
I am my mother's daughter: early developmental influences on leadership

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Abstract: This article presents a unique case history to elucidate the cultural, historic, and societal forces that influence who one becomes as a leader and a human being.

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1 Introduction

"We are all born with the potential to become human. How we choose to live [and to lead] will be the measure of our humanness. Civilization does not assure our civility. Nor does being born into the human species assure our humanity. We must each find our own path to becoming human."

– David Krieger, *What Does It Mean to Be Human?*¹

Last year, I asked the executives who had convened for a global leadership seminar I was conducting in Tokyo to view their lives through the lens of courage.² Most of the executives related stories involving their choice to steer their company in a high-potential-but-very-risky direction, or to blow the whistle on unethical behaviour, or to resign rather than participate in company-sanctioned corruption. Rather than telling a story similar to those of his colleagues – a Swiss engineer described how his anti-war commitment as a young man had led him to refuse to serve in Switzerland's compulsory

military service and, consequently, to his imprisonment as a conscientious objector. He explained that the greatest challenge to his courage, however, was not choosing to act in a way that was consistent with his conscience, but rather, figuring out how to tell his son about his time in prison in a way that would support the young boy's own integrity, courage, and humanity without forcing him to assume that he had to act like or agree with his father. The Swiss engineer waited until his son was 14 years old before telling him his life-defining story.

Perhaps one of the most powerful early influences on future leadership success is embedded in the personal stories and behaviour of those we love the most.³ Perhaps the best that a leadership program can do is to help participants recollect the personal stories that support the kind of leadership they most want to contribute to the world.⁴

The family stories told to me as I grew up in California definitely shaped who I have become as an adult.⁵ Similar to the Swiss executive, my own mother also waited until I was a teenager before beginning to tell me her stories, including the truth about the life she lived as a teen. Having been born in Vienna into a highly regarded Jewish family 14 years before Hitler invaded Austria, my mother and her family lived a story that is as profoundly moving as it is excruciatingly painful.

2 Leadership: creating a bubble of love

At age 19, when my Austrian mother first met my father, an American 11 years her senior, she no longer wanted to bring children into the world. World War II had destroyed her belief that the world was a safe place, a place worthy of children. My father strongly disagreed with my mother, arguing that her well-founded anguish at the state of the world did not have to reduce her to cynicism and despair. Luckily, especially from my perspective as their daughter, my father won the argument. He convinced my mother that the two of them, Liselotte and Robert, could create a bubble of love, and surrounded by that love, their children would be protected from the evils of the world. The result was three children, my older sister Phyllis, my younger brother Peter, and me.

Many years later, grounded in the personal sense of efficacy that was embedded in my parents' decision, I retold their story and passed on its wisdom to a group of senior civil-sector leaders:

As leaders, your job is to create the global equivalent of my parents' bubble of love; your job is to encircle the world with a sustainable bubble of peace, justice, compassion, and prosperity – a bubble in which humanity is safe to flourish both today and for all the generations to come.

After having given birth to my sister, brother and me, my mother, along with every parent who has survived terror anywhere in the world, was faced with asking herself, "How do you tell your children about evil and a world gone mad? How do you tell the truth without stealing the essence of your children's hope, optimism, and faith in humanity?"⁶

My mother eventually found a way to tell me her story in a manner that now defines the very essence of who I am as a human being, a professional, and a leader. Rather than overwhelming me with horror, fear, anguish, and condemnation, she told the story of her childhood in a way that encircled me with courage, compassion, responsibility and love.⁷

3 Vienna: stories of its heights and nadir shape who I am

My mother, Liselotte, was born in Vienna, a city that symbolises the very height of human civilisation, having given the world great art, architecture, music, philosophy, psychology, and so much more. One cannot help but feel awed by the grandeur of the sculptural facades elevating each building beyond the majesty of its neighbour, beyond mere practicality and everyday ordinariness. Vienna also, unfortunately, symbolises the nadir of civilisation, and both the heights and the nadir have shaped who I am.⁸

My mother's first 13 years were filled with all the splendour that has given Vienna its worldwide reputation for high culture. Then 1938 arrived and my mother's world, along with that of her neighbours, descended from cultured heaven into unadulterated hell. After months of increasingly repressive rules and abhorrent violence, two of the Nazis' Elite SS officers came to evict my mother's family from their home.⁹ Seeing 14-year-old Liselotte and her 19-year-old brother finishing their household chores, behaviour that was inconceivable of Jews to the Jew-hating Nazis, the Nazis ordered my mother's parents to pay 'the help' and send them on their way. With clubs raised and guns trained on him, my mother's father paid his children for 'their work' and sent them out onto the street. The Nazis then severely beat her father and took him away to one of Vienna's already overcrowded makeshift prisons. (This being early in the German occupation, only a few of the concentration camps had been built, such as Dachau and Buchenwald, but none, as yet, had been turned into an extermination camp.)

Believing they were more likely to be recognised if they stayed together, Liselotte hurried away in an opposite direction from her brother. The petrified teenager hid in parks and alleys behind Vienna's elegant buildings in a world gone mad with murderous violence aimed at Jewish children as well as Jewish adults. On the third day, hungry and scared, she managed to reach the home of the Janns, family friends, who, like 97% of Austria's population, were Catholic.¹⁰ Unlike the behaviour of the vast majority of Viennese, the Janns chose not to deny the new horrifying and inhumane reality. Even at risk of having their entire family murdered for hiding a Jew, the Jann family immediately took Liselotte in. If it had not been for the Janns' extraordinary courage, my mother would never have escaped, and I, needless to say, would never have been born.¹¹ Good transcends evil; even as evil eclipses good.

The neighbours, however, quickly grew suspicious, and informed the Nazis that they suspected the Janns to be hiding a Jewish girl. Once again the Nazis' SS officers arrived at the door, their distinctive, heavy boots warning the family of their approach. With both her own life and the lives of every member of the Janns' household in jeopardy, Liselotte quickly hid under the sheets and towels in the laundry bin. The SS officers tore the house apart looking for the fugitive Jewish girl. Liselotte, however, succeeded in evading the Nazis' prying eyes and murderous intent. The next night, however, she was once again out on the street, not because the Janns threw her out, but because she refused to continue to endanger the lives of her family's friends.

Even if my mother's story was to end there, which it does not, it would be impossible not to learn from her that life is sacred, that courage is necessary, and that people from all religions can act with integrity. We do not live in a black-and-white world in which "our side" has all the good people and the "other side" is the essence of evil. With just this fragment of my mother's story deeply embedded in my being, it is not in the least bit surprising that I chose to focus my initial academic career on cross-cultural

leadership – on learning how people from every culture, religion, nationality, and race can work together to each other's benefit while living in peace.

But let me return to 1938 and to my mother's story.

What now? How do you save your life when you are a young teenager, alone on the streets of Vienna, and civilisation has decided to hunt you down in an attempt to murder you along with all those like you?

Luckily, Liselotte guessed correctly where her mother was hiding. With relief she arrived at her Aunt Lilly's home and was immediately encircled by her mother's love. Once again she believed that she was safe within the protection of adults whom, from her child's perspective, she was certain "must know what to do". Twenty-four hours later, yet another "visit" from the SS forced her to realise, for the first time in her life, that the adults, including her mother, were uncertain and scared. They didn't know if her father was alive, or where her brother was. They didn't know that, at that very moment, the family of her brother's Catholic girlfriend was risking their lives to hide and protect him. Terrified, she was forced to realise that none of the adults had any idea what to do.

Then, for reasons that are almost completely unimaginable to me from my perspective having grown up in the peaceful, safe, happy world of California, Liselotte decided to take matters in her own hands.¹² Having carefully observed the Nazis' behaviour, she realised that she did not fit their stereotypical image of a Jew, and therefore, with luck, she could pass unmolested as a gentile on the streets of Vienna. Unbeknownst to the adults, the following morning Liselotte took the streetcar downtown to find the father of one of her school friends and ask him for help. Over the prior year, her girlfriend's father had repeatedly told her, "If you or your family ever needs anything, you come to me". An hour later, Liselotte safely arrived at Gestapo headquarters, entered, and asked to see the man in charge, her girlfriend's father. Good to his word, this senior Gestapo officer located Liselotte's father, ordered him released from prison, and arranged exit visas for the immediate family to leave the country within 30 days. Good transcends evil; even as evil eclipses good.

Days later, with her father home, but having been beaten so brutally that his skull was cracked and he no longer recognised Liselotte or any other family member, and with her brother safely back from his hiding place, the family began to agonise over its options. Leave the country immediately and sacrifice the grandparents, who, hard as they tried, could not get exit visas, or stay and risk the entire family being annihilated. How do you choose between the lives of your parents and those of your children? Her father and mother felt strongly that they could not abandon their own parents to such an ominous fate. The grandmothers, however, made the decision for the family: "Leave! If you don't, our family has no hope of surviving. Leave! For your sake, for the children's sake, and for the sake of their children! Leave!"

Years later I have pondered the meaning of having great-grandmothers who loved me, a yet unborn child, so profoundly, that they sacrificed their own lives so that I might be born. Although Great Grandmas Nina and Laura somehow survived almost to the end of the war, both paid the ultimate price – the Nazis murdered both of them, one in Treblinka and the other in Auschwitz. They died so that I, the next generation, might be born. Even though I never had the privilege of meeting either of my great-grandmothers, when I get very quiet, I can hear them speaking to me and can feel their strength:

Nancy, you have to speak your truth, for if not, we died in vain.

There is no way for me to escape becoming the leader they are supporting me to be.

4 Lebanon and Vienna: strangely, the same story

A number of years ago, I was working with a group of women leaders from around the world.¹³ I asked them to describe the roots of their leadership by recounting aspects of their life stories. One powerful story after another filled the room, as women from Asia, Africa, Europe, North and South America, and the Middle East told their stories. After a brief silence honouring the final story, a Lebanese woman asked me to recount my family's story. I responded by telling her about my teenaged mother walking into Gestapo headquarters, and therefore of my own sense of being genetically rooted in courage. Knowing what my mother did at age 14 makes it much easier for me to find the relatively small amounts of courage needed by me to navigate the seemingly endless challenges that are a part of my everyday life and work.

For reasons that I was not conscious of at the time, I also told the Lebanese woman about my mother having been forced to witness the murder of one of her school friends, strictly for having committed the crime of being born Jewish. My mother's story forced me to understand that a fundamental aspect of leadership is having the courage to see reality as it is, and not pretend that inconvenient truths, including the reality of evil, do not exist.¹⁴ In addition to having the courage to see reality, her story taught me that leadership is also about having the courage to see possibility, especially when the present moment is extremely bleak and others seem incapable of imagining a positive future and label you as naïve for having the audacity to express hope.¹⁵ As Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Auschwitz survivor Elie Wiesel repeatedly reminds leaders, hope is not an empirical conclusion based on the evidence at hand, but rather an individual choice to assert our humanity.¹⁶ Leaders bring hope to seemingly hopeless situations, not because rational analysis allows them to conclude that evil can or will be superseded, but rather, because it is human to have hope.

Leadership always requires courage, the courage to inspire people to move from reality back to possibility.¹⁷ My father's courage inspired my mother to believe that it was safe to bring children into the world. Leadership always involves taking the streetcar to Gestapo headquarters and inviting the incarnation of evil – at that time in the form of Vienna's highest ranking Gestapo officer – to defy his role and return to his humanity, if only for a moment. Leaders know unequivocally that evil exists.¹⁸ They also know that people capable of good are disguised in every religion and every walk of life; they know that laudable behaviour is never completely inconceivable.¹⁹

The Lebanese woman, however, was no longer listening to my mother's story or to the life-philosophy it had instilled in me. With eyes cast down, she interrupted my narration and softly said "I lived your mother's story". I fell silent, and then cautiously responded, "I don't understand?" With eyes still downcast, and almost in tears, the Lebanese woman, whom to all the world looked like the image of leadership success, recounted her story. She had been 14 years old, not in Vienna but in Beirut, and had just returned to school from lunch with her girlfriends. Two strange men appeared at her classroom door. Sensing danger, she immediately notified the teacher, who reassured her that everything was fine. Moments later the men opened fire, killing a number of the children, including both of her friends.²⁰

Years later in the Montreal seminar, the Lebanese woman's only question was, "Why am I alive? They were wonderful, beautiful, generous, happy girls. They were my best friends. Why did they die and I'm still alive?" From my personal experience, I could not have responded. However, from the depths of the stories my mother had so carefully

and lovingly told me, I knew exactly what to say: You are alive so that both you and your friends can live. You carry your own as well as their essence into the world. Live! Speak your truth, for if not, your friends will have died in vain. Your friends don't want you to die. They need you to live a life overflowing with their beauty, generosity, and joy. You honour them by living your truth.

My response will never show up in any pre-set leadership curriculum; it is, however, profoundly a part of who I am as a leader. My mother's story, in exactly the way she told it to me, rooted me in courage and humanity. That evening, in the middle of a women leaders' seminar, my Jewish mother's story saved a Muslim woman's life.

5 Not even Hitler can steal God

It is not about conserving the past, but about redeeming past hopes.

– Theodor W. Adorno²¹

The following summer, I invited my mother to spend a week with me at Reb Zalman Schachter's seminar on "From Age-ing to Sage-ing".²² What Reb Zalman calls sage-ing is, of course, what scholars refer to as leadership.²³ It was a wonderful seminar nestled in the Adirondacks Mountains on the edge of a lake. At the close of a first day filled with wonderful stories, interspersed with reflection, intensely personal conversations, and deeply moving niguns (traditional Jewish melodies), the 150 participants, aged 23 to 83, left the room to take a swim in the lake before dinner. My mother, lagging behind, came over and asked me, "Nancy, how old do you suppose Reb Zalman is?" Not wanting to miss the late afternoon sun, I answered a bit abruptly, "I don't know Mom, go ask him". She promptly walked up to the front of the hall, asked Reb Zalman, and returned to me with his answer, "He's the same age I am".

"That's nice mom, let's go swimming."

At the end of the second day, repeating the pattern of the first, my mother came to me and asked, "Nancy dear, when do you suppose Reb Zalman left Vienna?" Even though I was focused on the lake in anticipation of another wonderful pre-dinner swim, I realised that what my mother was really asking was, "Did Reb Zalman get out of Austria before or after Hitler marched in (before or after the Anschluss)?"²⁴ If Reb Zalman lived through the Holocaust, how could he still be so filled with religious faith and spiritual joy? For a second time I told my mother that I had no idea; and that she should go ask Reb Zalman. Moments later she returned with the answer, "He got out within months of when we did". Translation: Not early enough. He too, as a young boy, had been trapped in the hell of the Nazi occupation. He too must have seen friends and family brutalised and murdered. He too unequivocally knew that hell can envelop one's life.

On the final morning of the seminar, Reb Zalman invited the group to form a closing circle and to share any thoughts and wisdom they had gained during the seminar. Much to my surprise, my mother stood up and started to speak. She explained that even though she had been brought up religious, World War II had forced her to completely lose her belief in God. Both because of her own experience in Vienna and from subsequently learning that the Nazis had exterminated 6 million people, including 1500 children, she could no longer believe in the God of her childhood. No God could allow this to happen. Given the reality of the Holocaust, God could not exist.

With the room riveted on her story, she continued by explaining that after she had arrived in the USA and had started a family of her own, she chose to bring up her children to believe in family and education – in science, literature, and the humanities – but not in God. It was not until meeting Reb Zalman, a man who had born witness as a child in Vienna to the same atrocities as she had experienced, and yet had kept his love and faith in God, that she suddenly realised, “Even Hitler can’t steal God”. Awestruck, I watched, as did the other 150 people in the room, as my mother reclaimed a deep and profoundly spiritual love. With tears in his eyes, Reb Zalman walked over to Liselotte and hugged her. We all walked over and hugged her.²⁵

6 We stand on the shoulders of giants

[W]e don’t want our past to become your future.

Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate²⁶

A few years ago, Austria invited my mother, as one of the few remaining Holocaust survivors, to participate in the 1100-year birthday celebration of Mödling, the small town just outside of Vienna where Martha, my mother’s mother, was born. The invitation to meet with the President of Austria was fraught with political and personal tension. Why were the Austrians inviting Holocaust survivors? Were they finally attempting to confront their history? Or was the invitation symbolic camouflage, aimed primarily at manipulating the world into believing that Austria currently cared about its Jews and always had. There was no end of reasons to be suspicious. And yet, it was also a moment to honour Martha, and the love and stories she had so generously given to Liselotte – stories that ultimately supported Liselotte in becoming the articulate compassionate, dare-I-say leader, to yet another generation – my generation.

Liselotte chose her words carefully for the President of Austria, and for all Austrians. For me, there is no better definition of leadership:²⁷

This moment is crucial in history. This moment, 65 years after the Anschluss – 65 years after throngs of Austrians cheered Hitler’s occupation of the country – marks a turning point. Today, 65 years later, the people of Mödling have shown the courage to face history and therefore not to repeat history. No one in Mödling, nor in Austria, nor in the world can undo history. No one can erase the murders of Grandma Laura and Grandma Nina. No one can take Grandpa David out of the sadistic care of the doctors at the Viennese nursing-home-turned-torture-chamber in which he was condemned to suffer his final years. No one can erase the nightmare memories of those murdered or those who escaped.

Each of us, however, can and will create future history. Ours is only to choose if that history will be founded on love, understanding, compassion, and respect, or on a repetition of Austria’s historic atrocities. We know there is precedent for courageous compassion, from Jews and non-Jews alike. For if not, the Catholic Jann family, placing at risk the lives of every member of their household, would not have hidden a 14-year-old Jewish girl, and I would not be alive today.

The gateway to future history is today. The choice point is right now. There is no other time. There is no other place. Choose to have the courage to learn what really happened from the few remaining people gathered here today who bore witness to the crimes – those perpetrated by neighbors and those perpetrated by foreign powers. Hear the stories of courageous compassion. Choose to take responsibility. Choose to express your regret. Choose today, in this moment, to enter into a new conversation. Mödling had the courage to create this moment. The city invited each of us here today to enter into a new conversation. The world needs us. The world is depending on us. For without our courage and compassion, there will be no future. By creating and entering into a new conversation, our children will not have to remember this date with shame.

The reason so many people are passionately committed to developing leaders and bringing good leadership into the world is so we can help ourselves, and the world, enter into a new conversation.²⁸ The world needs us.²⁹ There is no other place. There is no other time.

7 Postscript

What I have shared is my story. It explains where my courage, values, and inspiration come from. Each of us has a personal story embedded in a cultural and family history that has shaped us as individuals and has given us our unique and highly personal combination of values, inspiration, and courage – our humanity – that we draw on in our day-to-day and larger leadership efforts. The more clearly we understand the roots of our identity and humanity, the more able we will be to use our strengths and core values to achieve the vision we have for ourselves and the world around us.



Nancy with her Grandma Martha



Liselotte with her mother, Martha



Liselotte and Robert Adler, Nancy's mother and father

8 Research postscript

There is no question that leadership scholars need to continue to ask the question, “Leadership for what – to what end?” The academic community needs to help society better understand what inspires people and organisations to “do good”, to act courageously, generously, and compassionately, and to see with their own eyes rather than accepting the descriptions of organisational and societal reality that are readily and pervasively offered by others. How do we learn, or relearn, to take responsibility for the quality of global society? These are the leadership questions of the 21st century; they pose a complex and crucially important research agenda for scholars worldwide.³⁰

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Notes

¹As cited in Franck *et al.* (2000, p.273). Note that article title echoes the title of Roberts' book, *We Are Our Mothers' Daughters* (1998).

²The global leadership seminar the executives were participating in was "The Art of Leadership". See Adler (2006) for a description of the seminar and the emphasis placed on reclaiming one's courage. Also see the work of Whyte (1994, 2001) along with the recent work of leadership scholars Kouzes and Posner (2006) on courage as a core aspect of leadership. Gardner (1995) demonstrates the importance of storytelling as a leadership technique as well as a powerful method for understanding the nature of leaders' lives.

- ³Leadership scholar Murphy (2007, p.4), citing the work of Schneider *et al.* (1999) and studies conducted at AT&T in the 1950s and 1960s (Howard and Bray, 1974; Howard, 2001), documents “early life history experiences to be predictive of later leader success”. Shamir *et al.* (2005) have documented and advocated a life-story approach to leadership. Jaworski (1996), CEO of the American Leadership Forum, for example, uses this approach to describe his own life-story as an inner path to leadership.
- ⁴Books and articles with varied approaches to leadership and leadership development abound (see for example, Adler, 2007; Antonakis *et al.*, 2004; Bennis, 1989; Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Conger and Riggio, 2006; Dorfman, 1996; Gardner, 1995; Goleman, 1998; Kotter, 1988; Northouse, 2006; Riggio *et al.*, 2002, among many others). Murphy (2007) suggests that over 2000 books are currently in print on best practices and insights for developing effective leaders. This article, rather than attempting to present a comprehensive review of leadership theories and leadership development approaches, describes one specific approach that is particularly powerful.
- ⁵In his seminal book, *Leading Minds*, Gardner (1995), presents the developmental life experiences of a set of prominent world leaders. It is within that tradition of scholarship that Liselotte's story is offered. From a methodological perspective, Liselotte's story is an extreme case and therefore fits into the growing literature on the use and value of extreme samples and extreme case studies to elucidate organisational and human phenomena (among others, see Yin, 2003).
- ⁶For a discussion of wisdom and maintaining hope in an organisational setting, see Adler's (2007) “Organizational metaphysics: global wisdom and the audacity of hope”.
- ⁷Both the psychology and organisational studies literatures have long recognised sense-making as a crucial aspect of leadership (Weick, 1995; Weick *et al.*, 2005). It was not, however, until I heard Klugger (2001) speak and read her book, *Still Alive*, that I realised how profoundly different my mother's own sense-making was from that of another Jewish child who was born in Vienna, had experienced the Nazis' occupation of Austria, and survived the holocaust.
- ⁸A earlier version of this description of Vienna appears in Adler (2005).
- ⁹The SS, in German, stands for the *Schutzstaffel*, the “protective squadron of the Nazis. The Nazis regarded the SS as an elite unit, the party's ‘Praetorian Guard’, with all SS personnel selected on the principles of racial purity and unconditional loyalty to the Nazi Party. The SS was distinguished from the German military, Nazi party, and German state officials by its own SS rank structure, SS unit insignia, and SS uniforms”. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS>.
- ¹⁰From a theoretical perspective, Liselotte, here and in subsequent situations that are described, demonstrates a high degree of learned optimism, a belief that her behaviours can lead to successful outcomes, even when probability appears strongly against her (Seligman *et al.*, 1996). Learned optimism, according to Seligman (1998), is a core component of leadership.
- ¹¹*Yad Va Shem*, the memorial to the Holocaust in Jerusalem, honours many non-Jews (righteous gentiles) who risked their life to save Jews. One particularly important story is that of Irena Sendler, recently honoured by the Polish Government, who saved 2500 Jewish children by smuggling them out of the Warsaw Ghetto (Lucas, 2007).
- ¹²See literature on self-efficacy and youth leadership (Murphy, 2001, 2007).
- ¹³In my search for leaders who have made a difference in the world, I chose to study women who have served their country as president or prime minister and/or who have served their company as CEO or managing director. For a summary of research on women leaders, see Adler (1996, 1998, 2002, 2003) and for a similar summary of research on developing women leaders, see Adler (2007), Adler *et al.* (2000, 2001) and Adler and Izraeli (1994).
- ¹⁴Conger and Kanungo (1999) discuss the importance of situation-sensing for leaders in moving individuals from the status quo to a better future. Among others, see Goffee and Jones' (2006) in-depth discussion of situation-sensing.

¹⁵Roger Martin, the Dean of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, has presented his theory of management as design, with an emphasis on abductive logic (the logic of what might be) and integrated thinking it takes to create new options (Dunne and Martin, 2006). Similarly, Boland and Collopy (2004) stress that managing in the 21st century is designing. Note that the specific phrase, "the audacity of hope", was first popularised by Barack Obama in his speech to the Democratic Party Convention ("Everyone Loves Obama", 2004) and later became the title of Obama's autobiography (Obama, 2006).

¹⁶Based on Rourke's (2002) article about Eli Wiesel, "His faith in peace endures".

¹⁷Positive organisation studies scholars, basing their research on the earlier work of their positive psychology colleagues (see, among others, Seligman, 2003; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder and Lopez, 2002), are now increasingly focusing on such positive aspects of leadership as courage, compassion, hope, inspiration, and wisdom (see Cameron *et al.*, 2003; Kessler and Bailey, 2007).

¹⁸Management scholar Delbecq (2001) has discussed the need for senior leaders to recognise the existence of evil and how it manifests itself in organisations.

¹⁹The notion of people being capable of being good, even if they have yet to express it, is related to Avolio's notion of latent leadership.

²⁰For an example from Africa, see the description of Hutu and Tutsi school children in Rwanda courageously choosing to protect each other, rather than allowing half their class to be murdered (Montgomery, 2007).

²¹Adorno (1903–1969) was a German social philosopher, sociologist, pianist and musicologist; as quoted from the Jewish Holocaust Museum's exhibit "Europe through our eyes: a holographic approach" in Vienna, Austria (http://www.fhlocaustmuseum.org/exhibits/viennashow/pages/6_jpg.htm).

²²Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, emeritus professor at Temple University and founder of the Spiritual Eldering Institute, designed the "Age-ing to Sage-ing" program based on his book of the same title (Schachter-Shaomi, 1995).

²³Increasingly over the past decade, scholars have discussed the role of spirituality and religion at work, including at presentations at the annual Academy of Management Meetings (see Bolman and Deal, 1995; Conger and Associates, 1994; Delbecq, 1999a, 1999b, Vaill, 1998).

²⁴The Anschluss refers to the Annexation of Austria by Germany during World War II. On March 9th 1938, Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg announced a plebiscite on the independence of Austria. Adolf Hitler took this as an opportunity to take action against the Austrian State. Schuschnigg was pressed to resign. National Socialist Arthur Seyss-Inquart took over the chancellorship and formed a new government. The Austrian National Socialists took power in Austria. On the morning of March 12th 1938, troops of the German Wehrmacht and the SS crossed the German-Austrian border. On March 13th 1938, Hitler announced in Linz the legislation on the "Anschluss (Annexation) of Austria into the German Reich". During the great celebrations in all of Austria, many potential opponents of the regime were arrested, as well as the Jews who were expropriated and deprived of civil rights. National Socialist rule was firmly established in Austria through propaganda, terror and enticements. (History of the Anschluss as described at <http://www.linz.at/Archiv/nationalsoz/ekapitel3.html>).

²⁵Avolio and Luthans (2006) describe trigger moments as being key to leaders' development. There is no question that this was a trigger moment in Liselotte's life. Note that an extensive literature exists questioning if and how belief in God can exist after the Holocaust (see Berkowitz, 1977; Del Cazo, 1997; Powell, 2007, among many others).

²⁶Gordon (2007).

²⁷Based on his WICS theory Sternberg (2003a), Sternberg (2003b, 2004b) posits that a person needs four crucial elements to be a good and effective leader: creative, analytical, practical, and wisdom-related skills and attitudes. Liselotte clearly demonstrates all four elements. For example, in going beyond what others have said, Liselotte's statement to the President of Austria meets Sternberg's (2007) creativity standard: "Creative leaders defy the crowd, seeing things in ways past leaders and experts have been unable or unwilling to see things" (Sternberg *et al.*, 2002; Sternberg and Lubart, 1995). Liselotte's statement to the President demonstrates wisdom-based skills in that she uses her words for the common good, balancing her own interests with those of other people and with larger interests that address the needs of the broader society (Sternberg, 2007).

²⁸Research suggests that asking big, important questions is a precursor to scholarly and worldly leadership success (Sternberg, 2007). As cited by Sternberg (2007), "Zuckerman [1983] found that great scientists are ones who ask important questions and deal with big problems. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1976) found the same in the arts – that the best artists were the ones who dealt with big ideas". No one can disagree that the questions Liselotte has asked in the past, and is currently asking, are "the big questions". Also see Adler (2008) for a discussion on global leadership as the act of giving oneself for things far greater than oneself.

²⁹The concept of the world needing us to create "future history" is supported by the work of such political historians as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., who stated that "But a far more grievous failing", he said, is to ignore history altogether, especially in a nation that has so often demonstrated imperial appetites. "History is the best antidote to delusions of omnipotence and omniscience", he said, forcing us "to a recognition of the fact, so often and so sadly displayed, that the future outwits all our certitudes (Semple, 2007)".

³⁰See Gardner *et al.*'s (2001) *Good Works: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* for an excellent research-based, discussion of professionals who offer their leadership in ways that enhance both the general society and their own careers.