

Verona Lucas lives in Fiji. She has experience offering the workshops of The Virtues Project as they are outlined by The Virtues Project to the middle managers and facilitators in several organizations, but saw little effect by not being able to work with the top-managers. The success story she refers to in her interview with me is that of her own radio station where she worked closely with the top-manager, whom she trained in the strategies of The Virtues Project and saw the enormous effect it has had on the culture and the rest of the members of the radio station.

When seeking to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership one can draw on several of the resources mentioned in the first paragraph of this section. During the interviews the main activities the Master Facilitators referred to using for leadership development was talks, workshops, consultations and reflection cards. They all explained and referred to activities that could be connected to the workshops The Virtues Project offers. Green, Kavelin and Lucas all talked about using the reflection cards. Kavelin and Håkonsen said they use consultations. And Green has had several talks in connection to developing the virtuous aspect of leadership.

Verona Lucas uses the workshops in organizations the way they are outlined by The Virtues Project in for example Acres et. al. (unknown). Barry Green, Christopher Kavelin and Hans-Olav Håkonsen all plan which elements they use together with the organizations they work with, and see these outlines as resource banks, where they can pick and chose depending on the needs and time available of the organizations they work with.

## 4.2 The Pathway Map

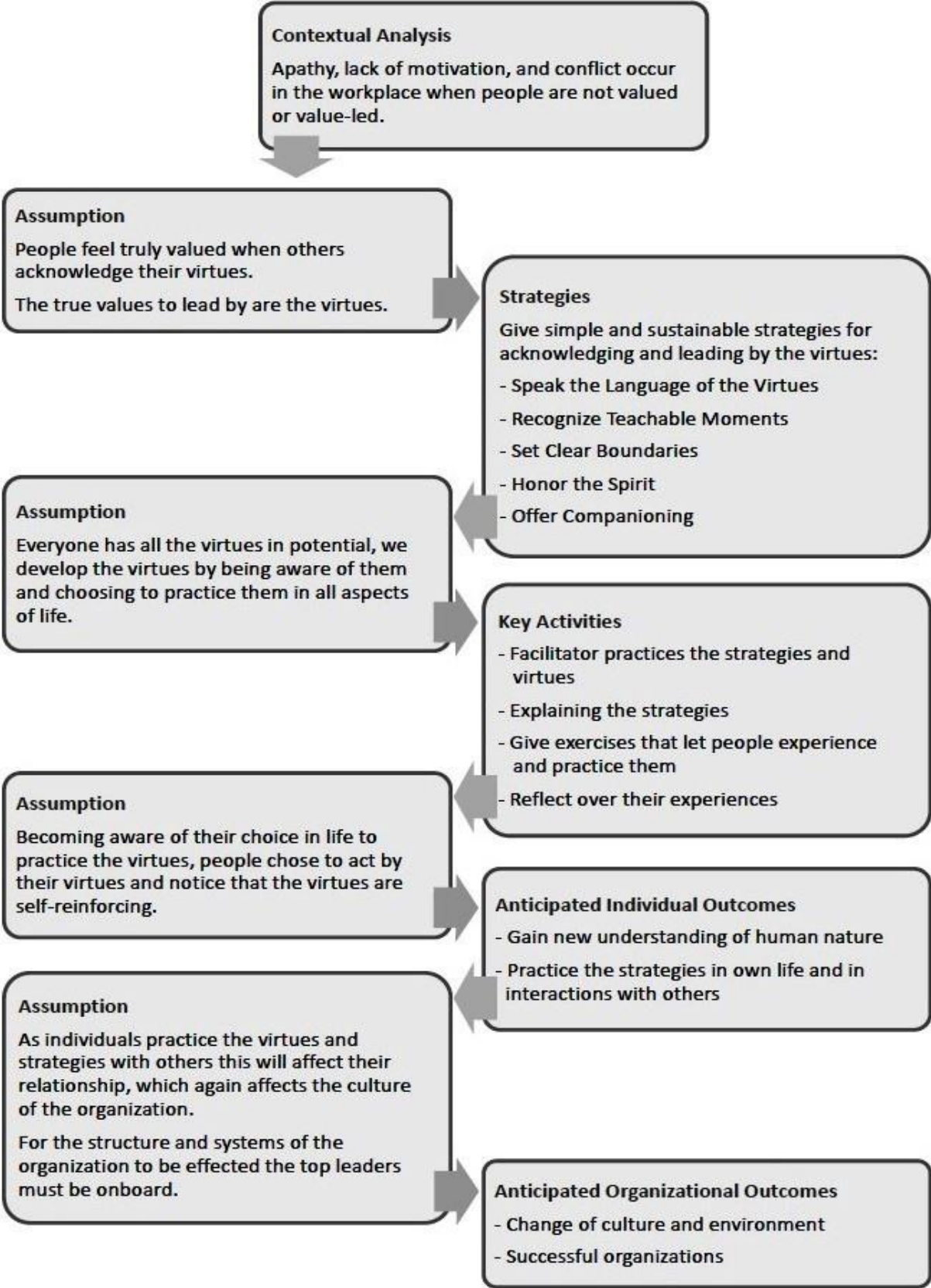


Figure 1: The Pathway map of The Virtues Project’s approach to leadership development.

I will now elaborate and offer explanations of this map with relevant quotes from the written material from The Virtues Project, as well as the interviews and questionnaires I have conducted with the Founders of The Virtues Project and four Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project from around the world.

### 4.3 Contextual Analysis

The contextual analysis of a program is about why the program was started (Gutiérrez & Tasse, 2007). As stated in the Pathway Map (4.2.) the contextual analysis for The Virtues Project towards developing a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation is that they found that: **apathy, lack of motivation, and conflict occur in the workplace when people are not valued or value-led.**

In my questionnaire to the Founders of The Virtues Project I asked why The Virtues Project was adjusted towards organizations and leadership development and during my interviews with the Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project I asked why they use The Virtues Project towards organizations and leadership development. The answers they gave, that had to do with a contextual analysis and not to do with the strengths of The Virtues Project, seemed to fall into two areas: The individual's relationship to their job and organization; and the relationship between the individuals.

Regarding the first area concerning the individual's relationship to their job and the organization they work for, Linda Kavelin-Popov shares, *"So many people are unhappy in their jobs, and continue merely to make a livelihood. I found that when this apathy and disconnect was pervasive in an organization there was also petty theft and other signs of resentment."* Also Barry Lewis Green points out that people are not often *"...really connected, people don't know or understand what the mission of the organization is, they don't understand or know the vision of the organization is, people are seeing themselves as in a job and not connected to the work."*

Hans-Olav Håkonsen says he always starts by doing a test with open questions to assess the situation and needs in organizations he is going to work with. This test is based on six questions by Jim Collins. Based on this test Håkonsen sees that many people do not know what to do and how to do it, they do not have the necessary tools and communication skills to do what is expected of them, they do not get feedback and encouragement from their leaders

about what is expected of them, they do not feel that they belong in their organization, and they do not feel they have the possibility to grow and develop in their organization.

Regarding the second area concerning the relationship between the individuals in the organization, Barry Lewis Green stated the issue he notices in the workplace is that people are not on the same page, they see themselves at odds with others; *“So I’m seeing conflicts, and I’m seeing disunity, and it’s not that they’re necessarily openly and overtly sabotaging each other, but people don’t really get a sense that we are all in this together.”* Verona Lucas and Hans-Olav Håkonsen point out the problem of backbiting, rumors and gossip. Verona said that backbiting and gossip is *“endemic”* in Fiji and *“people set out to destroy one another”*. Håkonen states that *“especially in Norway, it’s a lack of being seen, heard, understood and accepted.... And in many organizations there’s lots of rumors and backbiting and well people don’t feel safe.”* Lucas also said that, *“the ‘tone’ of leadership in Fiji is of bullying, intimidation and abuse”*.

Kavelin-Popov also points out in her answers the responsibility of the leadership, and people’s need to feel valued and lead by virtues:

I discovered that the failure to acknowledge effort and excellence, perceived injustices, and lack of clear vision resulted in total waste of the human potential in an organization as well as the expense of frequent turnover and small acts of sabotage. Likewise, when leadership showed two particular virtues – caring and high expectations of excellence -commitment was sustained and employees enthusiastically strode for excellence.

This is the reasons why they adjusted The Strategies of The Virtues Project to be used in leadership development in organizations.

## **4.4 Assumptions**

The assumptions underlying the strategies, key activities and outcomes will all be presented here, as they build on each other. I will specifically address three assumptions; view of human nature, concept of virtues, and view of leadership.

### **4.4.1 View of Human Nature**

In *The Family Virtues Guide*, L. Popov, D. Popov, & Kavelin (1997) explains that who we are and how the virtues are developed is the result of four things; nature, nurture, opportunity, and effort:

- Nature is our inherited traits, individual temperament, and innate capacities: gifts, talents, abilities, limitations, and virtues.
- Nurture is how we are educated; which virtues are recognized and supported.
- Opportunity is about which opportunities we have in life to act on our virtues.
- Effort is whether or not we respond to the opportunities to practice the virtues.

## **Nature**

Popov et. al. (1997) emphasize that we are independent, unique spiritual beings, and each individual is viewed as a separate, responsible, gifted individual full of potential virtues. They explain that everyone has all the virtues within them in potential to one degree or another, though the potential for developing certain virtues is greater in some people than in others (ibid). Barry Lewis Green shares the following about this; *“some of us access certain Virtues more easily than others...the Virtues Project says just because you find it hard to access them doesn't mean that you can't... even if this is not a strength of ours you can develop it”*.

The virtues that are difficult to access and need to be developed are often referred to as growth virtues by The Virtues Project, and those virtues that are easy to access and can be relied on are often referred to as strength virtues. Popov et.al. (1997) write that as people experience the emergence of their virtues authentic self-esteem and real happiness come naturally. Humans have a desire to be connected, to have a place, feel seen, and know that they contribute (Acres et. al., unknown:131).

## **Nurture**

Linda Popov (2004:78) says that *“it is only in bringing them [the virtues] to the forefront of our awareness that we can tap into this great inner reservoir of spiritual power.”* Based on this, the purpose of education is to bring the virtues to the forefront of our awareness.

What seems to be a theme in all the answers of the Master Facilitators of The Virtues Project regarding their view on how humans learn, is that we learn by experiencing and then reflecting over this experience. This is also an assumption which I see informs the methods used for teaching the strategies of The Virtues Project.

## Opportunity

People learn and develop strengths from challenges in life. This is one of the main assumptions The Virtues Project builds on - that humans develop their virtues through times when they are challenged – for example we learn patience when it is tested. The Virtues Project offers a positive outlook on the challenges as they are seen as ‘teachable moments’ that will allow us to grow and develop our virtues.

## Effort

There are two elements to the concept of effort that I elaborate; choice and practice. According to Popov (2004) the virtues are ‘gifts within’ us and it is possible at any moment to choose to live a life reflecting them. In order to develop the virtues we must consciously cultivate them; They awaken, grow and develop as we put them into practice (Popov, 2004). Verona Lucas explains:

This is the thing that the Virtues works on; you all, everyone is born with these qualities, and our life experience is for us to use the qualities. So when people understand that they're not evil people, they're not stupid, they're not bad, they just haven't used their honesty, or their truthfulness or their trustworthiness, and the choice is theirs, even after the workshop, if they chose not to use honesty, or truthfulness, or trustworthiness, that's their choice, but now they know that they do have the choice, they can use their honesty...So that's how people change, that's how people are affected by it.

Once someone is aware of the virtues and is faced with an opportunity to practice them, it is up to the individual to choose to use the virtues. It then becomes important to be aware of the virtue that one has or needs in order to meet any given situation and by practicing the virtues in all aspects of life (Linda Kavelin-Popov, questionnaire). If there is a behavior that is not virtuous, it is because of a lack of a virtue and can be improved by developing the virtue; being reminded of the choice to reflect the virtues and choosing to reflect them.

The Virtues Project makes people aware of their virtues and their choice to use them. It is the entirely up to them if they chose to use them or not. Lucas also refers to choice for organizations, not just individuals; *“it's up to the organization to use these five strategies and apply them in their own sphere.”* So once the training is over it is up to the organization, or the leaders within the organization to what extent they want to implement the five strategies through the organization, in it's systems and plans and so forth.

Once someone chooses to use their virtues it takes effort and practice to develop them. Lucas explains; *“They have to use them, they have to work at it, they have to learn to use this*

*language in their everyday speech and they have to work at it. And Dan Popov says it's like learning any language; it takes three months of hard work before it becomes easy."*

It is not easy to implement these strategies and virtues in daily interactions, it takes constant effort and awareness to not be caught up in old patterns of thinking and reacting. As time passes practicing the virtues gets easier, as it becomes more of a habit. But new situations and challenges arise, giving teachable moments and there is a need to stay reflective and aware.

Popov et.al (1997) warn that many of the virtues only thrive under conditions of challenge, and that if we do not use them, we lose them. A virtue can be 'lost' if a person stops exercising it for some time. Christopher Jones Kavelin explains; *"if you're not practicing them it's almost as if they're not there, even if you've developed it your whole life. If you stop practicing them, you might as well not have it."*

#### **4.4.2 The Concept of Virtues**

The Master Facilitators described the virtues as universal, assets, building blocks, the primary numbers, the A-B-C, and the foundation and basis of leadership and behavior. And that it is more sustainable to focus on 'being' before 'doing', on character before behavior. Lucas shares:

I've read broadly about management and leadership in businesses...They all say the same thing, only they don't actually get down to the foundation of what they're saying, which is the virtues...it's like these people are using words, but we have got A-B-C, you can make up new words, using those five strategies.

Green likens character development to the soil that a plant is growing in, and likens the plant and its growth to the behavior of an individual, where the quality of the soil dictates the quality of the growth of the plant. He shares that the leadership programs he has been exposed to focus on changing the behavior – changing the plant, while The Virtues Project goes beyond the behavior and to the character – changing the soil. He thinks this is a deeper, stronger, and more resilient basis for leadership development. *"So if we can work on our character and it's qualities that are inherent in all of us, we can actually start noticing changes in our behavior."* The material of The Virtues Project therefore goes beyond simple behavior modifications. Green says:



Most of the others [approaches to leadership development] are behavioral based, it's actions; do this and this will happen. I think the Virtues Project says be this, then you'll do this and this will happen. And I think that's stronger, I think that's more resilient, I think it's more sustainable, that if we concentrate on the soil that the plant is in, the plant will grow. While a lot of programs are about trying to grow the plant and forgetting about the soil.

Both Lucas and Kavelin make a distinction between values and virtues. Lucas says that people can value anything, while virtues are “*the building blocks on everything else is built.*” Kavelin said:

There tends to be more of a focus on cultural values rather than virtues and so whatever values happen to be dominant in that culture at that time tend to be the primary focus of the trainings for other organizations, and the virtues are more essential expressions that allow people to navigate whether those cultural values are actually still what they really want to be doing and allows for cultural transformation to occur in a more essential way.

Also in the literature of The Virtues Project I find a clear distinction between values and virtues. Hans-Olav doesn't seem to make this distinction as he talks about value-based learning and helping organizations identify their values.

## **Connects to True Meaning and Purpose**

The assumption that several of the interviewees and the material of The Virtues Project referred to was that The Virtues Project connects the individual to the true meaning and purpose of life. Popov et.al. (1997:2) write the following in *The Family Virtues Guide*:

We are born with a mysterious longing for mastery and for meaning. To keep learning, to keep stretching, to keep reaching for more. This is a deep spiritual need, a yearning of the soul which is often misinterpreted in the course of our lives as physical or material neediness...only a connection to our spiritual purpose will truly fill the need... It is the call to realize our innate sense of wholeness and the move toward wholeness which is at the core of spiritual growth. Nothing else will give us genuine happiness.

Verona Lucas shared how people are ‘just attracted’ to The Virtues Project. When I asked her why she thought this was, she answered that The Virtues Project and its strategies touches the reality of who we are, the human spirit. In her questionnaire answers she also shares that The Virtues Project “*calls to what is deep inside every person, it is not something you put on when you come to work and leave when you finish for the day... I only know that this calls to the very heart of what it means to be a human being.*” Also Hans-Olav Håkonsen shares that “*these five strategy really pin point what the human being as a spiritual being is.*”

Christopher Kavelin tells the following account that exemplifies this:

One of the Aunties there, a Tlingit elder ... she's very experienced, wise person who probably isn't surprised by all that much in the world any more. And she had this kind of awe, a sense of wonder at the end of the training, and she said *"You know, I've been to a lot of different other kinds of trainings, where they try to teach you not to think negative, but like"* she said *"they tell us to empty our baggage, of our prejudice and our shame and our fear and our anger, and they try to tell us how to cope with that. How to have conflict resolution so that we can navigate those challenges and those problems."* She said *"I had one training, where they said; imagine making balloons and you tie your anger to that and let that float away, and take your jealousy and let that float away, but then you're just left empty."* and she said *"and for the first time in my life now I know what to fill it with. Now I know what to fill that space with for the first time, and that's the virtues."* And so that was quite powerful, hearing her say that after like sixty years of having been to lots of workshops, and lots of trainings. To say *"what's unique about this is that it fills you up with the fruits of the spirit."* And speaking the language, all of those strategies are different ways to do that.

The Virtues Project touches on the true meaning of life and connects people to the virtues, which fill them up with the 'fruits of the spirit' and act as a counterpart to the negativity that is unwanted. By focusing on the virtues the negative counterparts automatically disappear.

#### **4.4.3 View of Leadership**

In her questionnaire answers Linda Kavelin-Popov defines leadership as *"the ability to create and hold a unified vision or purpose, and to motivate people continually to fulfill it."*

Verona writes in her questionnaire answers that leaders *"recognize the potential and qualities in those they 'lead' and provide the environment for them to express those qualities for the good of the organization they work for."* This is in line with Hans-Olav's definition of leadership which is to create a safe environment where people really grow and develop, and ensuring that everyone has a common vision and goal.

In the booklet *Inspiring Leadership* by Linda Kavelin-Popov (2007:4) writes that *"the two greatest tools leaders have to motivate their collaborators to be ethical is their talk and their walk – how they speak to people, and how they live by their virtues."* How a leader can motivate their collaborators to be ethical through their talk is mainly expressed through the first strategy of speaking the language of the virtues. Linda Kavelin-Popov (ibid) explains the importance of a leaders talk as follows:

The single most motivating factor in dedication to the job, other than love for the work itself, is appreciation. From our earliest years, we crave approval and recognition. We need to be truly valued. Virtues language is a tool that enhances authentic self-esteem by expressing appreciation specifically.

Verona Lucas also emphasizes *"the human need to be recognized and to feel that they are worthwhile people."* Also Hans-Olav Håkonsen emphasized the importance of feedback and how leaders communicate in his interview.

The second way leaders can influence and motivate their collaborators is through their walk. Especially the importance of the leader being an example and having an attitude of humility was mentioned.

Linda Kavelin-Popov emphasizes the importance of leading by example in her answers to my questionnaire and in her book *The Virtues Project Educator's Guide*. Here she writes that when leaders model the five strategies and the virtues it has a powerful effect on their coworkers, collaborators, customers and the community (Popov, 2000). Kavelin-Popov also states the importance of the walk matches the talk. Also Barry Lewis Green and Verona Lucas say in their interview that leaders lead by example, by their actions, and the importance of integrity. Popov (2007:4) elaborates:

To model the virtues in your code of ethics, you don't need to be a paragon of perfection. You do need to be an example of humility. When you make a mistake, take personal responsibility for it and make amends, not excuses. Share your victories and your challenges with others. Invite their support. Always be fair. Above all, show that you care. Acknowledge birthdays and births. Walk around and look your people in the eye. Be a world class listener.

Kavelin-Popov also answered that, "*A true leader is a servant of his or her people and puts their needs as important as the financial and other goals of the organization*", they listen, honor and companion their collaborators. Kavelin-Popov also mentioned humility in her questionnaire answers. Christopher Jones Kavelin brought humility to the forefront of what it means to be a leader, stating that:

It's essential to have humility if you are going to be a good leader, or even a leader... You really can't understand the people that you are wanting to serve unless you have that kind of humility... there's this kind of ironic, divine mystery about preferring others to ourselves and practicing that kind of humility in service, that is also noble and great at the same time.

Kavelin also brings up an issue of staying humble in the role of a leader in his interview. He states the importance of asking the question "*am I doing this for myself or am I doing it for the people I want to serve?*" every day. He says it isn't a question you can answer once off and say "*oh I've answered that question*". Because someone can start off with the intention that what they are doing is for the people they serve, but over time praise and recognition from others can make them do it because of the recognition it gives them or because it makes them feel important. Kavelin says that "*over time that's a really subtle shift and you end up starting to do it for yourself.*" Humility then becomes a continuous process for leaders to work on staying humble and having the right intentions, every day.

None of the other interviewees brought up this issue.

## 4.5 Strategies and Key Activities

The strategies of a program is about what the program intends on doing to cover the need found in the contextual analysis. As stated in the Pathway Map (4.2.) the strategies for The Virtues Project towards developing a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation is to:

**Give simple and sustainable strategies for acknowledging and leading by the virtues:**

- **Speak the Language of the Virtues**
- **Recognize Teachable Moments**
- **Set Clear Boundaries**
- **Honor the Spirit**
- **Offer Companionship**

According to the introduction text on the *Virtues Reflection Cards* produced by The Virtues Project (2006) “*the mission of The Virtues Project is to inspire the practice of virtues in everyday life*”. In order to inspire the practice of virtues in everyday life and in every relationship The Virtues Project has developed five strategies. Through the strategies of The Virtues Project individuals can identify their nature (strength and growth virtues), nurture the virtues in themselves and others (recognize and encourage the virtues), identify opportunities to act on the virtues, and become aware of the choice they have to make an effort by responding to the opportunities to practice a virtue. These strategies focus on our interactions with others – how we give feedback, how we make requests, how we set clear boundaries and expectations, how we listen, how we look for the potential in ourselves, each situation and other individuals, they give a language to assess strengths and growth potentials.

In the *Master Facilitator 5-Day Workshop Outlines* Smith (unknown:75) writes that the course goals of the two day introduction is; “*To learn and practice the principles and five strategies of The Virtues Project. To be able to apply the principles and strategies in everyday life both personally and professionally.*”

Each strategy complements the others, they are interlinked, and they build on each other. These strategies are meant to complement and enhance the structures, systems, and methods that already exist, by adding a new and deeper, more meaningful dimension and

understanding. These strategies are both what The Virtues Project seeks to develop and how they seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership.

I will therefore also go through the key activities connected to teaching each strategy. The key activities of a program is about how the program's strategies are implemented (Gutiérrez & Tasse, 2007). As stated in the Pathway Map (4.2.) the key activities of The Virtues Project towards developing a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation is to:

- **Facilitator practices the strategies and virtues**
- **Explaining the strategies**
- **Give exercises that let people experience and practice them**
- **Reflect over their experiences**

For ease of reference I will also present the anticipated outcomes of the program on the individual level under each corresponding strategy. As stated in the Pathway Map (4.2.) the anticipated outcomes of The Virtues Project towards developing a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation on the individual level is:

- **Gain new understanding of human nature**
- **Practice the strategies and virtues in own life and in interactions with others**

I will therefore go through each strategy and look at; what each strategy seeks to develop, how the interviewees use each strategy in their development of the virtuous aspect of leadership, and what outcomes each strategy is anticipated to have for the virtuous aspect of leadership.

#### **4.5.1 Speak the Language of the Virtues**

##### **What it Seeks to Develop**

This first strategy of The Virtues Project is based on the notion that the virtues themselves can be spoken as a language and that language shapes character and is a part of the culture people create. In the booklet *Inspiring Leadership* by Linda Kavelin-Popov from 2007 she writes

*“Language has the power to discourage or to inspire. Using virtues to acknowledge, guide, correct and thank awakens the best within us. Encouragement and appreciation are great motivators. Virtues language also allows us to balance discipline with tact.”* (page 6)

The language of the virtues is meant not just to effect the words we use but also the thoughts we have. It is a strategy that is meant to effect how we communicate with others and ourselves, and therefore affect the relationships we have with others and to our self. The language of the virtues is used to replace negative thoughts and language with positive thoughts and language, towards our self and others. It is meant to replace shaming and blaming with naming the virtues, and thereby reminding people and ourselves of what kind of people we want to be. This language focuses on what we want, instead of what we don't want, and is meant to be used in people's day-to-day interactions with others. (Popov, 2000)

In *The Virtues Project Educator's Guide* Popov (2000:60) writes:

The language of virtues is specific, clear, and most of all, easily internalized. It builds authentic self-esteem without over-dependence on approval. General terms, even when they are positive, do not hit the mark...[general] terms promote people-pleasing as they only indicate that you are pleased...without giving them any specific information about what they did.

The language of the virtues is used mainly in four ways; to acknowledge, to guide, to correct, and to thank (Popov, 2000). The best way to learn a language is to use it (Acres et. al., unknown).

For how to use the virtues to acknowledge, thank, guide and correct see appendix VIII. The Virtues Project promotes something they call the 'ACT with tact' approach to giving feedback. It can be used when giving periodic performance appraisals, staff evaluations, appreciations and suggestions for improvement to staff. ACT is an acronym for Acknowledge, Correct, and Thank. The approach is about giving a correction or suggestion for change or improvement between two positives; acknowledge and thank. According to Popov (2000:12), *“Ending feedback with a positive helps to sustain self-esteem and gives encouragement rather than discouragement.”*

## **How it is Used**

Linda Kavelin-Popov (2007:8) writes in the booklet *Inspiring Leadership* that, *“the virtues strategies can be applied as an assessment tool to take the ethical temperature of an organization and build team unity.”* She then goes through each strategy and formulates how

each gives rise to certain assessment questions. For ‘Speak the Language of the Virtues’ she asks the following questions; *“What are the Strength Virtues of our organization that support our successes? What are the Growth Virtues we need to develop to be more in alignment with our ethics and mission? What virtues do we want to have more of from each other?”*

Christopher Jones Kavelin has introduced the concept of virtues to leaders of indigenous communities by making copies of all 100 virtue cards and giving these to them explaining that all these qualities of leadership are already within them. He let them interact with these virtues and talk to each other about them, and taught them how to name them in each other.

Verona Lucas characterizes the virtues pick as a minimum exercise that is done no matter how short a presentation of The Virtues Project. Also Kavelin shares that the first activity he usually does, no matter who the participants are, is a contextual virtues pick. Barry Lewis Green uses the virtues cards in his training by spreading them out and letting everyone pick a strength card and a growth card and has some discussions around that. For more information about the Virtue cards and how to do a contextual virtues pick see appendix IX.

Hans-Olav Håkonsen explains that he teaches the first strategy with the whole organization at the same time by seating the top managers in front of the rest of the organization, while they interview each other and learn to appreciate and acknowledge the virtues in each other. Then he puts people into groups of three where they do this themselves, with one observer, one interviewing and one being interviewed.

Kavelin is the only one that mentions something called ‘The Five Card Spread’, this is originally developed for individuals, but he has adjusted it to be used with organizations. He says it is a method he uses where the companioning overlaps with the training. For details on the Five Card Spread see appendix IX.

The strategy of speaking the language of the virtues is therefore taught in several different ways, from the top managers demonstrating how to acknowledge the virtues in each other, to the facilitator helping organizations to identify their strength and growth virtues.

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

The anticipated outcomes of teaching people the first strategy is that they speak the language of the virtues; that they use the virtues in their language as they acknowledge, guide, correct

and thank others (Smith, unknown). Kavelin says that one of the consistent outcomes of teaching this strategy is that it gives individuals a language to identify and name virtues in themselves and others. Green explains that the language of the virtues allows him to be more specific in his feedback in evaluations and performance management. Green uses the material of The Virtues Project to help the participants identify their own strengths and the strengths of their co-workers, as well as identify which virtues they need to grow on. From this Green shares that participants took ownership of their virtues and the development of them.

Lucas shares that receiving a virtues acknowledgement *“touches something deep inside us and we respond to it...that people have to be able to know that they are valuable, that they are somebody.”* Kavelin shares that usually after doing a contextual virtues pick *“there's a very strong sense of unity among the group, enthusiasm for the process, which you need for it to be successful, also a sense of having met the virtues.”*

Green, Kavelin and Lucas also mentioned in their interview that giving people the language to identify their own qualities and strengths also helps them identify career opportunities. Kavelin states that the first strategy is *“very simple, only takes a couple of hours and the students usually walk away with a very different understanding of their role as students or leaders from that process.”*

Kavelin also says that The Virtues Project's training gives people a sense of nobility, a feeling and attitude that they are noble. Verona Lucas also states several times that this training makes people *“aware of the various aspects of who they really are”* and gives people the knowledge that *“they are someone of worth, that they do matter, that they can make a useful contribution to society and use the gifts they were born with to benefit the community.”* Lucas shares how the participants go through the strategies, gain a new understanding of who they are, then

they will go out and use the skills that they learnt in the workshop and now what happens then is how they apply it in the position that they hold in the business. And so if they're a team leader in a business, they will learn to acknowledge their staff, they'll learn how to look for the positive and not criticize, so if they find a fault with someone - how do you deal with it instead of knocking that person down?

This new perspective of human nature and the purpose in life doesn't just effect their view of their own life and themselves, but also how they view others and then also how they interact with them. Barry Lewis Green shares that he uses the material of The Virtues Project to help people get a better sense of the strengths of each individual so they get to know each other at



a deeper level. Verona Lucas shares that The Virtues Project gives people the knowledge and skills to improve people's relationship with themselves as well as with others around them. Hans-Olav shares how the material helps people see the good in others by focusing feedback on what we want and expect of others instead of what we don't want.

## 4.5.2 Recognize Teachable Moments

### What it Seeks to Develop

The second strategy of The Virtues Project is based on the view of life as an opportunity for learning and recognizes that mistakes, tests, and challenges are opportunities to hone our virtues (Popov, 2000). Williams (2009:32) writes *"Teachable moments are moments of awareness when one is awakened to the meaning of what is happening and the virtue at the heart of it."* Barry Lewis Green said that teachable moments is about *"being alert to the things that are going to teach me, and that could be my successes or my stumbles."* Christopher Jones Kavelin shares that, *"we all got taught how to be good human beings, but sometimes we forget and so teachable moments is a way of remembering."*

In the booklet *Inspiring Leadership* Popov (2007:6) writes:

Recognizing the virtues needed in daily challenges helps us to become lifelong learners open to the lessons of character. Avoiding shaming and blaming defuses disunity and backbiting. Calling employees to a high level of accountability motivates them to perform with excellence and to make amends instead of excuses.

This strategy builds on the language of the virtues but goes a step further than the first strategy in identifying virtues in our self and others. For questions to ask to help identify teachable moments for our self and others, and about balancing the virtues, see appendix X.

Barry Lewis Green explains that the idea of teachable moments is also found in other development programs, but that the extra dimension that The Virtues Project offers is that it focuses on virtues, rather than behaviors, by asking questions such as *"what would have been useful there for me not to stumble? If I was successful; what qualities did I bring to the table that allowed me to be?"* Green thinks this is more permanent and fundamental than focusing on behaviors.

## **How it is Used**

Linda Kavelin-Popov (2007:8) asks the following assessment questions for recognizing teachable moments in the booklet *Inspiring Leadership*; “*What is the Teachable Moment facing our organization now? Without shame, blame or naming names, what virtues do we need to call on to move forward in alignment with our vision?*”

Only Green and Kavelin share how they teach this strategy. Both refer to letting the participants explore teachable moments they have had in the past. Green lets the organizations identify a successful event and a less successful event and explore what were the virtues that were present or missing during these events. Kavelin does the same, but takes it one step further by also exploring how to bring back virtues that are missing during the crises.

Hans-Olav Håkonsen raises that this is a strategy that is more difficult to teach and takes a bit longer than the rest because it’s “*about the learning points and well people don’t like to be criticized*”. None of the interviewees raised a challenge with teaching this strategy.

## **Anticipated Outcomes**

The anticipated outcomes of teaching people the second strategy is that they start to identify, both teachable moments for themselves in their own life but also for others (Smith, unknown). This gives a new perspective to the challenges and also successes in life – life is about learning, not complaining or bragging. Kavelin shares how gaining a new perspective on life gives them “*the capacity to have teachable moments, to be self-aware, to be less insecure in them, to be less fearful about change or challenges, to be embracing of them*”.

### **4.5.3 Set Clear Boundaries**

#### **What it Seeks to Develop**

The third strategy of The Virtues Project is based on the view that authority should be used in the service of learning and developing the virtues in others, that boundaries should be used to protect people's health, time, energy, and dignity, and when someone crosses the boundaries the consequence should be reparation that helps them make amends. (Popov, 2000 and Popov, 2004)

In the booklet *Inspiring Leadership* Popov (2007:6) writes:

Boundaries based on respect and restorative justice create a climate of peace, cooperation, and safety in our homes, schools and communities. People give their best both ethically and energetically when guidelines and parameters are clear, as opposed to the chaos of constantly shifting priorities and agreements.

The strategy of setting clear boundaries is about creating boundaries that are based on a shared vision of the virtues and how we want to treat each other. According to Acres et. al. (unknown) virtue based boundaries are empowering because they start with the virtues which are something a person already has. For the guidelines on how to set clear boundaries see appendix XI.

Green says that setting clear boundaries in organizations is about “*creating culture*”, by identifying “*What are the primary elements of how do we roll, how do we treat each other?*” Lucas and Kavelin explain that there are two levels of boundaries in organizations; the one level is boundaries between the organization and the outside world, the other level is boundaries within the organization between its members.

### **How it is Used**

Linda Kavelin-Popov (2007:8) asks the following assessment questions for setting clear boundaries in the booklet *Inspiring Leadership*; “*How clear are our guidelines and expectations for employees? What justice and human rights issues need to be addressed? What corporate boundaries need to be clearer? How well do our personal boundaries protect our time, energy, and health?*”

Hans-Olav Håkonsen uses this strategy for the strategic planning. After assessing the needs of the organization by asking six questions by Jim Collins, he starts with the strategic planning together with the top managers group, the employee representatives and other key members of the organization. This is normally a two to three days workshop and is with anything from five to 40 people. Håkonsen shares how he uses the third strategy of The Virtues Project; setting clear boundaries, for strategic planning:

1. Identify 3-4 values that support the vision of the company
2. Define these values and how they will be communicated
3. Decide how to communicate when these values are seen and when they are lacking

4. Decide what the consequences are for breaking these values
5. Implant this into the plan of the company, *“because if it's not implanted in the plan of the company it will have no focus.”*

Barry Lewis Green says he'll spend time on the strategy of setting clear boundaries *“from time to time”*. He then assists the participants to assess *“what we're going towards and what would that look like, how will we treat each other.”* Kavelin explains how he uses this strategy to help indigenous leaders set clear boundaries of what they want the outside community to respect, and how they will treat each other within their own community. Lucas says that she ensures that the environment of the workshop is safe by setting clear boundaries for the workshops before she starts, for example that *“everyone's' stories stays inside this room, nothing goes out of this area unless the person gives their permission for the story to be told.”*

When I participated in the introduction workshop in Norway the following were the boundaries for our workshop (translated from Norwegian by me):

Courtesy: We treat each other with friendliness and tact.

Respect: We listen to each other, are fully present without interrupting, saving, giving advice or comparing.

Trust: We keep all personal information that is shared to our self, both during and after the course.

Integrity: I will only do what I feel is appropriate and safe.

The strategy of setting clear boundaries is therefore taught in several different ways, from setting boundaries for the training itself to helping the organizations plan and set the boundaries for their organization.

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

The anticipated outcomes of teaching people the third strategy is that they set clear boundaries and develop ground rules with relevant consequences (Smith, unknown). So for an organization this will be setting clear boundaries towards the outside world, and setting clear boundaries within the organization between its members.

## 4.5.4 Honor the Spirit

### What it Seeks to Develop

The fourth strategy of The Virtues Project is based on The Virtues Project's view of human nature. It is the foundation on which the other strategies are built. As Barry Lewis Green says, *"Honoring the spirit tends to get addressed through those three [strategy 1, 2 and 3] I think, because what we're really doing is we are honoring each other."*

In the booklet *Inspiring Leadership* Popov (2007:6) writes; *"We sustain our vision and purpose by integrating virtues into our activities, surroundings, celebrations and the arts. This strategy is also about nurturing individual dignity at all times. Themes such as the Virtue of the Week highlight corporate values."*

Honoring the Spirit is a strategy of seeing the potential in every person by recognizing their virtues. Barry Lewis Green shares that for him the strategy of honoring the spirit is recognizing that everybody counts. Speaking the language of the virtues and recognizing teachable moments is honoring the spirit. It is modeling the virtues you expect others to practice. It is sharing our skills, talents and stories with others. And it is having ceremonies at special times that reflect the virtues, for example when someone is hired, or during loss and grief, or for retirement. According to Williams (2009:33) honoring the spirit *"helps us see the importance of time for reflection, routines of reverence, the experience of natural beauty, and the participation in the arts."* Activities for honoring the spirit in an organization are creating shared vision statements, doing virtues picks, picking a virtue of the week and having virtues sharing circles (these are described in Popov, 2000).

### How it is Used

Linda Kavelin-Popov (2007:8) asks the following assessment questions for honoring the spirit in the booklet *Inspiring Leadership*; *"Do all of our stakeholders feel treated with dignity? How committed are our people to our standards of service and courtesy? How successfully are we imbedding our values into our environment using virtues language, arts, ceremony, and routines?"*

When assisting others in developing, the attitude of the facilitators is characterized by humility for the gifts and capacities of the participants, and that it is their choice how they

wish to live their life. Kavelin found that leadership is best taught through honoring the leadership abilities of the participants that he is working with and trusting that they already have great leadership qualities that he may not be aware of. He shares:

You just need to create the space for them to explore for themselves and with each other and with mentors that inspire them, and just kind of let it happen. And a big part of facilitating that kind of leadership is just not getting in the way, because it is really easy to get in the way of that kind of process by trying to direct it or telling people this is how it is supposed to be, and that cuts off that whole possibility.

For Kavelin it is important to start with listening and having an emptiness, without too much of an agenda or trying to be an expert. He strives to practice humility and says to himself:

It doesn't matter how many things I've done before, these people are completely unique. And if I don't honor how unique they are it's kind of a disservice and it's going to limit my capacity to have a unique gift for them, a unique service. The meaningfulness of what I can do with them will be limited if I go in with pre-judging, prejudices.

None of the other interviewees mentioned what attitude is important while teaching helping others develop. Only Lucas mentioned the importance of being and example by living the strategies of The Virtues Project:

One of the things about The Virtues Project is that the virtues look after themselves. If you're not using your virtues, if you're not using your language of virtues and you're not setting your clear boundaries the thing will just collapse around you and it won't work. So you actually have to uphold to the honest, the truthfulness, you have to hold to these, otherwise it stops.

Also Linda Kavelin-Popov emphasizes this in her questionnaire answers; *"We ask all facilitators to live with the Strategies and keep growing in them."* Also Acres et. al (unknown:112) write that facilitators must *"practice the five strategies every day. You can't teach or facilitate what you don't live."*

When creating the space that the workshop takes place in, the strategy 'honor the spirit' plays a role. Also the way the workshops are started and ended each day is affected by this strategy. This can be by lighting a candle, playing contemplative music and inviting people to be silent and fully present when listening to the music, reading a quote from one of the virtues cards, giving a guided meditation, letting everyone share something they are grateful of, or letting people give virtues acknowledgements to each other (Acres et. al., unknown). Håkonsen says that he is very careful about the framing and creating an atmosphere where everyone feels free and safe to talk and share. He creates a safe environment by greeting all the participants with a smile, they sit around a round table and he starts with music and reflection on a poem or a quotation from the scriptures of the world's religions. Kavelin shares that he feels more

comfortable sitting in a circle than being at the front of a class. He explains why; “*A circle is a way of showing respect for the equal gifts that each person brings...so that inherent in the physical space is a sense of the equal intrinsic worth of each person, and it sets in place an expectation of sharing and participation.*”

After assessing the needs of the organization and its members, Kavelin co-creates the program with them, this draws on the strategy of honoring the spirit. He'll say “*based on my understanding of your needs, these are some possibilities, but I'd like to craft that with you and get your suggestions.*” Kavelin also invites the participants to co-create the space itself. Green and Håkonsen do not mention whether or not they co-create the development program with the organizations based on the planning.

Both Kavelin and Kavelin-Popov say they use spirit walk for teaching honoring the spirit (see appendix XII). Håkonsen also uses spirit walk with organizations. He introduces it when they are going to find a new solution for the company. He then asks the management group to be silent for an hour and go out into nature and ask “*what are we going to do?*” and listen to the answers nature gives. He shares the effect; “*when they came back they had so many new ideas. So we found a new solution after one hour with silence.*” This is a concrete example of how this strategy can be used in organizations.

Barry Lewis Green states that honoring the spirit is addressed through the other strategies, because through those strategies people are honoring each other. Greens shares that he has to be “*really understanding of the diversity of organizations*” when introducing this strategy, because “*some people might start to think that we are going to simply hold hands and hug each other and sing kumbaya*”. None of the other interviewees raised a challenge with teaching this strategy.

The strategy of honoring the spirit is therefore taught in several different ways, from the facilitators being an example and honoring the gifts and choices of the participants and creating a setting that honors the spirit together with the participants, to spending an hour in silence to listen for new solutions to a challenge.

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

The anticipated outcomes of teaching people the forth strategy is that they honor the spirit in several ways (Smith, unknown). Håkonsen says that, “*strategy number four and five are the*

*best way to train people being here and now, being present.” Kavelin mentions that, “practicing honoring the spirit seems to be a really key part of connecting to people.” And Lucas shares that when she honors people for what they have done it “lifts people up, and then they're more cooperative, they're more willing.”*

#### **4.5.5 Offer the Art of Spiritual Companionship**

##### **What it Seeks to Develop**

The fifth and last strategy of The Virtues Project is based on the four first strategies and acknowledges the desire in everyone to be listened to fully and completely, to have someone be receptive and respectful of our feelings. It is based on the notion that people can work out their problems, find their own inner truth and resources when they are not interrupted, advised or rescued. (Acres et. al, unknown)

The art of spiritual companionship brings a new perspective to communication and teaches people to listen in a way which allows them to be deeply present to the speaker, listening with compassion and detachment, without an agenda or judgments, and trains the ability to witness another’s feelings without needing to fix them (Acres et. al, unknown). The listener is respecting and trusting the wisdom others have to solve their own problems, which gives the speaker a chance to own and solve their problem and make their own moral choices (Popov, 2000). Spiritual companionship allows individuals to tell their stories while being guided with clarifying questions to solve their own problems in terms of virtues (Williams, 2009).

In the booklet *Inspiring Leadership* Popov (2007:6) writes; *“Being deeply present and listening with compassionate curiosity guides others to find clarity and to create their own solutions. It supports healing and growth. Asking what and how questions allows others to get to the heart of the matter.”*

See appendix XIII for the steps in the process of Spiritual Companionship.

Green views offering companionship as *“not having an agenda, not having some plan to try and convince people, to hear where they are and being able to respond in a positive way.”*

Also Håkonsen says that when Spiritual Companionship someone *“you have to forget yourself. If you don't listen to what the other person is saying, you can't help them at all.”* Also Lucas



stats that *“the Art of Spiritual Companionship is learning how to listen and asking what instead of why.”* And Kavelin shares that if the companionship is based on the other strategies being taught first that it sets *“a safe place to share what's been your challenge, what's been your joy, what do you hope for”*.

In organizations offering companionship can be used for counseling, conflict resolution, problem solving, and strategic planning.

### **How it is Used**

Linda Kavelin-Popov (2007:8) asks the following assessment questions for honoring the spirit in the booklet *Inspiring Leadership*; *“How well do we listen to one another? How effectively have we created a climate of trust? How often do we take the time to ask the right questions? What issues in our organization need to be heard?”*

Kavelin and Håkonsen share that they teach the strategy of offering the art of spiritual companionship in organizations by helping the participants companion each other through the stages of companionship (see appendix XIII). Håkonsen also prefers to teach this strategy by companionship the top manager in a chair in front of the rest of the organization, because this sets an example of how open they can be in that organization. Green shares that he teaches this strategy by companionship the participants throughout the training.

Green, Håkonsen and Kavelin all explained how they plan with organizations before training. Lucas on the other hand stated that she does not plan the training, she just offers the workshops of The Virtues Project to organizations, as is. Håkonsen's approach was explained under the strategy of setting clear boundaries, as he based his planning on it. While Green and Kavelin base their planning more on the strategy of companionship. Green shares that he is not going to organizations with a solution and selling them something. He goes in with the following attitude; *“what do you need? and let's see if we can actually do something about it.”* He then asks questions to find out what their needs are.

Kavelin uses the strategy of spiritual companionship and ‘The Five Card Spread’ (see appendix IX). Kavelin shares how he uses the fifth strategy of The Virtues Project; offering the art of spiritual companionship, whenever he meets with a client. He says that this keeps him from having an exact formula that he follows all the time. He goes in with a similar

attitude to Green; *“I don't actually know what the needs of this person or this organization are.”* Throughout the initial spiritual companioning Kavelin asks questions like:

- What have been their greatest joys?
- What do they see as the strengths of their organization?
- What have been their greatest challenges?
- What have been some of their teachable moments?
- What is their vision?
- What have been the challenges to achieving this vision?

Kavelin's approach seems to be to use the strategy of companioning as the planning. Green and Håkonsen use elements of this strategy in addition to adopting own fixed questions that they use to map out the needs of the organizations.

The strategy of offering companioning is therefore taught in several different ways, from how the needs of the organization are identified, to helping the participants companion each other.

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

The anticipated outcomes of teaching people the fifth strategy is that they use the art of Spiritual Companioning (Smith, unknown). Kavelin shares that psychological research has shown that offering the art of spiritual companioning is a swift healing process for the person whom is companioned. He explains:

When you bring together somebody's trauma with a feeling of safety and a virtues acknowledgement it weaves together on the level of synapses a feeling of safety and the positive virtues with the trauma and it no longer causes post-traumatic stress disorder or an emotional reactions that control you...because it instantly grasps the synapses of the positive virtues acknowledgement after you've been describing what's tough for you to the experience and all of a sudden for the first time you're heard and the first time you feel safe, it's almost like it's an instant increase in the capacity to manage your response to similar situations later. Which is really important for governance obviously, because if you are constantly traumatized by the challenges in your community you don't make a very good leader.

## **4.6 Assumptions from Individual to Organizational Outcomes**

The assumptions between the anticipated outcomes on the individual level and the anticipated outcomes on the organizational level of The Virtues Project towards developing a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation is stated in the Pathway map (4.2.) as:

- **As individuals practice the virtues and strategies with others this will affect their relationship, which again affects the culture of the organization.**
- **For the structure and systems of the organization to be effected the top leaders must be onboard.**

There are mainly two assumptions communicated by the interviewees of how outcomes at the individual level cause outcomes at the organizational level. The first assumption is that the strategies of The Virtues Project effect how those trained in those strategies interact with others, it is then assumed that the these new ways of interaction between individuals will affect the relationship between them, and also effect the other individuals in the relationship. When a certain amount of individuals within an organization use these strategies in their interactions with each other, it is assumed that this will affect the whole culture and atmosphere of the organization. According to Linda Kavelin-Popov's questionnaire answers The Virtues Project is based on among others *"Family Systems theory regarding the dynamics of change in families and groups."* Lucas explains how they worked whit villages in Fiji and *"what we discovered was that the entire village took the principles, took the five strategies and changed the culture of the community, not just the individuals."*

The second assumption is that to change the structures and systems of the organization the top managers must change as well, if the top of the organization does not join in the change, it will not last. Linda Kavelin-Popov shares the importance of the top managers participating in the training; *"We do require that leadership be present, since that is one of the success factors in true organizational improvement."*

Verona Lucas has had experience with not working with the top-managers and says that this was challenging because they didn't change and they are the example for the rest. She explains:

When the middle managers and facilitators got their training they didn't get the support they needed to take that training on to the other staff. Which is what would have had to happen to change the corporations attitude of things...So The Virtues Project per say changes the individual, if the person who is changed is at the top for the organization then the entire organization will change.

Lucas shares the experience she has had when she has worked with the station manager of her radio and that her using the strategies on him has inspired him to use them on his staff and that that is how it is passed down in the organization.

Hans-Olav Håkonsen shares that it is a requirement that the top manager is willing to change, for him to work with the organization that. He elaborates:

The first question I always ask the top manager is “*Are you willing to change?*” If the top manager is not willing to change and grow I never go in and train. I say to him you have to find another consultant because the growing of the company goes as fast as the top manager changes.

## 4.7 Anticipated Organizational Outcomes

As stated in the Pathway Map (4.2.) the anticipated outcomes of The Virtues Project towards developing a virtuous aspect of the leadership relation on the level of organization is:

- **Change of culture and environment**
- **Successful organizations**

There are two sets of organizational outcomes that the Master Facilitators and Linda Kavelin-Popov share; the first set has to do with the change in culture and environment of the organization, the second has to do with the organization being successful.

### 4.7.1 Change of Culture and Environment

When I asked Linda Kavelin-Popov what the anticipated outcomes of The Virtues Project when working with developing leadership were, she answered; “*We anticipate genuine cultural change to include improved team work, more confident and happier employees, increased commitment and hope as well.*”

Linda Kavelin-Popov shares the following elaboration on this in her questionnaire answers:

Our observations and findings from years of consulting with leaders in business and government that positive change in culture occurs in tandem with shifts in values communicated and exemplified by leadership. When the corporate vision is focused on core virtues, changes in motivation and attitude tend to occur. Notably, using the language of virtues in performance appraisals and in regularly empowering and encouraging employees, significant positive change occurs.

Christopher Jones Kavelin explains that The Virtues Project can effect a whole organization by connecting each individual to their virtues and gives people a language to help others connect to their own virtues, which increases their sense of nobility and respect, and their joy and well-being. If this is done in an organization, you “*create a culture where people are honoring each other’s gifts and strengths, well the whole organizations culture of creativity and purposefulness and vision increases.*”

Kavelin states that practicing these spiritual virtues enables the unity of a community, conflict resolution and representation of interests. And that teaching them the process of Spiritual Companionship *“enables really the restoration of friendships or the awakening of friendships and unity.”* Also Barry Lewis Green says he has seen a drop in incidences of conflict, a feeling having a deeper, better connection with one another and *“working together better, seeing each other in different lights, having a better sense of my own voice, in terms of saying what I need, and I guess it ultimately comes to being a better leader.”*

Verona Lucas shares that the change that has gone on with their station manager is effecting the atmosphere in the organization: *“he's [the manager's] experience and what he had learnt with us has exposed his talents and skills and he's taking this on to the way that we've got very positive teams, very positive atmosphere in the organization.”* She explains this by saying that leaders that have received training by The Virtues Project *“recognize the potential and qualities in those they 'lead' and provide the environment for them to express those qualities for the good of the organization they work for... and assist them to use that potential for their own development.”*

Kavelin explains how the Five Card Spread gives an organization what they need to move forward, by helping them get to know who they are and what their purpose is, what their strengths and challenges are, and how to get where they want to go.

## **4.7.2 Successful Organizations**

The second set of organizational outcomes the Master Facilitators and Linda Kavelin-Popov share has to do with the organizations becoming successful. Lucas explains:

When you start to read these books about corporations and businesses that are doing very well, you can tick all the boxes because this organization does that. But we didn't do it by coming through university and all that sort of stuff, we came at this result through using the Five strategies of The Virtues Project.

Hans-Olav Håkonsen shares the outcomes he measured when he started to implement the Virtues Project in his training of managers and organizations:

The charge by co-creators in the company is growing, the costumers satisfaction is growing and the economic results are growing. So we can evaluate in nearly all the key factors in the company, the result of this...We always use the basic testing of those [Jim Collins] six questions, and it's normal that we have an organization that is about 10 to 12 points out of 30. My experience is that in three years these points are growing from 10-12 up to 24-30 points. So you can see tremendous results really quick. And on the costumers satisfaction it depends on which tools they use, what I normally see costumers satisfaction approximately 85%. On the economic scale most of these companies are growing 2-3 or 4%

at the bottom line... It's based on we always start with a measurement in the start and we see the growth. I am always using measurement because I think we need both subjective and objective measurements.

Håkonsen is the only one of the interviewees that has conducted quantitative measurements to assess the effects of implementing The Virtues Project in organizations. Both Green and Kavelin shared that they were in the middle of thinking about how to develop quantitative measurements. All the interviewees have witnessed lots of anecdotal and qualitative effects.

# 5 DISCUSSION

I will now discuss the assumptions on which the view of virtues and leadership is based and the research questions regarding what a virtuous aspect of leadership is and why we should seek to develop this aspect of leadership. I will then discuss the research question regarding how The Virtues Project seeks to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership, by discussing the strategies used by The Virtues Project to develop this aspect and whether or not these strategies actually do develop leadership, by drawing on the literature in this field.

## 5.1 What is a Virtuous Aspect of Leadership?

As stated in the theoretical and conceptual framework a virtuous aspect of leadership is taking the innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character (virtues) into consideration when an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (leadership). Acknowledging the virtuous aspect of human beings effects how one interacts with other humans, seeks to motivate and influence them, and how one communicates with them.

So how do leaders interact with, motivate, and influence their collaborators when they acknowledge the virtuous aspect of human beings? According to Popov (2007) leaders motivate their collaborators through their ‘talk’ and their ‘walk’. Regarding a leader’s ‘talk’ Avolio et. al. (2010) state that through their feedback, leaders contribute significantly to the quality of their collaborators’ emotional state. They go on to explain how leaders and collaborators will develop faster to their ‘full potential’ when feedback is strength-based (ibid). They explain that this is based on the assumption that touching on people’s concept of what they can stretch towards, will cause positive emotions, which again create and reinforce opportunities for further development (ibid). This corresponds with Popov (2007) who writes, *“The single most motivating factor in dedication to the job, other than love for the work itself, is appreciation.”* She says that by using the specific language of the virtues to acknowledge others, their authentic self-esteem is enhanced (ibid). Lucas emphasizes the need people feel to be recognized and worthwhile, and Håkonsen talks about the importance of feedback and how leaders communicate to their collaborators. Based on the view of The Virtues Project and Avolio et. al. (2010) leaders that acknowledge the virtuous aspect of human beings use the language of the virtues in their communication to their collaborators, by using virtues in their feedback to acknowledge, correct, thank, and guide their collaborators. They acknowledge

that their collaborators have the virtues in potential and are consciously looking for and acknowledging them in their collaborators.

The second way Popov (2007) states that leaders can motivate their collaborators is through their 'walk'. In the findings, especially two aspects of leaders 'walk' was identified; being an example and having an attitude of humility. I will here discuss the aspect of humility. Popov (2007) says that leaders have to be an example of humility; *"When you make a mistake, take personal responsibility for it and make amends, not excuses. Share your victories and your challenges with others. Invite their support...Be a world class listener"*. This view is supported by Gunther and Neal (2008), who emphasize the importance of humility. To them humility is more than a state of mind and is reflected in a leader's behavior, they know their own limits and appreciate the contributions made by others (Gunther & Neal, 2008). According to Gunther and Neal (2008) humility engenders curiosity in leaders, they learn from their mistakes, and are likely to be good listeners. A humble leader is also likely to develop healthy relationships with others, and most people would rather work for a humble leader than someone who takes all the credit (ibid).

Delbecq (2008) argues that every leader (even well-intentioned leaders) is tempted by the development of arrogance and dominance. He introduces humility and love as virtues that can protect leaders from these temptations (ibid). Also Kavelin brings up this issue of leadership, in his interview, explaining that if a leader asks; *"Am I doing it for myself or am I doing it for the people I want to serve?"* every day, this can help them make sure that their intentions are for serving others and not building up their own reputation and feeling of importance. Also Gunther & Neal (2008) mention that leaders who see the value and strength of being humble continuously work on being a humble person.

The concept of a humble leader, that serves the needs of their collaborators rather than their own, is not unproblematic. For example the Servant Leadership style (Greenleaf, 1970 in Sendjaya et. al., 2008) has been criticized for forgetting the needs of the organization, and putting the needs of the collaborators in front of that of the organization. Is this sustainable in a materialistic world driven by competition and economical gains? Kavelin shares that, *"there's this kind of ironic, divine mystery about preferring others to ourselves and practicing that kind of humility in service, that is also noble and great at the same time."* He tells a story about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, when someone asks him 'what is humility?', and



he answers; *“what makes the ocean so great? - is that it makes itself lower than everything else, and all else flows into it. If it tried to be a mountain top it would be devoid of water.”*

In order to properly address the question in the paragraph above, a re-examination of the world view and view of human nature as assumptions that the virtuous approach to leadership are based on, is called for. Michael Karlberg (2004) states in his book *Beyond the Culture of Contest* that all social theories *“rest on underlying assumptions about human nature and they cannot be properly evaluated without examining those underlying assumptions”*. This is in line with the quotation of Jackson and Parry (2011) that I shared in the beginning of the theoretical and conceptual framework, where they state that purpose is fundamentally connected to leadership and is often taken for granted by leadership scholars. This is why it has been important for me to present and explore the assumptions I have of human nature and those of my informants, before I look at the concepts of virtues and leadership. How one views virtues and leadership is effected by the view of human nature and purpose. Often human nature is not a part of the discourse of leadership, and as there therefore is not consensus on the view of human nature, the concept of leadership is ambiguous in the literature.

According to Karlberg (2004) many of the social theories in western-liberal societies build on the assumptions that human beings are fundamentally selfish, aggressive, and self-interested. Kavelin touches upon this in the interview when I asked him what challenges he had when using The Virtues Project with organizations. He answered:

The challenge tends to be the degree of materialism or values that are contradictory to authentic being as an organization or as people. And so if an organization has really devalued the virtues in themselves and in their organization and is living in a very poisonous kind of environment - that can be a real challenge.

The view of human nature presented in this thesis is one that acknowledges that human beings have potential for selfishness and aggression, but also view human beings as having the virtues in potential as well. Each individual is seen as unique, but we all share the potential to develop the virtues. This view also addresses the important role the environment around the individual plays. Individual will and effort play a role in the development of the virtues, but simultaneously the virtues can be either nurtured or suppressed through social structures within the environment.

Many critics remain skeptical of this assumption (Karlberg, 2004). The growing focus on positive psychology and leadership for a higher purpose, whom emphasis the strengths and positive potential of humans, shows however that more and more people see evidence of the capacity of human beings to embody the virtues, that humans can care about more than just satisfying their material needs and impulses, that organizations can work for the well-being of all, and that leadership can lead towards more than just achieving the bottom line. The main arguments positive psychology has regarding the view of human nature, is the need to not just look at problems and weaknesses, but also at strengths and possibilities. They view humans with an inherent potential for growth and development, and a desire to contribute and make a difference (Linley et. al., 2010).

These are two views of human nature. The findings presented in this thesis and the manner in which they are presented all rests on the underlying assumption that human beings actually have the capacity to be virtuous. This may warrant skepticism if viewed based on the view of human nature as selfish and aggressive. From this point of view viewing leadership in the light of virtues appears naïve and unrealistic, as it is inconsistent with the reality that the view of humans as selfish generates. If one does conceive humans as inherently selfish and aggressive, then social structures, such as leadership and leadership development, need to harness and constrain these impulses. When then attempting to create new social constructs of leadership in light of virtues, these new constructs will seem vulnerable to the self-interested motives and manipulations that western-liberal institutions have been designed to harness and constrain. (Karlberg, 2004)

As Karlberg (2004) states, it is difficult to verify empirically which of these views is more valid. Therefore the validity of the ideas presented in this thesis, is based on where or not someone agrees with the view of human nature presented in this thesis. As stated in the introduction, this thesis offers one perspective of the view of human nature, as a contribution to the discourse on human nature as a fundamental part of any discourse on the nature, purpose and development of leadership. It is meant as a contribution to the existing view of leadership, to add a new depth and perspective to aspects of human beings, that also must be considered when an individual leads a group of individuals towards a common goal.

## 5.2 Why Seek to Develop a Virtuous Aspect of Leadership?

Throughout my research I found several reasons why one should attempt to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. Two distinctions found while analyzing the literature and findings were developing virtues as a means for something else, and developing virtues as a goal in itself.

The review of literature in the field of leadership, both literature towards a higher purpose and that specifically combining the field of leadership and virtues, showed that the literature is full of arguments and examples of how developing virtues can enhance performance, improve workplace effectiveness, and have a positive impact on organizational productivity (Hackett & Wang, 2012), (C. Manz et. al., 2008a), (K. Manz et. al., 2008). Seeing virtues as a means for attaining something else, and developing them with this in mind is problematic and touches on what Hans Skjervheim calls 'the instrumentalistic mistake'.

Hans Skjervheim, a Norwegian Philosopher, wrote in his book *Filosofi og dømmekraft* [Philosophy and Judgment] from 1992, about 'the instrumentalistic mistake'. He explains that the instrumentalistic mistake occurs when people misunderstand an educational practice as a technique and treat people as things one can control based on calculated strategies (Skjervheim, 1992). Professor in Education, Erlind Lars Dale (1999), refers to Skjervheim's concept of the instrumentalistic mistake and how teachers 'manipulate' their students by using certain techniques in their education to affect the students in a certain way. Transferring this to the area of this thesis, the instrumentalistic mistake can occur when leaders try to develop virtues in themselves and their collaborators in order to enhance the performance of their collaborators and the organization. Developing the virtues then becomes a means to an end (enhancing performance) rather than an end in itself (developing the virtues), and therefore instrumentalistic.

This is one of the issues that is not easily solved when connecting the field of virtues to leadership. As I have chosen to define leadership in line with Northouse (2004:3); *"Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal ."* Leadership becomes about influencing others, and theories about leadership treat how to best go about influencing others. So just the fact that leadership is about influence, makes it prone to being instrumentalistic.

I touched upon this issue in the theoretical conceptual framework, when referring to Ciarrocchi (2012) who says that people can be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to be virtuous, and that someone is being truly virtuous only when they are intrinsically motivated. Ciarrocchi (2012) refers to Fowers' (2005) critique of positive psychology's emphasis on instrumentalism, the idea that external goods in the environment can be sources of personal fulfillment, and regarding virtues in a purely functional way. Ciarrocchi (2012) emphasizes developing virtues as an end in itself and not as a means to another end.

I support Ciarrocchi's view and have therefore become quite critical of the literature that seeks to justify the relevance of developing virtues by referring to all the outcomes that might come out of it for the bottom line, and that attempt to show how virtuous leadership effects effectiveness, and justifies prioritizing time and resources on its development by showing how it will earn this money back again.

Also Warren (2010:314) criticizes positive psychology in the work place for promoting and justifying its importance and contribution as something that leads to enhanced effectiveness. She writes:

In short, positivity is the latest management tool for getting the "best" out of people... in a highly efficient and cost-effective way. Although the positivity movement seemingly benefits employees (who doesn't want to live in happy optimism?), this last point about efficiency and effectiveness suggests a more mercenary reality – that organizations' motivation in adopting positive psychology principles with their staff is first and foremost because they expect it will make them more profitable. This is certainly the way consultants...are marketing their wares.

It is the intention behind developing a virtuous aspect of leadership that determines whether or not it is an instrumentalistic mistake. Just as the intention behind the virtuous behavior determines whether or not that behavior is truly virtuous, so is it with the development of virtues in leadership. Is the intention of organizations when adapting, implementing, and developing the virtues in their organization, to develop the virtues, or is this a mean for something else?

The Virtues Project is quite clear about their intentions; to inspire the practice of virtues in everyday life ([www.virtuesproject.com](http://www.virtuesproject.com)). Outcomes of developing a virtuous aspect of leadership that were mentioned by the Master facilitators of The Virtues Project during their interviews were among others a change of culture and environment within the organization and the organizations they work with becoming successful. There is however a difference between the intention behind using The Virtues Project and the anticipated and/or witnessed

outcomes. For all the interviewees the reasons they shared for using The Virtues Project for leadership development had to do with a lack of virtues in organizations and wanting to change the culture of organizations to focus more on the virtues.

Some of the organizations that ask The Virtues Project to come and teach them the five strategies, may have other intentions and motivations, like to enhance efficiency and profitability. And some of those that use the strategies of The Virtues Project toward organizations may be tempted to sell it as a means for enhancing productivity and improve effectiveness, because of the focus and value that is given to these values in western-liberal societies. Kavelin shared that the difference between the approach of The Virtues Project and other leadership development programs is that other programs tend to focus on cultural values rather than on virtues; *“so whatever values happen to be dominant in that culture at that time tend to be the primary focus of the trainings for other organizations.”* He says that the virtues are *“more essential expressions that allow people to navigate whether those cultural values are actually still what they really want to be doing, and allows for cultural transformation to occur in a more essential way.”*

According to C. Manz et. al. (2008a) traditional business values have historically emphasized efficiency and profitability, and have helped organizations achieve competitiveness and financial success. They go on to state that these values alone are inadequate for guiding organizations into the future in a healthy and sustainable way, and that when these values are pursued unchecked and without being balanced by virtues they can contribute to the emergence of broad scale corporate scandals (C. Manz et. al., 2008a). They further write that it is a challenge to balance the emphasis on virtuous purposes while still being held accountable for results. Also K. Manz et. al. (2008) state that the realities of the market are often largely in opposition to the lofty intentions of virtues. They give the example that the bottom line and performance can be in conflict with compassion and integrity (K. Manz et. al., 2008). In this atmosphere it can be difficult to justify spending money on developing virtues in organizations without showing how this can be a means to enhance performance, efficiency and the bottom line. Some practitioners and researchers require more pragmatism and measurable performance impact, and argue that economic returns is the only consideration when decisions are based on quantitative measures, they therefore doubt the value of virtues when applied to organizations (Youssef & Luthans, 2008). Also one of the interviewees expressed the need to combine The Virtues Project with other know approaches

to leadership development, that have shown results all over the world, because *“to take one hour training with nine hundred people costs a lot of money. So it's about time and efficiency and economy.”*

Gunther & Neal (2008:266) call for a shift in this view by demonstrating a strong belief that business is about more than the bottom line and that they can become a force for good in the world; *“business has enormous potential to do both great good and great harm...running a company...is not primarily a route to material well being or even self-fulfillment, but a way to serve the common good.”* It is important not to dichotomize being a successful business and being virtuous. For example a business could have the goal to serve the common good and have the virtues at the heart of their business, the money they then make would then be used enhance their ability to serve the common good.

This again goes back to the view of human nature. If we view humans as potentially virtuous and that life's purpose and challenges are to develop these virtues, then developing them becomes a natural goal that gives a sense of fulfillment, this will affect the view of the purpose of organizations, work and leadership. In my theoretical conceptual framework I present Youssef & Luthans' (2008) view that virtues have inherent value and that there is a sense of fulfillment that results in the terminal value of virtues beyond any other intrinsic or extrinsic rewards. Cameron (2003 in C. Manz et. al., 2008a) states that virtues foster a sense of ennoblement, meaning and well-being, and are self-reinforcing. In the presentation of my findings I quote Popov et.al (1997) who write that we are all born with a spiritual longing for mastery and meaning and that only a connection to our spiritual purpose (which is developing the virtues) will truly fill this need and give us genuine happiness. Both Lucas and Håkonsen share how they believe the virtues touch on what it means to be human. Kavelin also shares how the virtues fill people up 'with the fruits of the spirit'. The view of human nature presented in this thesis is that developing the virtues is the true meaning and purpose of life, therefore fulfilling this purpose is reward enough in itself.

### **5.3 How does The Virtues Project Seek to Develop a Virtuous Aspect of Leadership?**

The final and overarching research question; how does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership, will now be discussed.

Based on the assumption that all human beings have the virtues in potential, The Virtues Project has developed five strategies to inspire the practice of virtues in everyday life. These strategies are both what The Virtues Project seeks to develop and how they seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. For them the virtuous aspect of leadership is therefore using these strategies. All the interviewees referred to these strategies as what The Virtues Project has to offer leadership development. But they use and teach these strategies differently. The strategies were developed in such a way that they are meant to be flexible and can be adjusted to complement other development initiatives and accommodate different needs. The strategies were originally developed for parents to use with their children, but have been utilized in more and more settings, from schools, to organizations and communities, to the care of the dying. So does adjusting these strategies to the field of leadership development, actually develop leadership?

To answer this I will first look at each of the strategies and compare them to references in the literature of authentic leadership (Avolio et. al., 2010) (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), virtuous organizations (Powley & Cameron, 2008), and leadership development (van Velsor et. al., 2010).

The first strategy of The Virtues Project, speaking the language of the virtues, was addressed in the beginning of this chapter, when looking at the ‘talk’ of leaders. This strategy also holds another element than just the ‘talk’ part. It also introduces the concept of virtues and looking for our strength and growth virtues. Avolio et. al. (2010) writes that using a positive and strength-based approach is a faster and more effective way to develop authentic leadership. Michie and Gooty (2005, in Avolio & Gardner, 2005:318) state that, *“self-transcendent values and positive other-direction emotions play a fundamental role in the emergence and development of authentic leadership.”* They give the following example of this; *“positive other-directed emotions, such as gratitude and appreciation, will motivate authentic leaders to behave in ways that reflect self-transcendent values, such as honesty, loyalty and equality”* (ibid). The way they define self-transcendent values and positive other-direction emotions is compatible with the way virtues is defined in this thesis. As mentioned in the theoretical and conceptual framework Avolio et. al. (2010) share several ways of how to develop the virtues, all of which can be found in approaches of The Virtues Project; becoming more self-aware of one’s current level of these virtues, and focusing attention on how one demonstrates positive leadership behaviors every day. Therefore the authentic leadership approach acknowledges

the importance of the virtues as playing a fundamental role in developing authentic leadership.

Avolio et. al. (2010) emphasize the importance of self-awareness and positive self-knowledge for authentic leaders and collaborators, and an authentic relationship between them. They define self-awareness as someone's "*ability to understand his or her strengths and weaknesses, and cognizant of the impact they have on others*" (Avolio et. al., 2010:47). This self-awareness is something the first and second strategy of The Virtues Project seeks to develop, by giving people the opportunity to reflect on their strength and growth virtues.

The second strategy of The Virtues Project, recognizing teachable moments, seeks to develop a humble attitude of learning life's lessons. This corresponds to what Avolio et. al. (2010) call developmental readiness, as presented in the theoretical and conceptual framework chapter. People with high developmental readiness will embrace the 'trigger' events and seek out positive learning opportunities. As Green states in his interview, the concept of teachable moments isn't new, what is unique about the approach of The Virtues Project is that it goes to the virtues, and reflecting over what virtue was missing or what virtue was present, in our challenges and victories, and seeing in the challenges the virtue that is needed to meet the challenge. Kavelin refers to how this new perception of life's events can change how people meet them in a more positive and discerning manner, and embrace challenges.

While reviewing the literature I didn't find anything that corresponded with the third strategy of The Virtues Project, setting clear boundaries. For The Virtues Project this strategy is about how leaders use their authority, and that it should be used to protect the health, time, energy, and dignity of all members of the organization, leaders and collaborators alike.

The fourth strategy of The Virtues Project, honoring the spirit, goes deeper in The Virtues Project than in the literature that was reviewed. Powley and Cameron (2008) emphasize the importance of ceremonies and rituals for healing an organization that is going through crisis. They state that, "*ceremonies and rituals allow individuals to share stories of purpose and rebuild self-concept, re-connect with others and re-identify with the organization*" (Powley & Cameron, 2008:37). For The Virtues Project the notion of honoring the spirit includes, but goes beyond, establishing rituals. This is a strategy that is interwoven into the other strategies of acknowledging the nobility and worth of each person, that they are unique and should be treated with dignity at all times and under all circumstances.



The fifth strategy of The Virtues Project, offering spiritual companionship, corresponds with what Avolio et. al. (2010) call adaptive self-reflection, as presented in the theoretical and conceptual framework chapter. Adaptive self-reflection is a conscious, deliberate and constructive process of thinking about and interpreting experience in order to learn from it, based on an intrinsic curiosity and non-judgmental desire to learn (Avolio et. al., 2010). Offering spiritual companionship is assisting someone else in their adaptive self-reflection.

Avolio et.al. (2010:43) view the promotion of adaptive self-reflection, self-awareness, and subsequent development of core positive psychological resources, or virtues, as being an integral part of what they refer to as authentic leadership development. This underpins that the strategies of The Virtues Project do develop leadership.

I found that when teaching these strategies The Virtues Project uses the three strategies for enhancing leader development suggested by van Velsor et. al. (2010), as presented in the theoretical and conceptual framework chapter. The way The Virtues Project provides assessment is not by using questionnaires with fixed questions and conclusions, as they assume that each individual is unique. They instead help participants identify their strength and growth virtues and provide opportunities for the participants to acknowledge virtues they see in each other; this enhances their ability to identify virtues in themselves and others. The Virtues Project provides challenge by suggesting a new way to perceive human nature - that everyone has the virtues in potential and that the challenges of life are there to help develop these, and that the development of virtues is what gives true meaning and happiness in life. The Virtues Project provides support through spiritual companionship the participants, and by creating a safe environment characterized by honoring each other's spirit and by setting clear boundaries that protect the dignity of each participant. The Virtues Project enhances the participant's ability to learn from experience by enhancing their understanding of teachable moments in life and giving concrete questions that can help the participants identify what virtue is needed in those moments. It also aligns the development of the participants with the leadership context in the way they plan the development and co-create it with the participants, and by providing a space for the participants to share their stories and relate the virtues to their daily lives, including the leadership context.

As I shared in my theoretical and conceptual framework leadership development is more than leader development, because it also involves the development of the relationship between leaders and collaborators, and the development of the culture and systems surrounding the

leadership relationship (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), (van Velsor et. al., 2010). So do the strategies of The Virtues Project affect more than the individual, do they affect the leadership relationship, and the culture, structures and systems surrounding the leadership relationship?

Avolio et. al. (2010) argue that leadership interventions that seek to develop leadership will also develop the followers, and also the climate in which the leaders and collaborators interact. They describe that leadership development of leaders and collaborators is a reciprocal process, where they develop each other, and forms the basis for developing the leadership climate. This supports the assumptions of The Virtues Project, that by giving the individuals that participate in the training strategies that effect how they interact with others, these new ways of interaction between individuals will affect the relationship between them, and also affect the other individuals in the relationship. It is then assumed that when a certain amount of individuals within an organization use these strategies in their interactions with each other, that this will affect the whole culture and atmosphere of the organization.

When developing the systems of the organization both Verona Lucas, Hans-Olav Håkonsen and Linda Kavelin-Popov emphasized the importance of the top leaders being included in the training. They state that if the tools of The Virtues Project is not supported and implemented by the top leaders of the organization and integrated into its systems, the development will not make a lasting impact on the way the organization functions. If the top leaders support and are trained in The Strategies of The Virtues Project, it is assumed, and has also been the result in several cases that environmental cues are adjusted to support the development of a virtuous aspect of leadership throughout the organization. They integrate the virtues in their code of ethics and the plan of the company, by recruiting people that support this view, by integrating the Five Strategies of The Virtues Project in their development system, and by using them in their reward system (Pearce et.al., 2008). This assumption is based on what the role and responsibility of the leader is. This thesis has not touched upon the role and responsibility leaders have. The assumptions of The Virtues Project are based on view the leaders as responsible for setting boundaries, making and adjusting the plans, systems and structures of the organization.

The Virtues Project then expects that the outcomes of the development program are a change on all of Grove et. al.'s (2005) levels; episodic changes, developmental changes, and transformative changes. Viewing leadership as entailing a relationship between individuals, as proposed in this thesis, development of leadership must include a change of more than the

individual. Therefore for something to be classified as true leadership development there must be a change on the level of transformation – it effects the organization, its culture and systems.

According to Avolio and Gardner (2005) leadership development involves an ongoing process whereby leaders and collaborators develop individually and develop the relationship between them. They state that this process may in part be shaped and impacted by planned interventions such as training (ibid).

The Virtues Project is meant as a training program that will enhance this process. There is however a difference between how long the interviewees have worked with organizations. Green has had anything from an hour keynotes to weekend trainings, and 7 weeks of training starting with a full day, then meeting an evening a week for six weeks, and ending with a full day. Håkonsen works with organizations for one to three years, depending on their size. Lucas has a three-day training, gives them a few weeks to try it out, then has five-days of training giving them the ability to facilitate the three day training. Kavelin did not say much about how long he worked with organizations, what he said was that he carries the communities he has worked with, onwards with him, being open to developing solutions with them. He says *“it moves from just training, to developing practical solutions over a longer period of time”*. Lucas says that people can pick up quite a bit in a short presentation, that just explains the five strategies, lets people do a virtues pick and acknowledge the virtues in each other. Also Kavelin says that *“the first strategy of the five strategies is one of the most powerful ones, very simple, only takes a couple of hours and the students usually walk away with a very different understanding of their role as students or leaders from that process”*.

The approach The Virtues Project has to developing a virtuous aspect of leadership is mainly through offering the perspective of the virtues and the five strategies. These strategies are based on the view of humans that each individual is unique, but all human beings share the potential to develop the virtues. These strategies are then both what The Virtues Project seeks to develop and how they seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. These strategies are meant to complement and enhance the structures, systems, and methods that already exist, by adding a new and deeper, more meaningful dimension and understanding. Therefore how those that use the approach of The Virtues Project to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership will be different, depending on the needs of those they work with and their own preferences and strengths. I will end with the words of one of the interviewees:

*“One of the things that has always impresses me about The Virtues Project is that it has never seen itself as the ‘be all - end all’. It has never seen itself as replacing anything else. I think all those other programs are great, I happen to think that The Virtues Project is the most foundational, so I would never recommend it as a replacement... But! We need to get this material in, because this will complement and strengthen anything else we do!”*

## 6 CONCLUSION

This thesis has three main building blocks: The Virtues Project, a review of literature on virtues and leadership development, and a mapping technique (Pathway mapping). This way of triangulating my design has been necessary as this field is rather unexplored by researchers, and to create an analytic distance to the material.

As the view of human nature presented in this thesis is also my own, I have gained a more conscious relationship with my own assumptions of human nature through working on this thesis. Through reviewing the literature in the field of leadership and virtues I have learnt about new aspects of this view and gained deeper knowledge into some of its implications. For example the literature has helped me define virtues and some of their qualities. I became more conscious of the importance of intrinsic motivation behind the virtues, especially when reading about the instrumentalistic mistake. Through the interviews I have learnt how this view is being practiced by organizations and contributing to their development, especially the humble attitude of the leader and the facilitator touched me and has made a lasting impact. Through my review of the leadership and leadership development literature I learnt that leadership is more than just the leader, and the importance of the collaborators, the relationship between the leader and the collaborators, and the culture encompassing the leadership. And the need to also look at developing this when developing leadership. The importance of experience and reflection for development has become more clear to me. It is so easy to just attempt to transfer knowledge to others (and oneself) and hope that they (or I) will develop from it.

The Pathway map was useful in systematizing my data and mapping what The Virtues Project's approach offers leadership development. I especially appreciated its focus on contextual analysis and assumptions, as it is so easy to get caught up in finding the goals, methods and outcomes of a development activity. On hindsight I see that this approach can be criticized for being instrumentalistic in looking for the connections between assumptions and strategies/activities/outcomes. Then again the approach of the pathway map is meant to be a first step in an evaluation and form a basis for an evaluation of the effects of the development program, which in itself can be criticized for being instrumentalistic.

There were several aspects I did not get to address in my discussions chapter, among them the atmosphere created in the workshops and the organizations that use the strategies. Also the boundary between private and personal at work has not been addressed. The approach of The Virtues Project can become quite private, it can be problematic to expect this of people in a work setting. This issue did not come up in the interviews.

There are two areas of future research, I wish to mention. The first is to get a hold of the thoughts and experiences of those organizations and their members that have been trained in the strategies of The Virtues Project and implemented it in their organization. I have only interviewed those that facilitate this training and implementation. The second area is to develop and test tools for evaluating and proving the effects of The Virtues Project in organizations and leadership development. Several of the interviewees mentioned this need and some are starting to address how to go about this. In light of the instrumentalistic mistake and the virtue's basis in intrinsic motivation, I am unsure if it is wanted or even possible to measure the virtues. One would therefore have to go about measuring other variables to assess the outcomes of the training.

The conclusions of my discussion are as follows:

Based on my own reflections and Karlberg (2004): **The validity of the ideas presented in this thesis, is based on where or not someone agrees with the view of human nature presented in this thesis.** I think I would have arrived at different conclusions if I had another view of human nature, as I would have attacked the area from another angle. Also I noticed that my view has colored what books I pick up to read and what I remember from them, what questions I ask and therefore what answers I get, and also how I interpret these answers.

What is a virtuous aspect of leadership? Based on the information shared by all the interviewees and the literature on the field there is great consensus that the virtues, strengths etc. should be considered in the leadership relation: **The innate and praiseworthy qualities of the human character (virtues) should be taken into consideration when an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (leadership).**

Why seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership? In the literature on leadership and leadership development purpose is not discussed, there reasoning for developing virtues (and strengths) is instrumentalistic. Therefore this next conclusion is based on the literature on

virtues and the information shared by the interviewees: **Developing the virtues is the true meaning and purpose of life, therefore fulfilling this purpose is reward enough in itself.**

How does The Virtues Project seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership? Based on the literature of The Virtues Project and information shared by the interviewees: **The strategies of The Virtues Project; speaking the language of the virtues, recognizing teachable moments, setting clear boundaries, honoring the spirit, and offering companionship, are then both what The Virtues Project seeks to develop and how they seek to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. These strategies are meant to complement and enhance the structures, systems, and methods that already exist, by adding a new and deeper, more meaningful dimension and understanding.**

This thesis is meant as a contribution to the scholarly field of leadership development in connection to virtues, by mapping a concrete initiative that seeks to develop a virtuous aspect of leadership. The most important contributions this thesis offers to the field of virtues and leadership development is the notion that the view of human nature must be a fundamental part of any discourse on the nature, purpose and development of leadership. This thesis offers one perspective of the view of human nature, as a contribution to this discourse. This view is based on the writings of Bahá'u'lláh which is in line with the view of human nature The Virtues Project basis its strategies on. Exploring how this view of human nature effects the view of leadership, the relationship between the leader and their collaborators, and its development, has enabled me to explore a new area and draw conclusions that help us see leadership and it's development in a new and meaningful light. The second contribution this thesis makes to the scholarly field of leadership in connection to virtues, is the contribution The Virtues Project makes on how to practically implement this view and awaken and develop the virtues in the leadership relation, one thought, one deed at a time.

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# Appendices

Appendix I: 100 virtues defined by The Virtues Project

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## Appendix I: 100 virtues defined by The Virtues Project

Acceptance	Embracing life on its own terms. Acceptance allows us to bend without breaking in the face of tests.
Accountability	The willingness to take full responsibility for our choices.
Appreciation	Seeing the good in life. Freely expressing gratitude.
Assertiveness	Telling the truth about what is just, setting clear boundaries.
Awe	Reverence and wonder, deep respect for the source of life.
Beauty	A sense of wonder and reverence for the harmony, colour, and loveliness of the world. Calling on our creativity to add to the beauty in the world.
Caring	Giving tender attention to the people and things that matter to us. Listening with compassion, helping with kindness.
Certitude	An attitude of faith, confidence and certainty. Trusting that all will be well.
Charity	A giving heart, a generous way of viewing others and caring for their needs.
Cheerfulness	Seeing the bright side, looking for the good in whatever happens.
Cleanliness	Keeping our bodies, our thoughts and our spaces clean. An environment of order and beauty brings peace to our souls.
Commitment	Caring deeply about a person, a goal or a belief. Willingness to give our all and keep our promises.
Compassion	Deep empathy for the suffering of others. Compassion flows freely from the heart when we let go of judgments and seek to understand.
Confidence	A sense of assurance that comes from having faith in ourselves and in life. Confidence allows us to trust that we have the strength to cope with whatever happens.
Consideration	Giving careful thought to the needs of others. Holding a decision in a contemplative and thoughtful way.
Contentment	The awareness of sufficiency, a sense that we have enough and we are enough. Appreciating the simple gifts of life.
Cooperation	Working together for a common goal, calling on the different gifts each of us has to offer.
Courage	Transforms fear into determination. Embracing life fully, without holding back, doing what must be done even when it is difficult or risky.
Courtesy	Treating others with kindness, tact and graciousness.
Creativity	The power of imagination. Being open to inspiration, which ignites our originality.
Decisiveness	Firmness of mind in taking a stand, reaching a conclusion, making a decision. It requires both courage and discernment.
Detachment	Experiencing our feelings without allowing them to control us. Stepping back and thoughtfully choosing how we will act rather than just reacting.
Determination	The power of intent that drives our dreams. Persevering until we meet our goals.
Devotion	Commitment to something we care about deeply. Wholehearted service to our life's purpose.



Dignity	Honoring the worth of all people, including ourselves and treating everyone with respect.
Diligence	Doing what needs to be done with care, concentration and single pointed attention, giving our absolute best.
Discernment	Applying the wisdom of our intuition to discover what is essential and true, with contemplative vigilance. Clarity of the soul.
Empathy	The ability to put ourselves in another's place, with compassion and understanding.
Endurance	Practicing perseverance and patience when obstacles arise hones our character and educates our souls. We welcome all that we are here to learn.
Enthusiasm	Being filled with spirit. Excitement about life and openness to the wonders each day holds. Acting wholeheartedly, with zeal and eagerness, holding nothing back.
Excellence	Giving our best to any task we do and any relationship we have.
Fairness	Seeking justice, giving each person their share, making sure that everyone's needs are met.
Faith	A relationship of trust. Belief in the reality of Grace.
Faithfulness	Loyalty to our beliefs, regardless of what happens. Being true to the people we love.
Fidelity	Abiding by an agreement, treating it as a sacred covenant. Complete faithfulness in our relationships.
Flexibility	The ability to adapt and change amid the fluctuating circumstances of life. Going with the flow.
Forbearance	Tolerating hardship with good grace. Not allowing the trials of life to steal our joy.
Forgiveness	Overlooking mistakes, and being willing to move forward with a clean slate. Forgiving others frees us from resentment. Forgiving ourselves is part of positive change.
Fortitude	Strength of character. The will to endure no matter what happens, with courage and patience.
Friendliness	A spiritual essential. Reaching out to others with warmth and caring. The willingness to be an intimate companion.
Generosity	Giving fully, sharing freely. Trust that there is plenty for everyone.
Gentleness	Moving wisely, touching softly, speaking quietly and thinking kindly.
Grace	Openness to the bounties of life, trusting that we are held in God's love through all circumstances. Reflecting gentleness and beauty in the way we act, speak and move.
Gratitude	Freely expressing thankfulness and appreciation to others and for the gifts of life.
Helpfulness	Doing useful things that make a difference to others. Taking time for thoughtfulness.
Honesty	Being truthful, sincere, open, and genuine. The confidence to be ourselves.
Honour	Living with a sense of respect for what we know is right. Living up to the virtues of our character. Keeping our agreements with integrity.
Hope	Looking to the future with trust and faith. Optimism in the face of adversity.
Humanity	Having an attitude of caring and mercy to all people.

Humility	Being open to every lesson life brings, trusting that our mistakes are often our best teachers. Being thankful for our gifts instead of boastful.
Idealism	Caring about what is right and meaningful in life. Daring to have big dreams and then acting as if they are possible.
Independence	Self-reliance. Making our own choices confidently without undue influence from others. Perceiving the truth, with trust in our own discernment.
Initiative	Daring to be original. Using creativity to bring something new into the world.
Integrity	Standing on moral high ground. Keeping faith with our ideals and our agreements.
Joyfulness	An inner wellspring of peace and happiness. Enjoying the richness of life. Finding humor, even in the midst of hard times.
Justice	Being fair in all we do. Making amends when we have hurt or wronged others. Protecting everyone's rights, including our own.
Kindness	Showing compassion. Giving tender attention in ways that brings others happiness.
Love	The connection between one heart and another. Attraction, affection and caring for a person, a place, an idea, and for life itself.
Loyalty	Unwavering faithfulness and commitment to people and ideas we care about, through good times and bad.
Mercy	Blessing others with our compassion and forgiveness. Extending our tenderness beyond what is just or deserved.
Mindfulness	Living reflectively and meaningfully, with conscious awareness of our actions, our words and our thoughts.
Moderation	Being content with enough. Using self-discipline to create balance in our lives and to keep from overdoing. Healthy stewardship of our time and resources.
Modesty	Self-respect and quiet confidence. Accepting praise with humility and gratitude. A sense of respectful privacy about our bodies.
Nobility	Having high moral standards. Doing the right thing. Keeping faith with our true value as spiritual beings.
Obedience	Following what we know is right. Compliance with the law. Abiding by our deepest integrity and conquering our misplaced passions.
Openness	Willingness to consider new ideas. Listening to others with humility and sincerity. Being receptive to the blessings and surprises of life.
Optimism	A positive, cheerful outlook. Nothing can destroy our hope.
Orderliness	Creating an environment of peace and order. Planning step by step instead of going in circles.
Patience	Waiting peacefully. Quiet hope and faith that things will turn out right.
Peacefulness	Inner calm and tranquility. Giving up the love of power for the power of love. Resolving conflict in a just and gentle way.
Perceptiveness	Clarity of insight. Understanding that is intuitive, discerning and accurate.
Perseverance	Staying the course for however long it takes. Steadfastness and persistence in pursuing our goals.
Prayerfulness	A relationship of faith and gratitude with a power and presence greater than ourselves. A conversation with God.

Purity	A process of freeing ourselves day by day from influences and attachments that keep us from being true to ourselves and to what we know is right. Physical and spiritual cleanliness.
Purposefulness	Awareness of the meaningfulness of our lives. Living by a clear vision and focusing our energy on the goal before us.
Reliability	Being dependable. Being a promise keeper. Taking responsibility with trustworthiness.
Resilience	The strength of spirit to recover from adversity. Overcoming obstacles by tapping into a deep well of faith and endurance.
Respect	An attitude of honoring oneself and others through our words and actions. Treating every person with dignity and courtesy.
Responsibility	The willingness to be accountable for our choices and also for our mistakes. Taking on what is ours to do with strength and reliability.
Reverence	An awareness of the sacredness of life. Living with wonder and faith. Having a routine of reflection.
Righteousness	Living by a code of spiritual rectitude. Impeccable integrity to what we know is right. Calling ourselves gently back when we go off track.
Sacrifice	The willingness to give up what is important to us for what we know is more important. Giving our all for our beliefs. Making our life a sacred offering.
Self-Discipline	The self-control to do only what we truly choose to do, without being blown off course by our desires. Establishing healthy and ennobling habits.
Serenity	Tranquility of spirit, with trust and faith that all will be well. Peacefulness in the midst of trials.
Service	Doing helpful things that make a difference to others. Investing excellence in everything we do. The contribution we make is the fruitage of our lives.
Simplicity	Content with the basic gifts of life, we let go of excess, clutter, and complexity. We savour the moment.
Sincerity	Being open and genuine. Our words and actions reflect a truthful heart.
Steadfastness	Being steady, persevering and dependable. Having the strength to remain true to our purpose in spite of obstacles that arise.
Strength	The inner power to withstand whatever comes. Endurance in the midst of tests.
Tact	Telling the truth kindly. Thinking before we speak, aware of how deeply our words affect others. Discerning what to say, when it is timely to say it, and what is better left unsaid.
Thankfulness	An attitude of gratitude for living, learning, loving and being. Generosity in expressing appreciation. Focusing on the blessings in our lives.
Thoughtfulness	Kindness and consideration guided by empathy brightens others lives. Being contemplative and discerning.
Tolerance	Being open to differences. Refraining from judgments. Patience and forgiveness with others and ourselves. Accepting things that we wish were different with humour and grace.
Trust	Having faith. Positive expectation that all will be well. Having confidence that the right thing will come about without trying to control it or make it happen. Being sure, in the depths of our being, that there is some gift or learning in everything that happens.

Trustworthiness	Being worthy of the trust others place in us. When we give our word, we stand by it. Keeping our agreements faithfully.
Truthfulness	Truth is the bedrock of integrity on which we build all our other virtues. An ongoing commitment to live by what is most real and authentic in our own nature. Honesty in all our dealings.
Understanding	Being insightful in our perceptions of ideas and feelings. Listening with compassion and accuracy to others' feelings.
Unity	Inclusiveness. Finding common ground in our diversity. Seeking peace in all circumstances.
Wisdom	Having a discerning mind, based on experience and mindfulness. Making wise decisions based on our deepest intuition.
Wonder	Being open to the beauty and mysteries of life. Our soul's appreciation for what is precious and inspiring.
Zeal	Fervent enthusiasm for what we believe to be important. Living by a strong sense of the value of life and faith.

*From <http://virtuesproject.com/Pdf/VirtuesDefinitions.pdf>*

## **Appendix II: The letter of introduction to the founders**

To: Dan and Linda Popov  
Copy: Derek Patton

Dear Dan and Linda Popov,

My name is Inga-Lisa Hessel, I am student at the University of Oslo in Norway. I am taking a master in Pedagogy, focused on Didactic and Organizational learning. As I mentioned in my e-mail to you on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, I would like to write my master thesis about the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development.

I wish to map the Virtues Projects contribution to the field of leadership development, in order to:

- place it within this field and how it compares to other approaches to leadership development
- form a theoretical foundation that will enable future research on the effects of the Virtues Project on leadership development

As the time my study offers for working on my master thesis is only half a year, I sadly do not have the possibility at this time to also go on to the next step of the process of evaluating the Virtues Project's effects on leadership development.

In order to map the Virtues Project's contribution to leadership development I wish to make a "pathway map" of the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development. This is used to make the underlying theory of leadership development programs clear in order to evaluate them. I am interested in mapping the contextual analysis for the project; the project's strategic focus; its actions and activities; and its intended outcomes. In addition I would like to get a hold of the project's core assumptions that underlie the connections between the contextual analysis, strategic focus, activities and intended outcomes.

There are three steps recommended in the process of making a pathway map:

1. review of written program documents
2. interview key stakeholders of the program
3. series of work group meetings with key staff and other individuals

In connection to the first step I am reviewing the material provided on your website such as the presentations, and the books you have written (The Family Virtues Guide, A Pace of Grace and the Educator's Guide). I have already participated in an introduction course held by Linda Kragh here in Norway and will participate in a facilitator course in January. Would it be possible for you to provide the following?

- (course) material developed for implementing the Virtues Project in connection to organizations and leadership development
- any guidance you provide to those that intend on implementing the Virtues Project in organizations and leadership development
- any other material that you think might help shed light on the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development

As to the second step I hope to interview both of you, either together or separate, depending on what you prefer and recommend. This will most likely be over telephone or Skype. Will this be possible? In addition I would like to interview two others that have been especially involved in developing and implementing the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development. Would it be possible for you to put me in contact with those whom have most experience with this?

Among others, I will be asking questions regarding the following, during the interviews:

- how and why the Virtues Project is used towards organizations and leadership development
- which strategies, activities and methods are used and why
- what are the expected outcomes, why, where and when

The third step will be challenging as we are situated far from each other. I propose to have a meeting over Skype, with those I have interviewed, and any others you might recommend. The purpose of this meeting will be to review a draft of the pathway map and make adjustments and changes as needed. After this meeting I would like to present a second draft to you and the other participants for your feedback before I make the final pathway map.

During the interview and Skype meeting I will take notes. With your consent I wish to record the interviews and Skype meetings and transcribe them word by word, in order to quote you when relevant in my thesis. In addition I would like to use your full names in my thesis and connect your utterances to your names, if you consent to it.

The end product of my research will be a simple pathway map, mapping the key elements/activities, goals and assumptions of the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development, with accompanying explanatory text, presented in my thesis. I will also be placing the Virtues Project in the landscape of other leadership and leadership development approaches.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, thoughts or comments.

I look forward to hearing if this is something you feel will be of value to the Virtues Project and if you would be able to participate in parts or all of the above process.

I hope to hear from you as soon as possible, as I would like to conduct the interviews before Christmas.

Warmest greetings,  
Inga-Lisa Hessel

## Appendix III: The letter of request for interview with consent

### **Request to partake in an interview in connection to a master thesis**

I am a master student in Pedagogy, focused on Didactic and Organizational learning, at the University of Oslo and am working on my master thesis. The theme of my thesis is the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development. I wish to map the Virtues Projects contribution to the field of leadership development, in order to:

- place the Virtues Project within the field of leadership development and how it compares to other approaches to leadership development
- form a theoretical foundation that will enable future research on the effects of the Virtues Project on leadership development

In order to map the Virtues Project's contribution to leadership development I would like to among others interview a few individuals that have been especially involved in developing and implementing the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development. Questions will involve:

- how and why the Virtues Project is used towards organizations and leadership development
- which strategies, activities and methods are used and why
- what are the expected outcomes, why, where and when

I will be recording each interview entirely in order to transcribe them and use quotes when relevant in my thesis. During the interviews I will also be taking notes. The interviews will take place over the telephone or Skype. Each interview will take about one hour.

With your consent I would like to use your full name in my thesis and connect your utterances to your name. If you do not wish this, you will be anonymous.

It is voluntary to partake and you can at any point of time withdraw, also during the interview. If you hereby accept to partake in the study, but later want to withdraw, the information I have collected will be used, but fully anonymous.

The recordings will be deleted when my thesis is finished, latest (1<sup>st</sup> of December, 2013).

If you wish to partake in the interview, please sign the below and send it to me.

If you have any questions you can call me on +47 938 01 956, or send an e-mail to [ingalishassel@gmail.com](mailto:ingalishassel@gmail.com). You can contact my supervisor Leif Christian Lahn at the Department of Educational Research at the University of Oslo on [l.c.lahn@ped.uio.no](mailto:l.c.lahn@ped.uio.no).

The study will be reported to the Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

Kind regards  
Inga-Lisa Hassel  
Lokes vei 3  
1344 Haslum  
Norway

### **Declaration of consent:**

I have received written information and wish to partake in the study.

Signature ..... Telephone number .....

I accept my name to be connected with my utterances

## **Appendix IV: Questionnaire to founders**

### **About you:**

1. What relevant education do you have?
2. What relevant work experiences do you have?

### **The Foundation of the Virtues Project:**

3. What knowledge and experience is the Virtues Project founded on? (theories, research etc)
4. What view of human nature and the purpose of life is the Virtues Project founded on?
5. What view of human development and learning is the Virtues Project founded on?
6. How did you discern what is a virtue and what is not?
7. How did you identify the definition of each virtue and discern between the different virtues?
8. What judgments are behind choosing the 100 virtues? And the 52 used in the booklet on Inspiring Leadership?
9. Does the Virtues Project classify any of the virtues as “cardinal”, the foundation of the other virtues? If yes, which? If no, why not?
10. How did you identify how to develop the virtues and how to teach them to others?
11. How did you identify, develop and define the Five Strategies?

### **Towards leadership development:**

12. How would you define what the Virtues Project is in connection to leadership development?
13. Why was the Virtues Project adjusted towards organizations and leadership development?
14. What adjustments were made to the Virtues Project in order to implement it in organizations and leadership development?
15. Which perspectives does the Virtues Project offer leadership and leadership development?
16. Based on the perspectives the Virtues Project offers, how would you define leadership?



**Methods used:**

17. What are the key activities and elements when implementing the Virtues Project in organizations?
18. How did you select, produce, sequence and review the curriculum, materials and activities?
19. What considerations were made then selecting the methods and activities?
20. What is required of those that facilitate the Virtues Project in an organization?

**Anticipated outcomes:**

21. What are the anticipated outcomes of the project when working with developing leadership?
22. Among the outcomes which would seem most worth capturing in an evaluation?  
*For each outcome please specify:*
  - a. At what level they are expected to occur? (individual, organizational, and societal)
  - b. Which program component or activities are connected to the outcome?
  - c. When is the outcome expected to occur?
  - d. To what extent is the particular outcome expected to occur?

**Evaluation of the Virtues Project:**

23. Do you believe it is possible to measure the acquisition of virtues? Would you want to do this? If yes, how would you go about measuring this? If no, why not?
24. Do you evaluate the effects of the Virtues Project on leadership development?
25. **If yes on question 24:** How do you evaluate the effect of the Virtues Project on leadership development? (*then proceed to question 29*)
  - a. What is the purpose of the evaluation?
  - b. What is done with the feedback from the evaluation?
  - c. What is evaluated?
  - d. What methods do you use?
26. **If no on question 24:** Would you want to evaluate the effect of the Virtues Project on leadership development?
27. **If yes on question 26:** How would you want to evaluate the effect of the Virtues Project on leadership development? (*then proceed to question 29*)
  - a. What would be the purpose of the evaluation?
  - b. What would be done with the feedback from the evaluation?
  - c. What would you evaluate?
  - d. What methods would you use?
28. **If no on question 26:** Why not and how is the quality of the program ensured?
29. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program?

**Compared to other approaches:**

30. What makes this approach to leadership development unique and different compared to other approaches?
31. What other development programs and theories (preferably towards organizations but also in general) does the Virtues Project have similarities with? What is similar and what is different?
32. Do you have any additional information that you think will be of value for my project?

**Thank you for taking time to answer these questions!**

## **Appendix V: Interview guide with Master Facilitators**

### **Background information about you:**

1. What name do you wish to be connected to your utterances?
2. What relevant education do you have?
3. What relevant work experiences do you have?
4. Please describe your view of human nature, including how you believe humans learn and develop.
5. Please describe what you believe leadership is.
6. Please describe how you believe it is possible to develop this leadership.

### **The Virtues Project and Leadership Development:**

7. How would you define what the Virtues Project is in connection to developing leadership?
8. What experience do you have with the Virtues Project and leadership development in organizations?
9. Why do you use the Virtues Project towards organizations and leadership development? What needs do you see, that you seek to fulfill when using the Virtues Project in leadership development?
10. Which perspectives do you believe the Virtues Project offers leadership and leadership development?

### **Methods used:**

11. Please describe the process you use when implementing the Virtues Project in organizations, including planning and evaluating.
12. What do you believe are the key activities and elements when implementing the Virtues Project in organizations?
13. What influences your choice of methods and activities?

### **Anticipated outcomes:**

14. What are the program impacts that you have witnessed or heard about from those who have participated in the program (in organizations)?

### **Evaluation of the Virtues Project:**

15. Do you evaluate the effects of the Virtues Project on leadership development?
16. **If yes on question 14:** How do you evaluate the effect of the Virtues Project on leadership development? (*then proceed to question 17*)
  - a. What is the purpose of the evaluation?
  - b. What is done with the feedback from the evaluation?
  - c. What is evaluated?
  - d. What methods do you use?
17. **If no on question 14:** How would you go about evaluating the effect the Virtues Project has on leadership development?
  - a. What would be the purpose of the evaluation?
  - b. What would be done with the feedback from the evaluation?
  - c. What would you evaluate?
  - d. What methods would you use?
18. What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the Virtues Project in connection to leadership development and implementing it in organizations?

### **Compared to other approaches:**

19. What makes this approach to leadership development unique and different compared to other approaches?
20. What other development programs and theories (preferably towards organizations but also in general) does the Virtues Project have similarities with? What is similar and what is different?
21. Do you have any additional information that you think will be of value for my project?

## **Appendix VI: Permission from Virtues Project International**

Inga-Lisa Hessel  
Lokes vei 3, 1344  
Haslum, Norway

15 March 2013

Dear Ms. Hessel;

This letter is a formal response to your 6 January 2013 email request for permission to use the terms "The Virtues Project" and "The Art of Spiritual Companionship" and to quote from The Virtues Project™ body of work.

This letter provides you with permission to quote from all these sources, for the purpose of completing your thesis, as long as you use "excerpts from Virtues Project books, materials, and websites used with permission from Virtues Project International."

If you quote too much from any one book, you have to get the permission from the publisher who owns the rights. For The Family Virtues Guide and A Pace of Grace, it is Penguin Putnam out of New York. If your quotes are short, it's okay not to pay a fee or ask official permission, which they always give for educational purposes. The other books you may quote from freely. You may use quotes from my other books without official permission, for your thesis work only.

We look forward to receiving a copy of your final thesis.

Eva Marks Maclsaac

Director Copyright and Translation  
Virtues Project International

# Appendix VII: Letter of approval from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS  
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald Hårfagres gate 29  
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Norway  
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Org.nr 985 321 884

Leif Christian Lahn  
Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt  
Universitetet i Oslo  
Postboks 1092 Blindern  
0317 OSLO

Vår dato: 05.03.2013

Vår ref:33484 / 3 / KH

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

## TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 20.02.2013. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

33484	<i>Developing Virtuous Leadership</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	<i>Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
Daglig ansvarlig	<i>Leif Christian Lahn</i>
Student	<i>Inga-Lisa Dahl Hessel</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 01.12.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingene av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen  
  
Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

  
Kjersti Håvardstun

Kontaktperson: Kjersti Håvardstun tlf: 55 58 29 53  
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering  
Kopi: Inga-Lisa Dahl Hessel, Lokes vei 3, 1344 HASLUM

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tlf: +47-22 85 52 11. [nsd@uib.no](mailto:nsd@uib.no)  
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## Personvernombudet for forskning



### Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

---

Prosjektnr: 33484

Personvernombudet finner informasjonsskrivet tilfredsstillende utformet i henhold til personopplysningslovens vilkår.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at studenten etterfølger Universitetet i Oslo sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet, spesielt ved bruk av mobiltelefon.

Opplysningene publiseres i personidentifiserbar form forutsatt at det foreligger samtykke fra den enkelte. Den enkelte vil ha anledning til å godkjenne sitater.

Datamaterialet slettes innen prosjektslutt 01.12.2013.

## **Appendix VIII: Using the virtues to acknowledge, thank, guide and correct**

The language of the virtues is used mainly in four ways; to acknowledge, to guide, to correct, and to thank (Popov, 2000). In each of these ways the build-up of the “virtues statement” has three elements: an opening phrase; a virtue; and how the virtue is being shown or needs to be shown ([www.virtuesproject.com/Pdf/SpeaktheLanguage.pdf](http://www.virtuesproject.com/Pdf/SpeaktheLanguage.pdf) on 28th of March, 2012).

### **Using virtues to acknowledge and thank:**

Acknowledge virtues when you see them practiced in others and our self (Popov, 2000). According to Williams (2009:47) “*The object of acknowledging a Virtue is to build authentic self-esteem, to encourage and reinforce emerging Virtues, especially when they are new or challenging.*” When a virtue is acknowledged it is linked to a specific act that a person does.

Examples of virtues acknowledgement:

"Anna, I see your purposefulness by the way you are focused on your work."

“Thank you for being flexible about changing the time.”

### **Using virtues to guide:**

Guide others to practice a virtue when you know they are about to need it (Popov, 2000). Williams (2009:48) says “*The key to guidance is using the virtues to invite positive behavior focusing on what we do want rather than what we don't want.*” Guiding others by using the virtues gives them the choice to act on their virtues and let’s them know what is expected of them.

Examples of Virtues Guidance:

“Please be honest and tell me what is on your mind.”

“How can we show friendliness to our new colleague?”

### **Using virtues to correct:**

Virtues correction is a way of working with a person when they have made a mistake or forgotten to practice a virtue. When correcting someone we name the virtue involved and replace shaming with naming (Popov, 2000). Williams (2009:48) says, “*although there must be accountability for the behavior, we must give an open invitation to do the right thing.*” According to Williams (2009:48) this awakens the moral purpose of a person’s conscience;



*“The object is to stop misbehavior, give opportunities for restorative justice, and call the [person] to the virtue that is missing.”*

Examples of virtues correction:

“We need to be respectful by listening to what each person says.”

“What would help you to be tactful even when you’re irritated?”

## **Appendix IX: The Virtues Reflection Cards, contextual virtues pick & the Five Card Spread**

The Virtues Cards are “The Virtue Reflection Cards” which is a deck of 100 cards each with a virtue on that is described “based on research in the world's diverse sacred traditions”, a quotation “from many wisdom sources”, “six ways to practice each virtue”, and “an affirmation”

([https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.andromo.dev37785.app81998&feature=se\\_arch\\_result#?t=W10](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.andromo.dev37785.app81998&feature=se_arch_result#?t=W10). on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, 2013).

According to the guidance on *The Virtue Reflection Cards* (Virtues Project International, 2006) there are many ways to use the cards:

For guidance in making a decision, healing a relationship, clarifying our direction, or simply provide a spiritual focus for the day. They are a unifying activity when used in a sharing circle. When we receive a virtue, it is either a confirmation or an invitation, never a condemnation.

The Virtues Cards are commonly used for ‘The Virtues Pick’. Christopher shares how he teaches the virtues pick:

One of the most powerful ways to learn about speaking the language of the virtues, is to speak to something that is meaningful to you, whether it's a joy or you know, a sadness or whatever you are comfortable sharing. I might ask them to share what's something in your life that brings you joy right now. And then ask the person that is listening to identify virtues that they see in that person as they're sharing and then the person who's sharing will pick a virtue randomly, read the virtue out loud, name what was of significance to them in that virtues card reading and then the person who was listening will then honor them for the virtues they see in them, and then they'll swap.

The virtue pick can be done whenever and in several contexts. It can be done alone when in need of guidance, or at the start of a meeting to set the tone.

The Five Card Spread... leads to then asking more specifically, so you've got what is your strength virtue, what is your challenge virtue as an organization, but furthermore, what's your guiding virtue, what's your core virtue, and what's your sustaining virtue...and you can either do it randomly [doing a random virtues pick] and just kind of trust that the right ones will come or most organizations may choose to have a consultation process where they identify for themselves this is what our core virtue is.

## **Appendix X: Identifying teachable moments and balancing virtues**

When using the strategy of teachable moments for our own growth and learning we reflect over questions such as “*What can I learn from this situation?*”, “*What virtue do/did I need?*”, “*What do I need to do differently next time?*”, and “*How can I make it right?*” (Popov, 2000:xxiv).

When recognizing teachable moments for others the strategy uses the virtues to guide and correct, by for example asking “What virtue do you need?” and then to acknowledge when people show improvement. The key to this strategy is that it goes beyond just looking at the behavior and looks at the potential for growth and learning.

One aspect of recognizing teachable moments is acknowledging that the virtues balance each other. For example truthfulness and tact, forgiveness and justice, acceptance and assertiveness, and determination and discernment balance each other (Popov 2000 and Popov 2007).

Williams (2009:53) elaborates:

An interesting aspect of The Virtues Project is the balancing of virtues: How you use this technique is to observe what is under developed or over developed in yourself and in the children. If one is over developed in Assertiveness, then what is under developed is Tact. Over developed Determination needs to be balanced with Joy and Moderation. The beauty of balancing the Virtues is not about being perfect. It is a lifelong process. This is a powerful observation tool for parents and educators.

## **Appendix XI: Guidelines for setting clear boundaries**

The Virtues Project provides 10 guidelines for setting clear boundaries: (Popov, 2000:82)

- be moderate - have only four or five rules
- be specific - focus on the behaviors specific to your situation
- be positive - base rules on virtues and word them positively when you can
- give specific, relevant consequences for bottom line behaviors
- use consequences that are educative - not punitive, restorative - not retributive
- be consistent
- communicate rules clearly
- when students receive a consequence, be sure they understand the virtue involved
- make bottom line rules non-negotiable
- be assertive in making your expectations clear

## **Appendix XII: Spirit Walk**

Spirit walk is done as follows: (Acres et. al., unknown:133)

- Take a slow, contemplative walk outside in absolute silence.
- Allow yourself to be drawn to something. It may be a leaf, the sky, a building. Just go with the first thing that calls to you.
- Spend at least 10 minutes in a contemplative way “being with” the object.
- Come back into the room and journal about how it speaks to you and what gift it has for you
- Share and companion each other in pairs

## **Appendix XIII: The stages of Offering Spiritual Companionship**

There are seven steps to the process of Spiritual Companionship (Popov, 2000:130):

1. Open the door with open-ended questions - "What is happening?"
2. Offer receptive silence
3. Ask cup-emptying questions - "What is the hardest thing?"
4. Focus on sensory cues - "What are those tears for?"
5. Ask virtues reflection questions – "What virtue do you need?"
6. Ask closure and integration questions - "What has been helpful about talking?"
7. Always end with a virtues acknowledgement. This restores dignity after someone has opened up to you.