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Author(s): D.D. Warrick

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Abstract:

There is an urgent need in organizations of all types and sizes for transformational leaders who have the courage and skills to reinvent and build organizations capable of succeeding in today’s times of dynamic change and scarce resources. And yet, while the idea of transformational leadership has a rich and well researched history, few leaders are familiar with the term, few organizations are developing transformational leaders, and very few leaders have any idea how to be a transformational leader. One of the challenges with theories on transformational leadership is that while they are strong on the characteristics needed to be a transformational leader, they are not as clear on the actual skills needed to change and transform organizations. By integrating concepts from transformational leadership and from the field of organization development that specializes in organization change and transformation, both fields are strengthened. Transformational leadership is made more clear and practical and organization development benefits from a greater emphasis on the need for transformational leaders in leading change. The article also presents an operational definition of transformational leadership so organizations can purposefully and systematically develop transformational leaders and interested leaders can learn the fundamental thinking and skills needed to be a skilled transformational leader.