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THE LEADERSHIP STORIES
OF
TWO WOMEN PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

by

Elizabeth Sullivan Scott

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Interdepartmental Area of Administration,
Curriculum and Instruction

Under the Supervision of Professor Miles T. Bryant

Lincoln, Nebraska

December, 2000

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DISSERTATION TITLE

The Leadership Stories of Two Women Public School Administrators

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THE LEADERSHIP STORIES
OF
TWO WOMEN PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
Elizabeth Sullivan Scott, Ph.D.
University of Nebraska, 2000

Adviser: Miles Bryant

This study tells the story of three women educational leaders from their perspective. A high school principal and an associate superintendent served as informants. In the postmodern, feminist tradition, the researcher's story emerged as the third story.

Leadership research, based primarily on male subjects, provided models and theories of leadership conspicuously devoid of the growing female experience in educational administration. To try to understand women in leadership, research has examined their characteristics, career paths, success and failures or juxtaposed females against males. The resulting statistically constructed women has created a non-existent stereotype.

This research shattered the statistically created stereotype by illustrating two women's unique experiences and distinctly different paths to leadership. Neither woman perceived barriers or glass ceilings as major issues in their career advancement. Examining their stories through the lens of gender-based leadership theory proved limiting.

This study surfaced more questions than answers. Are gender based

leadership theories valid? What are the relationships between women administrators and how does the quality of these relationships affect leadership? Does the Queen Bee syndrome exist? How do marriage, children and a spouse impact leadership? Further research about the actual experiences of women educational leaders is needed to examine the impact of gender on current leadership theory and practice.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women comprise 5% of the superintendencies of public schools in the United States although they comprise 75% of the teaching ranks (Dardaine-Ragguet, Russo, & Harris, 1994). More women are becoming administrators in urban school districts, but smaller districts lag behind (Mertz & McNeely, 1994). To try to understand this phenomena, research often dissected these women leaders' characteristics, career paths, successes and failures or juxtaposed these women in a metaphorical joust against their male counterparts (Shakeshaft, 1989). The resulting statistically constructed woman leader has no distinct voice. With no voice, aspiring leaders cannot hear the rich, diverse, individual leadership stories of women leaders in the public schools and thus cannot learn from selected role models as they enter the profession. This homogenized woman leader, created in research, is incapable of voicing the multiple perspectives of female leadership. How do women become the leaders they are? What role does a woman's experiences play in shaping this leadership?

Leadership research, based primarily on male subjects, provided various models and theories of leadership (Taylor, 1994; Shakeshaft, 1994). Shakeshaft (1989) in her introduction to Women in Educational Administration stated: "The traditional literature in school administration largely ignores women. It tells us little about their past or present lives, nor do we hear of their struggles. Only in the past

decade has there begun to be literature about women in school administration, and only in the past couple of years have scholars begun talking about examining current theory and practice for the impact of gender.” (pp. 9 - 10) Shakeshaft (1989, 1994) summarized and synthesized the multitude of research that has been completed on women in educational administration. She developed stages of research to organize and identify the level of sophistication and contribution to the body of knowledge of female leadership. Early stages of research addressed the absence of women in administration, the characteristics of female administrators as compared to male administrators, and the barriers that women experienced in educational administration. In the later stages of research, much less frequent in the educational administration literature, women’s stories, independent of men, became the topic of research. From these stories, researchers were often able to challenge traditional theories of leadership, usually based on men’s experiences, and form new theories that were inclusive of women and men’s experiences. Shakeshaft (1989) stressed the need for more later stage research.

Shakeshaft (1994), in introducing an issue of Urban Education centered on women in educational administration, highlighted that the issues raised in her 1989 book, Women in Educational Administration, still existed. “Gender and sex differences in leadership style are far from understood, and need more examination before we are really able to know if there is a female leadership style. Among other variables we need to explore are female leadership styles in relation to female socialization, to organizational culture, to the organizational role (line, staff, and type of job) of the female manager, to her time in position, to the age of the woman manager and the age of those who report to her, to the sex of the employees managed,

and to the woman manager's place in the organizational hierarchy." (p. 358) Eagly, Karau, and Johnson's (1992) meta-analysis of 50 studies comparing the leadership styles of male and female principals found that female principals led in a more democratic or participative style and less autocratic style or directive style than male principals. Smith and Andrews (1989) found that women exhibited more traits of effective leadership than men. Women that lead successfully demonstrated skillful communication, effective problem solving, team building and curriculum and instruction expertise (Andrews & Basom, 1990; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1987; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Marshall, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1987). The women educational administrators' stories that would illustrate these findings need to be told. The multiple perspectives of different women provide evidence of whether leading with the feminine style of relational leadership, (collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision) (Regan & Brooks, 1995) is a legacy of being born a woman or of being socialized a woman in American culture. Several qualitative studies (Regan & Brooks, 1995; Clark, 1995; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Telerico, Pool, & Burstyn, 1994; Pavan & Reid, 1994; Helgeson, 1990) have identified the transformational leadership components, vision, communication of vision, empowerment, organizational culture and trust, as skills evident in effective women leaders.

This study added to this limited knowledge base by giving voice to two female educational administrators, by analyzing single case and cross-case data to identify themes; and by asserting conclusions from these themes on the role of experiences in the development of a feminine style leadership (Regan & Brooks, 1995; Clark, 1995; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Telerico, Pool, & Burstyn, 1994; Pavan & Reid, 1994; Helgeson, 1990).

Statement of Problem

I wrote this study, The Leadership Stories of Two Women Public School Administrators, primarily for other women educators who aspire to be or who are educational administrators. To fully understand who we are, how we lead, and how our experiences shape our leadership, we need to hear the rich voices of other women sharing their stories. Scholars interested in leadership, feminism, and/or educational administration will find assertions on questions of feminine style leadership.

Definitions

Case study. A case study is the description and analysis of a particular entity such as an event, object, person, group, institution, program, condition, or process (Stake, 1995; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Yin, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Bromley, 1986; Wilson, 1979).

Feminine style leadership. Feminine style leadership is leadership characterized by the attributes of collaboration, caring, courage, intuition, and vision (Regan & Brooks, 1995; Helgeson, 1990) demonstrated by skillful communication, effective problem solving, team building and curriculum and instruction expertise (Andrews & Basom, 1990; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1987; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Marshall, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1987).

Masculinist style leadership. Masculinist style leadership is leadership characterized by the traditionally male attributes of authority, dominance, strength and force (Bruner, 1999; Regan & Brooks, 1995, Helgeson, 1990).

Multiple case study. A multiple case study is a detailed examination of two or more case studies (Stake, 1995; Erlandson et al., 1993; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Yin,

1994; Merriam, 1988).

Delimitations

This study focused on only two women administrators. A larger group of informants would have made it impossible to address the depth necessary in each case study.

This study addressed principals and superintendents acknowledging that these women have held other administrative positions before they were hired for their current job. Thus the viewpoint of assistant principals and central office administration was heard.

This study confined itself to the public school arena.

Limitations

The two women were administrators in the same geographic area, employed by the same school district. This decreased the generalizability of the findings.

When I began this study, I was an outsider to the principalship and superintendency. As an outsider, I had a different perspective on the data I was collecting than I do now as an insider. When I became a principal in the midst of data collection, my relationship with my informants changed, thus altering how I approached data analysis. Revelation of insider knowledge during data analysis threatened the guaranteed informant anonymity inherent in this study. This dilemma prompted me to tell my own story to highlight experiences so different or inaccessible from my informants' stories. "The act of telling a personal story is a way of giving voice to experiences that are shrouded in secrecy." (p.79) Ellis & Bochner (1992)

Significance of the Study

This study was significant in exposing women as competent leaders who do not compromise or sacrifice their "womanness" as leaders. Women can and do lead assertively without becoming the shrew painted by the male-dominated leadership pool. This study was significant in providing women the opportunity to see themselves in the educational administration literature. This study contributed to the scholarly literature about women educational administrators in a way recommended by Bell (1989), providing a "diversity in the perspectives, experiences, and ambitions of women." (p. 317) I told each woman's story as well as wrote the assertions emerging from a cross-case analysis (Stake, 1995) about feminine style leadership (Regan & Brooks, 1995; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Helgeson, 1990 Andrews & Basom, 1990; Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1987; Marshall, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1987). Theorists could use these assertions to conceptualize models of leadership that embrace both men and women. These assertions about how experiences shape leadership added to the body of knowledge combining the areas of leadership, feminism, and educational administration. This combined knowledge will assist educational administration preparatory programs and school district staff development programs to better address the needs of women.

PROCEDURES

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

Vidich and Lyman (1994) traced the historical development of the qualitative method through the early ethnography of the seventeenth century to the postmodern

ethnography of the 1980s and 1990s. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) divided the twentieth century history of qualitative research into five phases, the traditional period, the modernist phase, blurred genres, the crisis of representation, and the fifth moment - the present. Throughout these phases, qualitative research established its roots in cultural anthropology and American sociology (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Lancy, 1989; Kirk & Miller, 1986). As social and human sciences grew in the use of the qualitative paradigm as scholarly inquiry, its use gained momentum in the field of educational research (Creswell, 1995, Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The separate and parallel development of the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms (Creswell, 1995) has produced two distinct processes from which to seek and understand knowledge. The ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions of the qualitative paradigm contrast sharply with the assumptions of the quantitative paradigm.

Ontologically, qualitative research purports that reality is the subjective and multiple views of the informants; quantitative research finds reality to be objective, singular and apart from the researcher. In this study, two women public school administrators provided multiple perspectives on how critical life events shape leadership. Epistemologically, the qualitative researcher interacts with what is being researched; the quantitative researcher must remain independent from what is being researched. Using a case study design, I interacted with my informants and their documents during interviews and observations. To enhance the quality of data, I strove to develop a rapport of trust and mutual disclosure. Axiologically, qualitative research is value-laden and biased. Being a woman public school administrator, I

brought beliefs to the study of the strength and value of women in that role. I also had personal knowledge of the daily experiences of the positions and thus was capable of posing more in-depth questions than someone unfamiliar with the job. Rhetorically, qualitative language reflects a distinct, informal vocabulary that reflects the personal, multiple voices of the informants; the impersonal language of quantitative research is formal and based on specific, set definitions. Vignettes and narrative descriptions written in Van Mannen's impressionist style gave voice to the multiple perspectives of the informants. Methodologically, qualitative research is an inductive process characterized by an emerging design that is context-bound, deriving accuracy and reliability through verification; quantitative research is a deductive process characterized by a static design that is context-free, deriving accuracy through validity and reliability (Creswell, 1994; Firestone, 1987; Guba & Lincoln, 1988; McCracken, 1988). Triangulation, member checking, peer review (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1988) helped verify the emerging design based on inductive process.

Merriam's (1988) six basic assumptions of the qualitative paradigm delineated its uniqueness and purpose. Qualitative researchers are primarily interested in process rather than outcomes or products. Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning - how people interpret their lives and experiences. Open-ended interviews and documents were analyzed for emerging themes. Each female educational administrator was asked to check the themes and assertions to verify they accurately reflected her perspective. The qualitative researcher was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher immersed herself in the naturalistic setting to gather data. I collected all data at the administrator's work site. Qualitative research is descriptive. The researcher

described the data collected in terms of process, meaning and understanding. The qualitative process is inductive. Abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories emerged and evolved throughout the data collection and analysis process. Stake's (1995) narrative report format of vignettes, narrative descriptions, themes and assertions gave voice to the multiple perspectives of the data.

The Type of Design Used

This study employed a multiple case study design. Case study design originated from the research traditions of political science and sociology (Stake, 1995, 1994; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Yin, 1992; Merriam, 1988). A case study is the description and analysis of a particular entity such as an event, object, person, group, institution, program, condition, or process (Stake, 1995; Erlandson, et al., 1993; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Yin, 1994; Merriam, 1988; Bromley, 1986; Wilson, 1979). The leadership stories of two women public school administrator provided, as Yin (1989) explained case study design, a contemporary phenomenon [women's leadership] within its real-life context [public school administration] where relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated. A multiple case study design followed Merriam (1989) and Yin's (1989) process of using multiple sources of evidence [documents, archival records, interviews, observations, physical artifacts] to provide a holistic view of the informants. Merriam and Yin's description of the case study design concisely described the design of this study: the researcher explored a phenomenon [each woman] bounded by time and activity [the critical life events during educational preparatory program, teaching assignments, and administrative positions] and collected detailed information by using a variety of data collection

procedures [interview, observation, documents, archival records, physical artifacts] during a sustained period of time [one month per informant].

The Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because of my current status as a public school administrator, I brought my own experiences and stories of leadership to this study. As I worked with and studied a beginning educational administration block class, I wrote Ophelia's Journey to the Principalsip, an edited life history of a female educational administration student. The themes that emerged during that study, loss of voice and regression to adolescence, focused many of my personal reflections about my two-year career as an administrator. The need of the female educational administration students to see themselves reflected in the educational administration literature also became apparent. Thus identifying women educational administrators who would be willing to have their leadership stories told as well as analyzed became my passion.

Through my professional contacts, I identified a superintendent, an associate superintendent, a high school principal, and an elementary principal to be my informants. The superintendent and elementary principal dropped out of the study due to a change in jobs. The remaining women, the associate superintendent and high school principal, were employees of a large urban school district. The women were European-Americans in their late forties.

The school district that employed the women served as one type of gatekeeper. The district gave the women permission to be studied in the context of

their jobs. The informants served as their own gatekeepers (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Each informant signed a participant consent form (see appendix A) as approved by the University of Nebraska's Institutional Review Board. I presented to each participant a copy of a time line (see appendix B) of her part of the study. Each informant suggested and approved my observation protocol to be unobtrusive during my half-day observations.

Spradley (1980) in discussing the ethical principles established by the Counsel of the American Anthropological Association, stated that the cardinal rule of qualitative research is to protect the rights, interests, and sensitivities of the informants first. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) reinforced this tenet with their declaration that anthropologists must do everything in their power to protect the physical, social, and psychological welfare and to honor the dignity and privacy of those studied. Therefore the primary ethical issue of this study was to protect the rights of the informants. Informants were given the opportunity to view and check written documents and were guaranteed the right to have objectionable statements removed. The informants made the final decision to remain anonymous. All data collected were available only to the informant and me. To permit analysis of data, copies were made of any documents and transcriptions. These copies were identified only by the last four digits of the informant's mother's phone number. Information obtained in the study may be published but the informant's identity will be kept strictly confidential.

Data Collection Procedures

I purposefully selected an associate superintendent and a high school principal to share their leadership stories. The associate superintendent of an urban school district was a European American woman with 19 years of administrative experience (9 years current assistant superintendent position; 5 years personnel administrative assistant; 5 years as assistant director of a Teacher Corps project). The secondary principal of an urban high school was a European American woman with 11 years of administrative experience (3 years current principal position; 5 years as a high school assistant principal; 1 year as a middle level assistant principal; 1 year as an elementary coordinator; 1 year as a staff development coordinator).

I initially spent two months collecting and analyzing data from each informant.

Through out the three years following initial data collection, informal observations and interviews occurred. In preparation for publication of this manuscript, two additional formal interviews occurred. To assure multiple sources of data (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994), I requested documents such as resumes, copies of job applications, personal journals, appraisals, and publications. I researched local news media sources as well as district public relations information that contained information about the informants. The research occurred at their schools or district offices. Six taped interviews of sixty minutes occurred in their offices. Half-day observations occurred at each woman's workplace in accordance with her schedule. To organize data and facilitate analysis, protocols for data collection (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 1994) were used.

The time line of four interviews in one month's time as outlined in Appendix B was an ambitious format. Due to my job constraints and the informants' busy

schedules, the initial data gathering took place over two months.

During interviews and observations of the high school principal and associate superintendent, I went armed with a tape recorder and a notepad. I only used the tape recorder during sit down interviews in the principal's and associate superintendent's office. The interview questions outlined in Appendix C, provided the core questions from which additional questions and probes occurred dependent on the informant's answers. The theme of each interview's questions was extremely helpful in providing a starting point for each interview. Documents provided by the high school principal although indicative of competent job performance, did not contribute to the deep understanding of the leadership story of this informant. Documents provided by the associate superintendent highlighted her focus on children. During observations in the high school, I carried a notepad and took notes when appropriate. This note taking did not affect the flow of the student council forum nor the activity in the cafeteria. The high school principal introduced me at the student council forum and asked student permission for me to take notes. In the cafeteria, the teenagers seemed oblivious to my existence. Each of the interviews or observations in the building ended before we intended with a school crisis that needed the principal's immediate attention. During observations of the associate superintendent, I was always able to carry a notepad and take notes because that was similar behavior of the participants at the variety of meetings I observed. There was never an emergency that prematurely ended an observation or interview with the associate superintendent. At the football game and sports banquet I attended to observe the high school principal, I took no written notes. This would have changed the actions of the people around me. I jotted notes as soon as I got in my car to leave. Upon arriving home I wrote up observation

notes. For both informants it was very effective to begin each interview with a review of previous observations or interviews to build meaning for analysis. These discussions helped me clarify data as well as allowed informants to eliminate data. Both informants asked me to delete information upon the discussion during the subsequent interview.

Data Analysis Procedures

As dictated by the qualitative paradigm, data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation and narrative report writing (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 1994). Due to the voluminous amount of data generated by a case study design, Marshall and Rossman's (1995) concept of "reduction" and "interpretation" was vital in processing the data. As data were collected, continual categorizing and coding (Bogden and Biklen, 1992) to accomplish the necessary "de-contextualization and re-contextualization" (Tesch, 1990) to produce a holistic view was accomplished. Tesch's (1990) eight steps to analyze unstructured data were used to analyze transcripts of interviews. Procedures to analyze other data collected follows Yin's (1989) "explanation building" and "time-series" analysis. It was both appropriate and revealing to establish both causal links and patterns over time to tell the leadership stories of two women public school administrators. Field notes, log, and diary were continually reviewed to determine accuracy in coding, categorizing, and identifying patterns and themes. All audiotapes were transcribed. Further assistance in adhering to a systematic, comprehensive, yet flexible data analysis procedure was the development of data collection matrices as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994). A visual representation which displayed the many and varied

relationships between data, informants, and setting were instrumental in developing the narrative report. An initial reading of raw data was followed by rough coding.

Methods for Verification

Stake (1995) emphasized the importance of triangulation and member checking in his writings. To establish internal validity, the accuracy of the information and whether it matches reality (Merriam, 1988), I used the following strategies:

1. Triangulation of data - I interviewed informants six times as well as doing half-day observations. Informants provided archival documents such as resumes, job applications, personal journals, appraisals, and agreed-upon district-level personnel files. Three years after initial data collection, data were reexamined by both the informants and myself. From this various data, I was able to effectively triangulate the data.
2. Member checks - All textual data as well as data analysis products (themes, categories, causal links, time patterns) and narrative writings have been submitted to informants for the judging of accuracy. Part of each interview and observation consisted of dialog between myself and the informant on my perspective from the previous interview or observation. Upon completion of each individual case study, the informant was given a copy to critique. Informant feedback was used to make the document more accurate. Upon completion of the entire study, each informant was asked to review the document for accuracy and clarity.

3. Peer examination - Amy Goodburn, an assistant professor in the Department of English, served as a peer reviewer.

4. Participant involvement - Inherent in the qualitative design, the distance between informant and researcher was minimal (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). Continual checking and rechecking both verbally and in writing contributed to the development of trust between the informant and myself. Written into each protocol form was the request for informant feedback. Assurances of confidentiality were important if the study was to have depth and meaning.

5. Clarification of researcher's bias - As a female public school administrator, I had biases. I believe in the strength and value of women in public school administration. The shared experiences of informant and researcher made the story richer.

6. External validity, in a case study where the objective was to understand the particular case in depth, refers to the reader generalizability. Reader generalizability implied that the one case was so rich and accurate in description that anyone interested in transferability would have a solid framework for comparison (Merriam, 1988). Therefore to achieve external validity, I composed a thick, rich narrative compiled through simultaneous data collection and analysis from multiple sources.

The Qualitative Narrative

In telling these women's stories, narrative methodology became an important tool to describe their lived experiences in their own terms. Polkinghorne (1988) posited that narrative is the primary scheme which renders human existence meaningful. Sharing anecdotes and telling stories engages the teller in representing then explaining experiences perceptually. Sociological and sociolinguistic models of narrative focus on how stories interact and produce multiple perspectives. The processes of understanding, recalling, and summarizing stories comprise the filter of psychological narrative.

No standard format for the writing of qualitative narrative reports existed (Merriam, 1988). The variety of qualitative narratives suggested that certain formats emerge from the chosen qualitative design. Since this case study was for a dissertation, Lincoln & Guba's (1985) suggested five basic elements. In this format, included in the narrative would be a discussion of the problem that prompted the study, a thorough description of the setting/context of inquiry, a thorough description of the transactions or processes observed, a discussion of key elements, and a discussion of lessons learned from the study. Stake (1995) recommended similar elements but had organized them to better engage the reader. He suggested an entry vignette, followed by the purpose and method of the study, then an extensive narrative description, a further development of issues, triangulating documentation for the issues, assertions, and a closing vignette. I used an adapted form of the Stake (1995) format. I selected a powerful vignette to begin the narrative. I told each woman's story as an extensive narrative description and developed any issues, triangulated where necessary, and made assertions for each case. These assertions

were represented in italics as to not interrupt the flow of the story. I finished with a closing vignette. The vignettes and narrative description were written in the Van Maanen's (1988) style of an impressionist tale. Cross case analysis was addressed in Chapter 4.

Both theory and literature were used inductively in this study, in a manner consistent with the qualitative paradigm. Methodological use of literature established the procedures and rationale for use of the qualitative paradigm. Other literature and theory was interspersed throughout the rich, thick description as the assertions called for its inclusion.

CHAPTER 2

Katie, the Woman in the Principal's Office

Katie, a European-American, in her middle to late forties, smiled and laughed often as she told me that it was only now that she was a principal of a large, Midwestern, urban high school, that she could ask for help. Wasn't it "ironic," she mused, that when she needed the help most as a young, inexperienced, developing assistant principal that "asking" would be considered detrimental to her career. Both male and female supervisors told her, "If you're female, you have to prove things to us. You have to prove that a woman can discipline high school students. If you ever want to be a high school principal, you have to prove yourself." Katie felt she was unintentionally "set up." She believed discipline should be a collaborative endeavor. But she did it alone; she did it for three years. She survived. She emerged scarred but triumphant when three years ago she was named principal of Thomas Jefferson High School. Those scars permeated many of her current beliefs and actions.

Katie's struggle between what she believed, "discipline should be a collaborative effort" and the school district standard, being successful at high school discipline as a proving ground for being able to be a high school principal, illustrates the clash of feminist traits of leadership and masculinist traits of leadership as labeled by Regan and Brooks (1995). Feminist traits of collaboration, intuition, vision, courage, and caring emerge from women's life experiences as do masculinist

traits of authority, dominance, strength and force emerge from men's life experiences. Katie's feminist strand of collaboration knew that discipline most effectively changed behavior if all stake holders as well as outside experts conferred and planned together to affect a change in a student's behavior. Katie's drive to be a high school principal drove her to perform the role of disciplinarian from a masculinist strand of authority and strength. Katie believed that the district valued the image of power and authority in a high school principal. Because of her desire to be a high school principal, as the vice principal in charge of discipline, she gave the district what she believed they wanted.

Katie's Journey to the Principalship

Katie, unique in 1996 as the only female high school principal in her urban school district, was not unlike her female high school classmates of the 1960s. Their guidance counselor in a "small town America" high school recommended secretarial, nursing or teaching careers to all the female graduates. Katie selected elementary education to be a teacher like her mother. She feigned illness as she recalled how one university class of children's literature made her "puke." Her flair for theatrics and love of performance made drama a natural major for Katie. After successful student teaching, she was hired to teach junior high in the same urban district for which she still works.

Katie did not feel connected to what she labeled as the stereotypical feminine,

"cutesy" things of elementary education. Her need to be like her mother kept her in education but she knew she had to be with older children.

Trying to discern when she decided to become an administrator, she remembered two "AHA!" experiences. During the seventies sometime, she found herself at a women in education conference sponsored by the State Department of Education. In a leadership session, participants were asked to envision themselves as administrators, to draw their offices, to visualize themselves behind a desk, to imagine their answers during an administrative interview. Katie recalled the women around her being unable or uncomfortable doing these tasks. She distinctly remembered her comfort. "Being a dramatic person, it was pretty easy for me to put myself into those positions. Like I could visualize myself behind a desk, talking to people, giving answers...For me that was just performing, playing, it was easy for me to put that hat on and pretend I got principal." With other women around her still trying to imagine what their own office as an administrator would be like, Katie had drawn an office complex that had room for secretaries and assistant principals. As an educational administration student, she delighted in the role playing activities at the principal's assessment center. Katie held no bad memories of the assessment center for future administrators. She enjoyed acting like the principal in front of the assessors and fellow administrative students. "It was real easy for me to work with someone else and perform in front of other people." Katie found it easy to pretend she was a principal.

As an extrovert and a performer, Katie continually tapped these natural tendencies to perform to meet her personal goals. Katie's self-confidence and inner strength opened doors that society often believed her gender closed. With opened doors, her ability to perform transformed her being into new roles until the performance became reality.

After ten years of teaching junior high school, Katie began her administrative career as an elementary assistant principal. The male principal that hired Katie was replaced with a female principal. Katie left to be an assistant principal of a junior high school. It wasn't the children's literature that drove her out but the new female principal. "She was mean, mean to staff, mean to me...she disliked me a great deal just because people liked me."

Katie's encounter with sharing leadership with another woman introduced her to what some researchers call the "queen bee" syndrome (Gupton & Slick, 1996). The woman in charge, the queen bee, does all she can to keep other women out to protect her "queenly" status. Upon becoming high school principal, Katie sensed tension with a female assistant principal on her new staff. Remembering her previous experience, she did all she could to not be a queen bee.

Katie then spent her next eight years proving she could be a high school principal. One dimension at a time, she learned the craft of administration. She was first responsible for all the discipline of a junior high. Her next administrative position added the facets of budgeting, scheduling, and curriculum at a large high

school to her repertoire. "I felt like I was running the school. I was running it not because I was trying to hoard the work but because other people did not want the work. That was really fun for me. I was running the school but only in certain areas. I know now as principal that I didn't have the whole picture." Katie clearly knew then that she wanted to be a high school building principal. One more proving ground remained, being the disciplinarian for 1600 high school students.

Katie was the first woman in such an administrative position in this district. She acknowledged this time as the toughest three years of her career. "I learned to stand up for my values. I learned that it was important to let other people know what I thought was good or bad, right or wrong. I learned that not everyone had the same values or beliefs or cared about things as strongly as I did. They might not do anything at all if I thought there was a wrong somewhere and thought it should be changed. A lot of people did not agree with me. I finally came to the point that it was okay that they didn't agree with me. It was okay if nothing was done as long as I voiced my opinion."

Katie winced as she recounted rushing to a classroom to remove an intoxicated student from a classroom. A belligerent 17-year-old male in his alcohol induced agitation struck her. Katie's knee hit the floor as she summoned the strength as the vice principal responsible for discipline to represent the "muscle" of the building. She rose and commanded the student to come with her. He did. She called the police. She suspended the student to district office for possible expulsion. His

return to school after his parents staged a successful appeal of the expulsion magnified Katie's sense of isolation. Katie told student services and the hearing officer that she did not agree with their decision. Her statement did not change that a student who had hit an administrator could return to school. The scars of battle earned from the struggles with adolescents, their parents and teachers about discipline in an urban high school gave resonance to Katie's voice as a woman administrator!

As disciplinarian, Katie depended on masculinist traits. To the intoxicated young man, his teacher and that classroom, her ability to stand after being struck and command the student to come with her was a demonstrative show of power, strength and authority. She did not wilt but stood strong and tearless. As Katie retold this incident, she never once used any verbs of performance or acting. These actions were Katie's, the disciplinarian. Katie's courage was that masculinist courage of the warrior. Regan and Brook's feminist courage is "the capacity to move ahead into the unknown, testing new ideas in the world of practice." (30) Katie's courage was about dominance and "power over." (Brunner, 1999)

One of Katie's first major actions as a high school principal was to collaborate with the other principals to advocate with district office to redesign how discipline was accomplished in the high schools as well as to create school security positions in each high school. Katie, with an insider perspective as a previous vice-principal in charge of discipline, successfully articulated the need for shared responsibility for discipline among all assistant principals as well as the need for

security personnel. After Katie's first year as principal, the vice principal position was eliminated and discipline was divided among the three associate principals. She then hired male associate principals who were both collaborative and strong. Two years later, resource police officers were added to the high schools.

Katie's role in this change demonstrated vision, another feminist trait of leadership. Regan and Brooks (1995) defined vision as "the ability to formulate and express original ideas, enabling others to consider options in new and different ways. Vision is a process through which the leader enables everyone to synthesize what may first appear to be disparate points of view but that, when synthesized, create a totally new and progressive position. Collaboration makes vision possible. Eliciting everyone's thoughts and creating a trusting environment where everyone feels free to offer his or her own points or view makes vision possible." (p. 30) As a new member of the principals' group, she did not have the pecking order power to demand the elimination of the vice-principal and reconfiguration of the assistant principals' duties. Her ability to envision effective discipline for a safe and orderly learning environment as well as collaborate with new colleagues caused this change to happen.

Katie as Relationship Builder

Katie, vivacious and vibrant, quickly articulated that it's her performance-based, hands-on leadership style that makes Jefferson High a place where teachers

want to teach and where students can learn. Relationships were the basis for the operation of the building. "It's almost like a popularity contest. It's not like I'm competing with someone but in order to have a school that's run well; the teachers have to feel like they are liked. All of them have to feel like they are liked. Since they're not all going to be my best friend, I have to modify how I act in order to make them feel like they're liked even though I may not like them."

Katie described her ability to build rapport with teachers as being based on effectively mimicking their communication style. Katie told me, "If a teacher walks in and has a really soft voice and kind of talks like this and is airy...I do the same thing. That's very unlike me but I can play that game well. I can be calm and quiet, almost mimic them...that's my goal to make them feel comfortable, that they can come to me and I can respond to them and relate to them." Katie intuitively greeted students, parents, and teachers using the same level that was used with her. If they used a title with her, she did with them. If they high-fived her, she high-fived them. She found no hypocrisy in her ability to change for each individual or group. Her vision and mission always remained constant, to ensure each student at Jefferson High School received a high quality education from dedicated, happy staff members.

Katie's use of the term "mimic" was disconcerting. Mimic implies insincerity and mockery. Insincerity and mockery are neither masculinist nor feminist traits of leadership. In terms of any effective leadership model, insincerity and mockery sabotage any growth and change. On clarifying, she emphasized that she was in no

way being hypocritical but establishing an open forum for communication. Katie believed this communication style eliminated the barriers of hierarchical leadership. Regan and Brooks (1995) referenced Peggy McIntosh's broken pyramid metaphor with a fault line to explain hierarchical leadership. Above the fault line on the pyramid are the few and powerful mostly white males with whom it is difficult to communicate. Below the fault line is a broad base of women and people of color where communication is easier and horizontal. Katie believed her communication style keeps her below the fault line, easily accessible to all.

Principal Performing as Enforcer

An urgent voice over the walkie-talkie on Katie's desk, announced that there was a fight outside a portable. We rose together to leave the office for the fight outside by the portables. In my own setting I referred to the posture and walk to a fight as a major league charge. I started my major league charge fast walk, determined look, and high adrenaline surge. Katie turned to me and said, "Slow down, it'll be over by the time we get there." Outside the front entrance, we saw a police car. She told me that their resource officer was not crazy about being at the high school and would rather be teaching gang and anti-drug classes at a middle school all day. She wondered aloud why he was not responding rapidly to the radio beckon. The male associate principal had now caught up to us. It was brisk as we both had no coat and crossed our arms in front of us as we walked. Three or four

male students walked by and laughed telling us we're too late; it's over. When we reached the sidewalk by the street, the security guard, an African American adult woman, was walking between two European American girls, both crying. One was red faced and had scratches on her face and neck. The other didn't seem to have visible injuries. We escorted the female with the scratches. The African American woman walked more slowly with the other fighter and stopped in the hallway to get her story while we (the two of us and the male associate principal) went with the other girl into the main office. The male associate principal asked the girl her name. She mumbled a response. The girl's voice became louder and more intelligible, "What do you want me to do?" He commanded, "Get rid of the attitude." The girl, loud and gruff, postured uncooperatively. "What do you want me to do?" she screamed defiantly. Katie stepped within six inches of her, leaned her face nose to nose with this angry teenage girl. Katie stood her ground and said curtly, "sit down." The girl recoiled, sat down, looked at Katie and meekly mumbled, "Okay." For a minute, Katie regressed into the Vice-Principal in charge of discipline. After three years the muscle memory was still there. Katie smirked at me as the male associate principal took over the subdued student. Being a principal had not made Katie soft.

The difference between female leadership and male leadership is sometimes described as "soft" and "hard." (Bruner, Gupton & Slick, Helgeson, Regan & Brooks) Katie easily became authoritative and powerful while disciplining a student in juxtaposition with her male assistant principal who unsuccessfully exerted power.

In this example being hard or soft had nothing to do with gender! Katie successfully modeled for her new assistant principal the body language and clarity of direction needed to deescalate an angry student. To effectively intervene with angry students it is vital to know if violation of the angry person's personal space will escalate or deescalate the situation. I do not know if she later discussed this incident with the associate principal.

On another day, Katie and I watched the cafeteria as a 16-year-old male dressed in faded blue jeans with holes for knees and a black, Marilyn Manson tee shirt, stared down a slight girl dressed in light blue pants and a white shirt. The girl sat alone at a table. She tried not to make eye contact with him. When his eyes would not let go of hers, she abandoned her table, a tray full of food in her hands. I watched her dump her uneaten food in the trash as the young man and his friends now occupied the table. I turned to Katie. She said, "You know, a school is really a small town. You've just seen one of the bullies at work." We spent the rest of that time talking about a high school as a town.

Katie did not address this incident. She viewed it as a lose/lose proposition. Rescuing the young lady would increase the victim's powerlessness. Engaging the bully in a battle in front of 250 other students in the cafeteria would increase his power. Katie believed it would be more effective to deal with these students one on one after lunch.

The Principal Performing as Mayor

Imagine a town where 91% of the population are unmarried and were all born within a 3 year span; where 9% of the population tells the other 91% what to do; where an external stimulus causes 100% of the population to move en masse 14 times a day. Imagine a town rich with activity, burdened with all of modern society's problems. Imagine a town where learning, discovery, and personal growth dominate everyone's life. Imagine what it would be like to be responsible for this town.

When Katie described the high school where she has been principal for the last three years, she often used this town metaphor to help explain what an urban high school of the nineties was really like. She commented on how being the principal was like being the mayor, police chief, judge and jury all rolled into one.

I watched Katie being the mayor. During lunchtime, Katie, in conjunction with student council, held student forums in the media center. In the glass-windowed conference room in the center of the media center was a rectangular table surrounded with 10 chairs. Two female students, one seated at the head, one to her side, greeted Katie. "Dr. Smith, I'm so glad you could come." The students were both dressed in teenage costume, faded blue jeans, short sleeve T-shirt, pastel colors, no decoration but demonstrated very adult, business manners.

Suzy took the lead. "No one is here yet. Do you mind if we wait?" "No, tell me about your classes. How's school going this year?" Katie asked. Both students listed very challenging classes (Anatomy and Physiology, Pre-cal, Physics,

Chemistry, AP lit).

Katie with big eyes and a hand motion with palm up, "How are you able to survive?"

The girls smiled and said that they were keeping up but it's tough. The girls talked about a pep rally that student council is planning. "Yea, it's gonna be for school spirit not just sports. We're going to try to get more kids involved in the fun," the girls added in unison.

Katie interrupted with "OOOOOO, like the powder puff, cross-dressing skit, the kids loved that!" The two girls laughed as they looked at each other in surprise.

A young male (5'7", black short hair, sparkly blue eyes, braces on top and bottom teeth, blue plaid flannel shirt tucked into blue jeans with a belt) entered the conference room, paper in hand, headphones around his neck. He asked, "Is this the student council forum? My class elected me and it took us a long time to list all of our concerns."

Suzy introduced Dr. Smith to him and asked his name and grade. Matt was a tenth grader. When the Katie said hi, he touched the headphones around his neck, looked toward the table and asked if it was okay if he had the headphones on. Katie smiled broadly, winked at the student council girls, and said sternly, "No, take them off."

He fumbled with them. Katie laughed and said, "Matt, I was just teasing." "I'll take them off if you really want me to," Matt responded. Katie redirected his

attention by asking what he had written on his paper. Taking a deep breath, Matt looked directly at Katie and said very articulately, "I want you to know that these are not all my opinions, I am representing the other students in my class." Erin encouraged Matt to continue that he was fulfilling the purpose of a forum.

Katie smiled and patted the table almost like she was petting a big dog and quipped, "I won't hold anything against you."

Matt began with a question about a Math program. Katie stated that she was not familiar with it. Suzy explained the program. Katie promised to ask the Math department chair to look into the effectiveness of the teaching strategy. Matt continued with a litany of concerns - longer lunches; open campus for 10th grade; snack food during lunch; and recycling. Katie listened, taking notes on a white pad. She responded succinctly. A couple of times she could tell that Suzy and Erin knew the answer to the question and let them respond. When Matt asked about hats, weapons, and the "pepper spray" incident, Katie sat up straight, bit her lip and talked quite rapidly. "I feel strongly about the school being a safe place. Hats were being used to intimidate and claim gang affiliation. We can't have that here at Thomas Jefferson High. We knew what we had to do. Kids here are great. I really liked it that so many kids came forward about the pepper spray incident. Kids here know what's wrong and generally won't support bad behaviors. We love it when kids support us in eliminating bad stuff. It makes our job so much easier."

Matt paused after taking about 20 minutes of the conversation. Erin took

advantage of the opening and challenged Dr. Smith with, "What's wrong with this picture? We're an educational institution and the military recruiter is here with a hummer that has a weapon, people killer, on it? Why do we let war makers at school where we're trying to teach non-violence?"

Katie answered, "Yea, I know, I struggle with that, too. They have the right to recruit because for some kids the military is the only way that some kids will get training or education after high school."

Erin reiterated forcefully that might be true but they do not have to bring a weapon to school. Erin was intrigued by the Students for Peace group that was giving students red targets to put on their clothing. She drew the circles in the air of the target and wondered aloud how kids could be stupid enough to sell out to the military. Everyone seemed at this point to be nodding in agreement when Suzy interrupted, reminding us that although she didn't agree with the military that we were wrong to "put down" the kids that made that choice. Katie seemed a little flushed in the cheeks, nodded, and said that she would have to check the hummer out.

As is common in most schools, when the bell rang, the conversation stopped. Katie thanked everyone as they left. As we walked out of the library we saw a girl with a red target on her clothes. Katie touched her elbow, saying "nice target" as if to bring closure to the conversation she had just had.

The student council forum, like a town hall meeting, gave the principal (mayor) the opportunity to meet with her constituents (students) and hear their

concerns; the difference being that the students do not elect the principal. Katie demonstrated a keen understanding of transforming students into contributing members of the learning community we call high school.

Katie connected to the two female student leaders by showing respect for the difficulty of their classes, sharing their teenage humor in the pep rally skit, winking at the girls when she exerted power over the tenth grade male student, empowering them by allowing them to answer questions that Katie could have, and responding directly to their difficult questions about the military. In all my observations of Katie, I never saw her as uncomfortable as she was with Suzy "calling her" on being intolerant of students who choose the military. Her discomfort was one of embarrassment not anger. Katie knew Suzy would only continue to grow as a strong leader with the clarity of values her remark demonstrated.

The residents of this town, Thomas Jefferson High School, are 2000 unmarried sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen year olds. Two hundred adults of various ages and marital status also reside within this town. The irony is that the minority rules the majority. Katie talked often of the dilemma of "running" a school in a participatory fashion. She believed one often needs to be authoritarian with students and participatory with teachers. Schools reflected the societal problems of the community they served. Katie was shocked that the general public did not expect that the violence and drugs of a community would not surface in the small towns we call high schools.

Katie did not view her participation in Student Council Forums as participatory leadership. She viewed it as listening to the people for whom she was responsible. She believed adults and she as principal have final authority over school decisions. Katie believed that adults collaboratively discipline students in an authoritative way. This belief system in terms of students was masculinist; in terms of staff it was feminist. Katie's words and most actions indicated "power over" (Bruner, 1999) students although her actions did not always demonstrate dominance over students. The feminist masculinist dichotomy of leadership did not effectively describe this element of leadership. Sergiovanni's (1994) sources of authority suggested that bureaucratic power fulfills the needs of certain circumstances and thus may be appropriate in the context Katie suggests. The everyday decisions and actions of leaders derive their power from different sources of authority. Understanding which source of authority is most effective for a specific situation to produce the needed results is vital to sustaining effective leadership. Although moral leadership is the pinnacle source of authority, bureaucratic authority is sometimes more effective for certain circumstances which need immediate, nonnegotiable results. A leader's inability to appropriately activate bureaucratic authority will sabotage a leader's career. Too much bureaucratic authority eliminates participatory leadership. Too little bureaucratic authority creates chaos.

Principal Performing as Cheerleader

I arrived at the game about two minutes into the contest. Students and adults were entering the stadium as I entered. A group of school employees were standing at the top of the stadium looking at the crowd. I asked the athletic director where the principal was sitting. He pointed out the section right below where I was standing. Katie was seated in the middle (both vertically and horizontally) of three rows of teachers and employees of the high school. Approximately 30 people dressed in black and red, predominantly female surrounded her.

Katie had on black jeans, white socks, tan and black hiking boots. She had on a school spirit windbreaker and black knit gloves. Seated next to her was a male, associate principal also dressed in the black and red of the school.

I sat alone about 10 feet away from the group. I could hear conversing but not discern words. About 10 minutes into the game, Katie noticed I was sitting near but not among. So she beckoned me to join the group.

The football team was driving down the field. Katie stood up at every good play; yelled encouraging cheers. "Great run; stop'em," she screamed in a high pitch voice. She then produced whooping noises as if she were an ambulance arriving to save the crowd and team. The teachers teased her, "Down in front. Don't get so excited." She'd laugh and yelled more. When the team scored, she stood up to sing the school song. The male associate principal next to her stood up. A middle aged, African American teacher of Spanish stood up. She was two rows in front of Katie.

She turned and asked Katie if she was keeping track of who stood up for the school song and was she putting it in their personnel files. With a smirk and loud laugh, Katie bellowed, "YEAH and I'm sending them to the personnel office also." The surrounding crowd laughed. Five more teachers stood up.

Later the same teacher turned around and inquired, "Do we have to go to school the next day if the team won?" Katie without taking a breath shot back, "We don't have to go to school until the team loses. Oh yeah, I have the power to do that. right." The crowd around her laughed again.

An older female teacher became serious and asked why the "band kids" weren't in school the last two hours of the day. Katie deferred the question to the male associate principal who explained they needed the time to get into their uniforms and get the instruments to the field on time.

As the half ended, Katie cheered the football team off the field and cheered the band onto the field. "Go Band! Whoop Whoop Whoop!"

Meanwhile the male associate principal's two children arrived at the game. The boy seemed to be 5 or 6; the girl 8 or 9. When the associate principal moved two bleachers away from the teacher group with his children, Katie turned and talked to the children. When the band began to play a polka, Katie yells "Fred, Fred, come Polka with me." The 5-year-old peeked around his dad's shoulder. Katie charmed this miniature man with her big, teathy smile and sparkly eyes. Fred shyly refused. Katie put an eye-lock on him. She jumped up; crawled over 5 or 6 adults; stepped

down 2 bleachers and locked her elbow with Fred and began to polka. Katie smiled and sang along with the polka music. He smiled and began to dance. The dance probably lasted a minute while the crowd of teachers cheered them on.

Everyone acknowledged Katie when they came and when they left. Katie called them by name; made a comment related to their school work or families; and always laughed and smiled.

When her husband arrived, he didn't sit next to her. They said hi. The staff knew her husband and spoke to him as an extension of her. An older man arrived about the same time during the second half. Katie focused her attention to the older man instead of her husband. Everyone moved so that he could sit next to her. They talked quietly between her boisterous cheers. I later realized this was the principal she had replaced. It was an interesting contrast to see how differently she acted with him.

Katie's husband's job was also one of leadership and power in the community. When I asked her if there was a supportive man behind her success, she told me that they supported each other in their difficult jobs. She relied heavily on his viewpoint on personnel matters. She found him to be much more severe and authoritative than herself. Therefore, she confided that her final decisions were usually somewhere between her initial reaction and his recommendation. At the other sporting events that I observed Katie, she and her husband came together and sat together. Katie's husband's late arrival and his deference to the relationship

Katie had with her predecessor caused him to not sit with his wife. In public situations associated with Katie's job, his role was to be her supportive husband not to be the public figure that he was. Both Katie and he seemed happy with that role.

The weather was 40 degrees in the sun. As the sun dropped and the wind picked up, people complained about the coldness. Two teachers sitting in front of Katie, offered a coat they were sitting on to Katie. She was dressed in a school colors short, lined nylon jacket. She told them that she was warm enough.

They countered, "But it's your coat."

She yelled back, "Remember I exchanged it for your cheers. The team still needs you to yell." Everyone continued yelling and the team won.

At the football state playoff, Katie was the center of the teacher cheering section. During the game, she had yelled at the referees, polkaed in the aisle with a colleague's five-year-old son, stood on the bleacher shouting the school song, quietly and respectfully visited with the man she had replaced and did not sit next to her husband. At girl's sporting events, she ushered the team into every home competition by running the length of the gym floor carrying the school banner with the team.

Katie loved the center of attention and relied on her performance ability to build rapport with staff, students, and families. She understood the role athletics played in the climate and culture of Thomas Jefferson High.

Helgeson's (1990) description of a web as a leadership framework more closely described Katie's relationships with staff.

In a web construction, the figurehead is the heart rather than the head, and so does not need layers and ranks below to reinforce status. Authority comes from connection to the people around rather than distance from those below; this in itself helps to foster a team approach. In acting as a figurehead, the leader with a web conception need not insist on rank, authority, and importance in order to convincingly represent the organization. (p. 55)

Katie physically placed herself in the center of the football crowd as she does at school. She built relationships with staff based on who they are not on who she was. As an extrovert, Katie naturally found herself in the center of the web. Unlike the masculinist trait leaders of the "good old boy" network, she understood she more effectively leads from the center than she can from the head or top of the ladder.

Katie's Finale

Jefferson High, predominantly upper middle class white, was not immune to gang violence. On a clear spring afternoon, students came running into the office to report a crowd of male teenagers sporting sagging pants, red shirts and bandannas gathering across the street. Rumors suggested that they were there to get even with some Jefferson students. As Katie became aware, the police had been called and campus security was considering going off campus beyond their jurisdiction. Without hesitation Katie grabbed her radio and yelled for the male associate principal. They charged out of the school across the street impervious to school boundaries. Katie stared straight ahead not acknowledging the school's eyes watching her from the 15 classrooms and 5 portables that faced this street. Without

police, without campus security, Katie, calm but fierce, directed the Jefferson students to return to school and the gangster-like teenagers to leave before the police arrived. The students left as Katie's stare transformed the gangster-like teenagers into wayward young men. Katie persisted. The young men left, succumbing to her power. As Katie and the associate principal crossed the street toward school, she looked up and smiled at all the students and staff who had been watching her. When she was clearly in the view of the most people, Katie dramatically lowered her body to one knee, raised her opposite fist in the air, then pumped that elbow toward the ground in the currently popular, triumphant signal of victory. Katie beamed as she stood up. She was the woman in the principal's office.

CHAPTER 3

Barb, the Associate Superintendent

Barb, an Associate Superintendent in an urban public school district of 30,000 students, became wide-eyed, her voice full of wonderment as she told me how she came to her present job. “I was sitting in my office in the human resources department and my superintendent came in. He said, ‘Barb, the Associate Superintendent for Instruction is going to be leaving this district. I have to make a recommendation to the board tomorrow night about who I want to fill that position. I am going to recommend that you do it.’ He didn’t say I want to recommend. He didn’t say would you do this, are you interested? He said I’m going to recommend that you do that. I was just stunned. I barely knew the man. I had been in instruction for I think clearly for five years and arguably for 12 years. I just looked at him. I’m sure I said something like, why would you do that. He just said, ‘I know you can do it. So that is what I’m going to recommend.’ I was just truly stunned. But I slept on it overnight. I talked to my husband and talked to another person, a good friend, whose judgment I value a lot. I went in to see him the next morning and said if you think I can do this job, I’m sure I can do this job. So I would be glad to do this job.”

Barb has been stunned each time a promotion came her way. Unlike Barb’s female colleagues, her male superiors readily recognized her acumen. These men of power successfully sought her out for leadership positions she was not seeking. Barb

evolved from sixth grade teacher into team leader, to Teacher Corps Team Leader, to Human Resources administrator, to Associate Superintendent. She literally only applied and interviewed for one of the positions, Human Resources administrator, but only after the person who was vacating the job urged her to apply.

Barb's response of shock and surprise to each of these promotions seemed to initially fit Schmuck's (1975) model of the "who me?" woman. The "who me" woman was surprised when asked to take on responsibility and leadership. Schmuck attributed this response to a lack of confidence in her own leadership skills. Barb although truly surprised by the requests always believed she had most of the prerequisite skills to effectively do the job. Barb did not lack confidence in herself. She knew she could learn what she did not know to do each job.

Barb the Teacher

Throughout her jobs, Barb has relied heavily on what she learned about students and effective instruction during her three years as a teacher at Robert's Middle School. Attending a small rural school, Barb remembered well the teacher that foreshadowed her future by telling her that her writing style would serve her well when she wrote her dissertation. The importance of those words for her resonated the life changing power of a teacher. Barb began her teaching career as a sixth grade teacher at Robert's Middle School. Although 25 years ago, Barb passionately recalled the students and curriculum she taught. During her second year she taught a

commercially produced interdisciplinary curriculum called People and Technology that integrated science, social studies, and literature. Students studied how people use tools and what difference tools and technology make in people's lives. Studying three basic cultures, 18th century whaling, Ghana and the impact of a hydroelectric dam, and the 1970's culture written about by Gordon Parks in *A Choice of Weapons*, students formed learning communities based on their hands-on projects. Students grasped the juxtaposition of the whales' advantage against a harpoon with the whales' disadvantage against a modern whaling boat. Students demonstrated the impact of the technology on the geography of Ghana after building a river valley to scale, then damming the river. Then students speculated about the impact on the dam's influence on the culture. Barb recalled the most powerful piece of curriculum was the study of Gordon Parks. "The third real important piece of that study was a study of Gordon Parks, who was a black photographer, a photographer for Life magazine. The unit was called choice of weapons. It was taken from Gordon Parks' book by the same title. Gordon Parks was an angry young black man in the 1950s I believe who decided that he would fight the race wars with his camera rather than with picket signs or with civil rights marches and smoke bombs or any other weapons that other people chose to fight those wars. The kids learned the technology of the camera. We made pinhole cameras, some of them actually worked. They were so proud. So was I. We also looked at the work Gordon Parks had done. His photographic essays were just compelling. The students did some photographic essays using his photographs.

Then they did some photographic essays of their own using either pictures they had taken or pictures they had selected. The creation was beautiful; it was absolutely beautiful work. There were just magic moments as they presented their creations. We sometimes used the opaque projector or sometimes we were able to turn the selected pictures into slides and in any case they could display them to the class on a screen. They were just gorgeous, just beautiful. I think the shows were some of the best work I have ever had students produce and certainly was the most rewarding teaching I have ever done. It was good content, good strategy, and it all came together in a way that it pulled kids together, lots of group effort, lots of group sharing, lots of group learning. It just affirmed for me the value of building a community within a classroom.”

Regan and Brooks (1995) identified a feminist strand of leadership composed of five attributes: collaboration, caring, courage, intuition and vision. Barb clearly possessed all five attributes. Regan and Brooks (1995) defined vision as “the ability to formulate and express original ideas, enabling others to consider options in new and different ways.” (p.36) Barb envisioned students and teachers connecting curricular objectives to social change. Students and teachers were able to build community through these connections. Students worked individually and in groups. Teachers helped students understand the power of fighting racial discrimination with photos instead of violence. Student products illustrative of that social action were presented to all the students and all the involved staff. The success of this teaching

unit demonstrated the interconnectedness of collaboration and vision. "Vision is a facet of collaboration and vice versa." (Regan and Brooks, 1995, p.36)

Facilitating an advisory group of the same students from their sixth grade year until their ninth grade year gave Barb insights into student teacher relationships and hands-on learning. Barb recounted two conversations during advisory individual conferences with the same young man. "I remember talking with one 8th grade boy about health class. He was an 8th grader, who was slow developing. He said health was really interesting. He talked about studying human growth and development but he had one question. He asked me when will it happen. I promised him that it would happen. Of course, it did, but he was kind of late. He is the same kid who one time after he had gotten his report card and I was reviewing report cards with all of my advising students, he had gotten a "C" in science. He was a really bright kid so this "C" was unusual. It was a quarter science class called rocks and minerals. I asked Michael to tell me what happened in science. He told that he got a "C." That was pretty unusual for how bright he was. Michael told me, 'I wouldn't mind if I'd ever really gotten to hold a rock.'" I mean, this was powerful insight. This kid had been in a 9 week course on rocks and minerals and had never even picked up a rock. This was just another really strong affirmation that kids need things to be real. That was a lesson that has stuck with me for a long time."

Barb understood the world through the relationships she had built. A three year advisory group allowed her to develop authentic relationships with students.

This level of trust enabled her to comfort a pre-pubescent male in his impatient anticipation of puberty. Barb also gained an understanding of effective instruction through this same student's inability to succeed in a "hands-off" class. When Barb made decisions about instruction for her district, the developmental and cognitive needs of this former student weighed heavily.

Barb smiled when she explained how as director of the Outdoor Education program, Missouri geography became "real" on a weekend camping trip during the night in the rain. "I heard this little voice saying Mrs. Dunlap. So I knocked on their tent. I stuck my head in and these little bright eyes just looked up at me in the dark with a flashlight and they asked if we were in Platte County? I asked why they wanted to know. They replied that there was a tornado watch there. I told them that we were in the northeast corner of Platte County, so thanks for telling me. For the first time in their lives Missouri geography had a lot of meaning to them. The tornado didn't come. We were okay but it rained a lot. We were really muddy."

Barb combined those two vital ingredients of learning, building relationships and making it real, when she took students home to cook. When studying a culture, she found home a much more comfortable place to cook with children than the school's home economics room. She shared her home with her students as they cooked African peanut butter stew. Barb laughed as she spoke of one Christmas when her teacher advisor group met at her home. "One year I had a group of kids with my teacher advisor group home at Christmas time. My husband and I had a custom

when we first married, one of those traditions that lasted for a while but didn't last forever. We named our Christmas tree. The year that Spiro Agnew was vice president and resigned in disgrace we named the Christmas tree Spiro. The teacher advisor group was all gathered around the Christmas tree doing some activity. They knew about our custom of naming the tree. One kid, Bill, asked what did you name it this year. I said we named it Spiro. Bill asked, 'Why because it's crooked?' Bill laughed. Nobody else even got it, but Bill did. He just laughed. So it was just truly a privilege to be an adult in those kids lives and it was, they were wonderful, wonderful kids."

Barb cared for the children she taught. She spent weekends camping with them. She shared her home and details of her personal life with her students. Her commitment to children and their learning drove her actions. Regan and Brooks (1995) defined caring as "as the development of an affinity for the world and the people in it, translating moral commitment to action on behalf of others." (p. 27) Barb lived her moral commitment to children by being a teacher.

During the summer after having taught for two and a half years, Barb's principal called her at home and asked if she could come up to the school and meet with him. At the meeting, he explained that the team leader over sixth and seventh grade and basic studies team was leaving Roberts Middle School to be an assistant principal. Barb was shocked when the principal asked her to be the team leader for the next year. "I was just floored, absolutely astonished I had never thought about

being a team leader. I didn't really have much of a picture of what a team leader might do but my first response to myself was to say, oh, I can't do that. The reasons that I said that were because my picture of what a team leader did was that when you got the whole team of kids together for a speaker or for some kind of an activity or for films, the team leader was the person who got all the kids quiet. I thought I can't do that. I can never get 150 kids to be quiet at one time. Then I thought, well now wait a minute, there are five other teachers on the team. One of them could probably do it or all of us together could do it. So, fortunately, I didn't blurt out and say oh, I can't be a team leader because I can't get the kids to be quiet. But it is absolutely what I thought. Then I thought, very quickly there is another way to do it. It doesn't have to be the team leader that does that. So I said sure, I would be the team leader, again not really knowing what all that would mean, or what it would be, or how I would do it. I knew there would be new people on the team but that was the first formal leadership role that I played." Barb was only an interdisciplinary team leader for one year.

Barb almost became a victim of Schmuck's (1975) "who me?" woman but ignored her immediate reaction of not having the skills to quiet 150 children by identifying that other team members could accomplish that. As a team leader, Barb learned how to bring a group of people with significant differences in beliefs and philosophies to a common ground for the good of students. Regan and Brooks (1995) identified that skill as collaboration, "the ability to work in a group, eliciting and

offering support to each other member, creating a synergistic environment for everyone." (p. 27)

Barb as Teacher Corps Team Leader

The same principal, a year after drafting Barb as team leader, struck again. Now Barb became the team leader for the interns in the new federal Teacher Corps program to be located at Roberts Middle School. Barb did not apply. She did not interview. Her principal appointed her by handing Barb her plane ticket to a four week training session in Richmond, Virginia. Barb recalled, "I had a thousand questions in my mind but really because I just, I trusted him so much that I for the most part set those questions aside and flew off to Richmond for four weeks. So those two early formal leadership experiences, interdisciplinary team leader and Teacher Corps team leader, were very much positions that were just handed to me. I didn't feel that there was much choice about doing them. I wasn't reluctant to do them. I just was really surprised in both cases." Barb led in three different positions in the seven years that the Teacher Corps was funded at Roberts Middle School.

Barb's willingness to accept her first two leadership positions can be attributed to the feminist strands of intuition and courage. Regan and Brooks (1995) defined intuition as the "ability to give equal weight to experience and abstraction, mind and heart. It is a natural mental ability, strongly associated with experience." (p. 35) Barb's experience with her principal and her heart created a trust so strong,

she knew getting on that airplane was the right thing for her to do. Her willingness to risk the unknown for the good of students and learning demonstrated courage as defined by Regan and Brooks (1995).

When the Teacher Corps ended, Barb prepared herself to return to Roberts Middle School as an eighth grade social studies teacher by reading up on American history and “thinking about how to teach history through the lives of famous people and ordinary people” during the summer. Although she had earned her doctorate while facilitating the Teacher Corps program, she knew that she would return to a classroom in Roberts Middle School. Again, during the summer, another phone call changed her career path.

Barb’s doctorate was in Curriculum and Instruction. For her dissertation, she studied concept formation and the interaction of methods of instruction with the cognitive developmental levels of students. With her degree came no administrative endorsements. In her doctoral studies she sought knowledge to understand how children learn.

Barb as Human Resources Administrator

Sarah, the administrative assistant in Human Resources who hired elementary teachers and worked as a liaison to the university teacher education programs, called to tell Barb that she was leaving her position to become a principal. She then asked if Barb was applying for the position. Barb had not considered it. Barb recalled, “So I

sprang into action, found somebody who could type up an application and resume for me. I turned in the application by the deadline just 24 hours after the Thursday afternoon phone call in the kitchen of my house. I was identified as a finalist. I don't know how many finalists there were for this position but I was called in for an interview. On my way in it occurred to me that someone would probably ask me why I wanted to do that job. Of course the honest answer was that I really wanted to be like Sarah. So it seemed like a way to be like Sarah would be to do the kind of work that she had done and figure out how to do that. So I thought that's probably not really a good answer in a job interview. I figured out some other reasons why I would like to work in human resources. Through that process I was selected to do the job. It's probably one of the few jobs other than my first teaching job that I actually applied for a job, interviewed for a job, went through a whole process, was offered the position and accepted the position. And again, due to "planning" on my part, one of the first things I had to do then was go back to school to take enough hours to earn an administrative certification so I did that in the first year." As a human resources administrator, Barb learned that although her work focused on the hiring of adults, all decisions were to give the student the "benefit of the doubt." This framework continues to impact her decisions as an associate superintendent.

Barb unlike many of her female colleagues was sought after by her principal to be a leader. He mentored her in her first two positions. While in Teacher Corps, Barb found a role model in Sarah, a human resources administrator. Sarah recruited

and hired teachers as well as served as liaison between the university and the district for student teachers. Barb and Sarah collaborated often during her Teacher Corps position. Barb readily admits that her motivation to apply for the human resources job was the chance to be like Sarah. Barb believed that the hiring, training and supporting of teachers seriously impacted student learning. Barb benefited greatly from her mentor and from her role model. She learned so much from them that her next job would transform her into her mentor and role model's supervisor.

Barb as Associate Superintendent

Barb, one year teacher; one year teacher/team leader; seven years Teacher Corps team leader; five years human resources administrator; became Dr. Barbara Dunlap, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. She did not fill out an application nor did she interview. The male superintendent who appointed her knew she would excel at the job. After 14 years as associate superintendent, she reflected about her role. "There are times when I believe I need to take the spot light either to be very clear about what is important or to draw the heat away from somebody else or to represent the district or more importantly to represent the children. But most of what I do in leadership is gathering ideas and pulling people together through conversations. Then we figure out what's best for children."

Barb's variable leadership role demonstrated Helgeson's (1990) web metaphor for leadership.

In a web construction, the figurehead is the heart rather than the head, and so does not need layers and ranks below to reinforce status. Authority comes from connection to the people around rather than distance from those below; this in itself helps to foster a team approach. In acting as a figurehead, the leader with a web conception need not insist on rank, authority, and importance in order to convincingly represent the organization. (p. 55)

Barb did not have to be the center of attention. She claimed that role when it focused people on children's learning. From the center of the web, Barb could more effectively gather ideas and pull people together.

Barb as Instructional Leader

Barb believed to be effective in her job that she must regularly interact with students. Reading to children was one of Barb's favorite ways to keep in touch with children. When an elementary school invited her to read to a group of second graders, Barb dressed as an ant, antennae and all, to read the book Two Bad Ants by Chris Van Allsburg. Barb smiled as she recalled, "I told the children that I was dressed as the main character in the book and from looking at me what did they think the main character was? Their answers were just a hoot! Many of them were insect focused but one thought I might be a creature from another planet. That was pretty fun." Each year Barb has become an integral part of a high school, social studies and literature block class. She facilitated a lesson about affirmative action and then returned 10 weeks later to participate in a poetry recitation activity. "It is really fun to be with a group of kids who are starting to think about big ideas that would turn into

national policy types of questions. Their insights are really fine and their thoughtfulness is always amazing to me. Their idealism is absolutely essential if society is going to continue. We have to have a group of 16 years olds who think they can save the world if only the adults don't blow it up before they get there. I mean, it's just an essential characteristic of an educated society. Every time I have visited a sophomore class I am reaffirmed that we do have that characteristic."

Barb created time in her schedule to keep connected to children. This children contact strengthened her mission. Barb knew it was important to teach children even it was for abbreviated amounts of time. In so doing her connection to teachers and their work flattened the hierarchical nature of the school district.

Barb persistently focused her efforts as associate superintendent on increasing student achievement. She eventually embraced the disequilibrium caused by the publication of standardized test scores in the area of reading. "I really like those periods of disequilibrium. I look at those periods of disequilibrium as when the most growth occurs. In fact, if there aren't those times, there isn't ever any growth. So you don't get growth in an individual person or in a leader or in a system if there isn't time of disequilibrium. This year is a time of incredible disequilibrium in the system for several reasons. The publishing of the reading scores has just brought huge discomfort at the elementary grades. Our reactions have ranged from deceptiveness to things are fine to don't bother us to the scores don't mean anything to the why am I being criticized - I am a wonderful person to go away and let me learn what to do

about it. All of that stuff is there while we are dealing with the budget. Both of these are extremely stressful, extremely dissonance producing because they bring into question values and attitudes and beliefs and systems and traditions. I think it is a very, very stressful time in the organization. At the same time I have also seen probably more stretching and growing and attempting to look farther ahead on the part of almost every one than I have seen at any other time. So I see it as a terribly uncomfortable year for lots of people for lots of reasons. I also see this as truly the time from which I think we will emerge as a stronger district instructionally. I think we will be more focused. I'm not near as confident about how we will emerge from the budget but I think from the disequilibrium caused by the printing in the newspaper the reading scores and all the other things that has followed we will be stronger instructionally. It has been very stressful, very worrisome. It has been very hard for lots of people.”

Barb's reactions to the public outcry about elementary reading scores evolved from “scores don't tell us everything” and “the kids and parents have changed” to “what does the data tell us” and “what do we need to change.” Introspection surfaced for Barb the logical conclusion that the district did not believe information that the district itself collected as well as the emotional/affective conclusion that using demographics to excuse poor performance only blamed and alienated the families the district was educating. Again, intuition and courage synergistically combined to power Barb toward solution finding.

When the downtown rotary group asked Barb to speak the first week of school, they did not request a specific topic. Barb was smart enough to realize that if she did not address reading that they would ask about reading. “So that was the group that I kind of tried out my here's what the status is and here's what we are doing speech. It was a very honest speech and it was also very well received.” This speech solidified in Barb’s mind the direction the district was going. Barb smiled when she confided that this calming, straightforward approach and her favorite “comfort foods” of chocolate and bread pudding provided personal solace during these stressful times.

Courage continued to fuel Barb’s ability to deal with the reading crisis in an honest and collaborative way. Barb intuitively knew what the Rotary wanted to but more importantly needed to hear.

Professionally, Barb put together a district office team consisting of the reading consultant, director of curriculum, and the director of assessment to do instructional conferences with her at each of the elementary schools. “One of the things that I would say that has been one of more productive responses to the reading crisis has been to do instructional conferences in every elementary school. First of all by establishing these conferences and the expectation that in those conferences we would look at data related to achievement, it forces us to get 10 years worth of data. So we are looking at patterns of data rather than a single year, a single grade level. Then to say I'm going to talk about teaching and learning in your school focuses on a

bigger issue than just what is happening with the vocabulary scores in second grade. The conversation is a broader conversation. Then by doing that across the district there are some things that after 35 school conferences emerge as clearly district wide statements. This is a pattern across the district and we have heard it again and again and again. Maybe not every school, but enough schools to say this is a pattern across the district. Then you can say to teachers, these are some things that we are hearing everywhere. Teachers then say that is true in our building and we are not alone. It is nice for teachers to know that they are not alone in their struggles. Then there are some things that we hear in individual buildings or in buildings of particular kinds of students or particular student population. So then we can say in some ways, this is unique in your building. We have not had this before. So that is something we will work with you on your building about but we probably won't devise a district wide program because it does not appear to be a district wide need. So that conversation was really, has really turned into a wonderful way to first of all have a conversation instead of a panic session about it and secondly, so what is the information, a lot of information not just that which was printed in the newspaper chart. And third, from a teacher's point of view, what's teaching and learning like in your building. What does it feel like, what are your frustrations, what does really well. In a panic time or a stress time people like to be heard, they like to tell their stories. So we have heard wonderful stories across this district, every grade level, practically every teacher has been to those meetings. We have heard lots and lots of stories. If you listen to enough

stories then some wonderful patterns start to emerge. They never would have if we didn't first of all take the time to collect all of that and then have the ability to step back and say okay, now we have heard 35 sets of stories, 35 instruction conferences, 35 sets of data, what are the patterns that emerge. As it turns out it is really good that I just didn't go out and do those on my own because I would have heard the stories from only my perspective. I wouldn't have heard it with the richness that the five of us heard. So it has been a really important strategy. I think just for everybody, for everybody involved.” As a result, elementary reading instruction improved, standardized test scores rose.

Barb used collaboration to find creative solutions to improve instruction for all children. Her task driven personality caused her to draw together a group of district experts to interact with each elementary school. Barb took on the role of facilitator. Barb chose to be actively involved in finding solutions. Barb's ability to synthesize 34 sets of quantitative student data and qualitative staff data resulted in district direction.

Barb as Supervisor

As the person responsible for curriculum and instruction in the district, Barb supervised all building principals. She identified appraisal and termination as the most challenging part of her job. “Hard personnel stuff is the hardest. That is the hardest work that we do. While I have not had a lot of those conversations because I

think we make really good choices of principals in the district and the principals do extraordinarily good work. I've had several of them over 11 years. The conversations are not too easy. The next one is not any easier because you did the last one. I think that is fine. I really don't ever want it to be easy to fire somebody. I say that to principals now. I don't want it to be easy for you to tell a teacher that you are recommending him not to return because if it easy it means you are callous. You have lost the sensitivity that we expect people to be treated with." Barb's voice and body posture drooped with sadness as she retold one such experience. "One incredibly hard one has to do with a person that was principal in this district a few years ago. I liked him a lot and still like him a lot. It became very clear in the second year that he was struggling a lot with some major tasks of being a principal. There are some things that you can struggle with and get away with. He just couldn't do major leadership tasks in terms of organizing school improvement work and focusing on instruction. He just couldn't. We provided lots of support and assistance to him. Other programs, staff development, other principals and I organized a support system to develop his skills. I spent a lot of time in the building with the teachers. Some communication things improved but that, kind of that big systems thinking, big picture thinking part of it never improved. So a year later then I had to meet with him and lay out an appraisal and a recommendation that he just could not continue as a principal. It was incredibly hard, very, very hard to do. Actually I was really surprised when I said you will probably want to think about this. I am not asking you

to make any response right now. I'll be glad to come back in a couple of days and we can talk about it further. You can call me. In the next conversation he really just was ready to say what do I do now, what can I do in this district and he wanted to know that I hadn't given up on him. His next assignment was as an assistant principal which he did and he did quite well. He has since moved from the community but I think he left feeling okay. I think whatever messages he gave to his colleagues and to people in the community were not negative messages. I think that means at least that he felt like he had been treated right. Especially through the hard times it is really important to treat people well.”

Barb relied on the relationships she built to give her the courage to do the sometimes difficult work of supervision. Barb did not fall into the masculinist strand of unfeeling authoritativeness to mask the pain of terminating someone. She believed the relationships she built made the work possible and meaningful.

Barb in the Community

Professionally, Barb interacted with diverse elements of the community. Comfortable and skilled at public speaking, Barb concisely presented the school budget to the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce. Her tone and demeanor changed from that of business woman to caring educator when meeting with a group of concerned African American citizens who wanted to know why their children were not doing as well as European Americans on standardized tests. “In

speaking to community groups unless asked to do otherwise, I tell as many stories as I can. I think stories are an incredibly powerful way to communicate. You can illustrate any program in this district through a story that people are more likely to remember than they are to remember facts and figures. I use facts and figures for the people who have that kind of mind. Some people won't remember what I say about the facts and figures of reading recovery but they'll never forget Michael who learned to read. Stories are a wonderful, powerful way to communicate.”

Barb's storytelling communicated her and the district's mission to educate all the children. Barb wrote an e-mail message every Monday morning to the principals that she supervised. In those writings she often told stories. Indicative of her gifted story telling and the intertwined nature of her personal life and professional mission was the story she wrote to thank her colleagues for the support she received when her father died.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE. . . .

Long before I heard this piece of wisdom from the African tradition, I knew it. . . because I experienced it. This past week when I was with my mother and other members of my family, I learned it all over again. The people gathered around us at the time of my father's funeral and all the related happenings were the village that raised me. There was my Sunday School teacher, and my 4-H leader, and some of my high school teachers, and my piano teacher (in memory only, as she died ten years ago), and the ladies of the church, and my parents' friends, and our farming neighbors, and my hometown friends, and, of course, the family that extends and extends and extends. It was such a strong and loving village in which to grow.

I also realized that a village continues to raise me as an adult. All of you are a big part of that village, and I am most blessed. I haven't words to tell you how much I appreciate your care and support all the time; this

too is a strong and loving village in which to grow.

It is my sincere hope that the children we teach and the adults with whom we work experience the best the village has to offer. We are all the richer for it.

Barb's stories revealed to her colleagues and to the community the oneness of her professional and personal life.

Barb's most frequent and often most difficult community contacts were conversations with disgruntled parents. Treating everyone with dignity usually defused incredibly angry and upset parents. By the time parents talked to Barb they had had multiple, unsatisfactory interactions with their principal and teachers.

"Hardly ever can I fix the problem but sometimes because I haven't had 36 run ins with them already like the teacher has and 6 like the principal has I can listen to it without any history. I don't bring any baggage to that. I can listen to the whole thing, not remember 95 percent of what was said, and try to find some point that I sympathize with, agree with or apologize for and then redirect them back to where the problem needs to be solved. While sometimes that is very time consuming, it's still doable."

Barb met with the community curriculum council that consisted of a parent from each school. When Barb became associate superintendent, she was nervous about this kind of formal work with parents. As a human resources administrator and Teacher Corps leader, she had had very few parent contacts. Now Barb identified this group as her best window into what district parents were thinking. Although she

realized the group does not reflect every parent in their school, she always heard a great diversity of parent views. The diverse opinions built the understanding of how difficult it was in school or school district to make a decision that pleased everybody. “There are just some nice relationships that I have developed in Curriculum Council. When I need to recommend a parent to serve on a study committee or serve on an advisory committee, that is the group that I know are interested and who also give evidence of enough flexibility in their schedules to do something like that.”

Personally, Barb chaired a major program committee in her church and statewide church organization. She found that many of the issues of the church and school district needed to keep a focus on what was the main mission and goal. Competing demands for resources and the unavailability of needed resources dominated both her church committee and school work. The dynamics in the church group highlighted for Barb what it was like to be a newcomer. “The difference between the church committee and my school work is that I am new in the church group. I don't have any relationships with the people. So my comfort level in chairing this committee is much less than my comfort level in chairing the principals' groups. With the principals groups, I am really purposeful about developing relationships with people in these groups. First and foremost it has been because they are wonderful people. They are the kind of people I want to have relationships with and secondly because I do better work when we pair the strong relationship I have with each principal with the relationship each principal has with every other principal.

So I think it is really important to nurture those relationships. It is just clear to me the difference in a group where that exists for me and the group where that doesn't exist for me.”

Barb built relationships and then interconnected those relationships to achieve what is right for students. An elementary principal who worked for Barb told me of Barb's many phone calls and visits to her building when she first came to the district. Through these conversations Barb came to know about the principal's family she left behind in Illinois to get her first principalship. The principal was amazed how Barb retained all that personal information about her and always asked about her son by name. The principal speculated that Barb must have a rolodex she studied on her desk and in her car to be able to do that for 50 principals. The principal continued that Barb's ability to converse about families in unpredictable settings discounted her theory. Barb was also able to share with this new elementary principal many insights about the building staff and its climate and culture. Barb suggested three other principals who the elementary principal could contact when Barb was unavailable to answer questions. Barb was purposefully connecting the new principal to others in her sphere. The principal was pleasantly surprised when the call she received from Barb on her birthday was a “happy birthday” call with no other agenda. During the elementary principal's second year, the calls continued and the communication flowed. The new principal felt connected to other principals and her supervisor Barb. This connection caused the elementary principal to stay in

the district a year longer than she had planned. After the third year, the elementary principal knew she had to return to her family in Illinois. She told me she did not anticipate that she would ever have another supervisor like Barb. Barb had not yet built those kinds of relationships in her church group. Barb was keenly aware of the absence of a web of connections in her new work on the church committee.

Barb seeking the Superintendency

Barb's educational administration career had been one of opportunities without barriers. Barb had only sought one job and easily obtained it. Her other positions found her. Her decision to seek a job outside of the district that had embraced her added another dimension to her story.

Barb had not contemplated being a superintendent until a search firm contacted her by letter about an opening in a suburb located outside a metropolitan area of a Midwestern state. She described that letter as “probably one step above the general letter that they send to the world.” After a telephone call from the search firm, Barb met with a search firm employee at a national conference for a more in-depth conversation. From that discussion the search firm identified Barb as one of the twelve possible candidates. Another interview placed Barb on the bubble of being in the top six. The search firm again called Barb and asked if she really wanted to do this because they would only forward six candidates who would say yes if offered the position. She told the search firm that she was not really interested so she did not

become one of those six candidates. At that point in her career, Barb put any thoughts of the superintendency out of her mind.

Six years later while reading “Education Week” Barb saw a superintendency opening in a Midwestern town that was the site of the state’s major university. Barb’s current job was going well. She had not during her career sought out other jobs but she began to think that maybe the time was right to become a superintendent. Barb cautiously began her research of the town and school district. She contacted a former colleague she knew that was employed by the school district. She drove to have dinner with this colleague. This dinner conversation ignited Barb’s desire to seek another job. Barb explained, “So I decided that this sounded kind of interesting. It was challenging. It was incredibly invigorating to think about another district, a different system, where all the challenges are new. You haven’t made any enemies yet. You haven’t done anything yet to make anyone mad. It’s exciting.” When Barb finally decided to apply, the job had been listed for weeks. Barb wrote a letter of application and an essay about her accomplishments within a week to meet the impending deadline. With the aid of FedEx, Barb met the deadline and flew off to Spain with her spouse to spend Christmas vacation with a close friend’s daughter who was studying there.

When Barb returned from Spain on a Sunday night, she received a telephone call from the search firm responsible for finding candidates for this superintendency, requesting an interview on Thursday or Friday. Feeling the need to be prepared,

Barb chose Friday. Barb's boss, the superintendent who had drafted her as associate superintendent without even interviewing her, told her of the search firm's call to him. Barb was appalled that the caller asked him about her appearance and if she had children. Barb, former human resources employee, knew these were illegal questions to ask during an interview but references were fair game she supposed. Barb smiled when she recalled that the superintendent told the man that, "there were a lot of children of friends that were important in her life and that she's very warm and loves children." The man from the search firm told the superintendent that women without children were often cold and hard.

Bruner (1999) in her original study of women superintendents created the term, culturally bilingual, to mean that "a woman must remain 'feminine' in the classical sense, while communicating in a 'masculinized' culture." The man from the search firm believed that a woman without children must not be feminine in the classical sense. A "hard" woman was undesirable as a superintendent to this search firm.

Barb's Friday interview occurred in a hotel near the airport. The man from the search firm started his first conversation with Barb commenting on how he was unable to contact her for several days during the holiday break. Barb shared that she had been in Spain. When he asked why, Barb was able to explain that a woman who had been in her life since she had been 4 was in Spain for her junior year. Barb delighted in telling him, "She asked us to spend Christmas with her so of course we

did. I think that took care of any questions he had about whether I cared for kids.”

Barb’s answers to the interview questions allowed her to showcase her philosophy and belief system about children and their learning. That philosophy and her appearance must have matched what the search firm was attempting to locate for the school district because Barb was informed that she was one of the eight finalists.

The next step was to be interviewed by the board of education. After a horrendous flight in a snowstorm, Barb arrived an hour and a half late. To protect the school district and the candidates from a voracious press corps, the board was keeping the identity of the candidates secret. Barb was whisked from the airport to a back door at the school district’s central office to avoid television cameras and journalists. The interview lasted a couple of hours with a dinner following. The only specific question Barb remembers from that interview was from the board vice president. He asked if public education would survive the next decade. When Barb instantaneously replied yes, he countered with, “should it?” Barb seized the opportunity to give her impassioned speech about the importance of educating all the children of all the people as the center of democracy. Barb remembered, “It felt like a good interview to me. I don’t have much experience in that arena but I felt good about it.”

On Monday evening, the board president called Barb at home to tell her that she was one of four finalists. Barb’s reaction was similar to her reaction to every job promotion she received, “I was just dazed. I heard next to nothing. I had to call the board president back the next morning and say I’m really sorry but I missed most of

the details. She said she reported back to the board that Barbara Dunlap was absolutely stunned to be called back. I said that would be true.” At that point, it became public. The newspapers of both Barb’s town and the interview town published stories about her candidacy.

The final interview was an incredible 12 hour experience. Barb met with the senior staff of the district. She visited several schools where students, staff and parents interviewed and interacted with her. She ate lunch with representatives from the religious community who wanted to know all about Barb; what she liked; what she thought was important; what she believed in. The afternoon consisted of a reception where anyone in the community could come and shake Barb’s hand and say what ever they wanted to say. At the reception Barb was reintroduced to the persistent press corps, “What was most interesting to me were the two news reporters on both elbows listening to everything. I had not had that experience before. I thought it was terribly intrusive not on me but on what people said and what people cared about.” In the evening, Barb was again interviewed by the board in the boardroom. Prepared questions that the board had sent Barb in advance in addition to questions that the public had written on cards were posed to Barb in front of a public audience and numerous representatives of the media. The board then closed the meeting and asked more questions. Barb did not remember any specific questions. She did not “remember being baffled or stumped by any questions in particular.” Dinner with the board again followed the interview.

Barb was back to the hotel in time to watch herself on the 10 o'clock news coverage. Although Barb was forewarned of the vulture like reputation of the media due to competitive training by the state university's outstanding journalism school, Barb found their aggressive nature more "pest like." "During the afternoon with the community and the evening with the board, there was one television reporter that kept saying, 'When is it my opportunity to grill her? I want to ask her some budget questions.' I did not find the press difficult to work with I just found them to be pests." Barb had been told that some people refuse to work there because of the reputation of the media.

Barb flew back the next morning. From the airport she drove straight to the teachers' association to assist the superintendent and assistant superintendent with contract negotiations. Exhausted when she returned home that evening, she went to bed knowing, "It just was the fit thing. It just wasn't right." The next morning she had breakfast with her current superintendent, a man she trusted immensely. There was only one topic of discussion. Barb wanted to know how to appropriately withdraw her name from consideration. From breakfast, Barb returned to her own office and called the board president with whom she had interviewed. Through the interview process, Barb believed she had begun to know the members of the board for whom she might work. When recounting the telephone call to the board president, Barb stated, "I called the board president who I really liked. I liked her a lot. I called her and said that I needed to withdraw. She told me she was so sad that I

would withdraw. I said so am I. I really wanted this job. It's just not the right fit. She said can you tell me any more. I said that part of it is because you and two other board members are finishing your term in office and you are not going to continue. That feels pretty shaky to be hired by a majority of a board that is not going to continue. The whole time I was being interviewed I couldn't find anyone who could say anything good about the people that were running for the board. That sounded really shaky. I didn't tell her much more than that. We then just talked about timing. We agreed on the next day that it would be made public."

In only two days of interviews, Barb had developed a rapport with the board president. Barb's intuition told her that this job was not the right fit. Barb knew to not violate her intuition.

That evening, one of the partners in the search firm called Barb to tell her that she had "made a group of people very disappointed." Barb repeated her disappointment and shared her concern about the board. He offered to give Barb the names and numbers of people in the community that would be very credible spokespersons for the board candidates. He did his absolute best to get Barb to reconsider. Barb was certain that she would not change her mind.

As Barb thought about the opportunity, she reflected, "It truly all goes back to the right place at the right time. It may have been the right time but it truly was not the right place. So it wasn't the right fit. That's an interlocking circle. There were some pretty weak links there. The connections weren't the right connections to pull

me in there. It wasn't where I should be. It's more intuitive than anything but it's right. It was absolutely right. I have no regrets."

Barb did not take any phone calls from the media once she made her decision to withdraw. She believed that she was not the story. Her statements did not matter.

Barb followed the lack of success of the superintendent that was hired. "I truly don't have any sense that if it had been me that things would have been fine. I don't think that at all. What I do know is that some of the political uncertainty that I sensed in the board, looked to me that that is how it played out. And since the superintendent's job is truly working with the board, it's not like you can say everything else is fine but the board. That doesn't matter. The board is whom the superintendent works with. That is the biggest difference between my job and the superintendents. I relate to the board now and do some work with the board. My primary work though is to work with the educational leaders of this district. I get to work with principals and directors and I don't know under what circumstances I would change my work. I'm not saying I wouldn't but I don't know what circumstances would make me change. That is the reason I say that there would have to be a compelling reason for me to let go of the work which I really like and that I do as well as I've ever done anything and pick up another piece of work. At this point there is not a compelling reason to do that. The impact I can make for children and their learning is as great in this position as it would be in the superintendency."

CHAPTER 4

My Story filtered through Katie and Barb's Story

Rejection is difficult, especially when a man in power had pushed you into judgment's arena. Like a Christian thrown to the lions, I entered the arena of educational leadership fearful and with great trepidation. Once face to face with the lions, I fought tenaciously for my life. Unlike most ancient Christians, I survived my first battle, escaping with profound emotional and psychological scars. For seven years those scars dictated where I dared to venture. Ironically, it was another man of power who walked by my side into the next arena. He persistently but passionately whispered it was my destiny to fight the lions. He connected me with people who helped me believe not only should I fight but also that I could win. From this journey, I've emerged a strong woman; a middle school principal; a doctoral student studying other strong women in educational leadership.

The first powerful man was a "business suit" principal. Perfectly pressed and sequentially ordered, he found my lack of conformity disconcerting. Still he recognized that I was a leader among the teachers in his newly assigned building. He and another administrator nominated me for the school district's leadership conference, a weeklong leadership conference designed to incestuously breed current teachers into the district-defined leader mold. I thanked the principal for the

nomination but said I was unsure about being a leader with a title. Pressured by his urgings, I attacked the written application with fervor. An elite panel scrutinized that year's 140 nominees' written applications; interviewed the 40 survivors of the first cut; then selected the chosen twenty to participate. Represented by the power of my words, I made the first cut. Somehow, the interview eliminated me from the chosen few.

I had worn my best clothes, transformed my long hair into a dignified braid. I remember feeling well about the interview. The questions allowed me to pontificate about my belief in the goodness of all children. Other questions drew my professional knowledge and its application out into the room. Sitting on the hot seat with twelve interviewers of various but higher ranks than myself became innocuously comfortable.

The letter of rejection surprised me. The request for a debriefing interview to "professionally" grow from the experience infuriated me. My nominating principal told me I should follow through with the offer. I refused. He made the appointment for me and then shamed me into going. He reminded me that my actions could reflect poorly on him. My Catholic being responded to the guilt and shame manipulation. Fortunately, I thought, my appointment was with the only female assistant superintendent. Another woman would understand my angst.

Dr. Modelo, in a tan business suit and short tie, sat behind her gargantuan walnut desk. She invited me to sit in a chair, which seemed miles away from her desk. Her hair, short, dyed brown, and permed, reminded me of the "old lady" style of my 65-year-old mother. Unlike my mother, Dr. Modelo was thin and prim. Her business like voice feigned warmth but I felt a chill as she began to talk.

"You see Bess, you are easy to talk to about this. Most people I debrief do not have the brains or compassion that the district is looking for. You have those things. You are bright, articulate. You love students. Our concerns that eliminated you from the running can easily be changed by you. You see, your appearance rated only a two on a five-point scale. Even though you rated 4.5 and above on the other nine scales, we cannot allow anyone with marks less than three into the group. You are overweight; your coif is inappropriate; and your dress was unprofessional on interview day."

She paused, finally looking at me for a reaction. I remember my cheeks burning as I attempted to look into her being to see if she believed what she said. My visual probe didn't work with this woman. There was no connection. I don't remember the rest of the words. I do remember quietly but forcefully saying that those disqualifiers are part of who I am. If the district could not honor me for my intelligence and compassion, I did not want to change those so "easily changed" characteristics. I left, angry, sad, and feeling betrayed by another woman. Learning that another woman could be one of the lions constituted the most important professional and personal growth from this experience. It's odd that the principal that pushed me into this experience never spoke of it again to me.

Ten years after this negative encounter, I was a high school associate principal who knew she wanted to be a middle school principal. Only five years previously as a 15 year teaching veteran, I had no intention of ever being one of "them," an administrator. I still carried scars from being told I had the compassion, intelligence

and skills to be a leader but was too fat with an inappropriate hairdo for my previous employer to consider me as potential district leader. Unlike Barb I was not drafted to be an administrator. Unlike Katie, I did not develop the vision independently. The desire to become an administrator developed when I started a new job as a teacher at an alternative high school. A male principal who had known me a short two months urged me to start a program in educational administration. He prodded. He nagged. Finally he even drove me to the university to register for classes, offering me his credit card to pay for my tuition if I was in need.

At the end of my first year at the alternative high school, I applied for two middle school associate principal positions at the same time I applied for the alternative high school's coordinator position. I received an interview for the coordinator position. The female middle level principal interviewed me; the male principal did not. During that interview at the woman's building, I asked her if the district would have any problems with a female-female building. She assured me that they would not but continued to tell me how her students needed positive, male role models. She did not hire me. Three weeks after the coordinator interview, I finally learned of being selected. I was thrilled to be starting my first administrator position so soon after starting my academic preparation for such a position.

Coordinators, a position on the teacher salary scale and contract, are as much administrators as the principal who hired them wants or needs them to be. During my experience as an alternative school coordinator, my principal's wants and needs

varied from minute to minute. I was coordinator every afternoon. During that time I was responsible for some of everything, discipline, scheduling, curriculum, teachers but none of them on a consistent basis. Six out of every nine weeks, I co-taught a five hour a day, 15 day long, orientation unit for new students. Two other teachers and I developed and taught the orientation unit. Orientation was the highest quality and most meaningful teaching of my career. During the middle three weeks off, I was coordinator the entire day. I found myself lonely and isolated during coordinator time.

The relationship with the principal who had urged me to become an administrator was inconsistent and confusing. After hiring me as coordinator, he seemed to no longer like or respect me. I intuitively sensed that he did not trust me. These feelings culminated when he would not give me a master key to the building. Another time, he reprimanded me for getting something out of his top desk drawer without his permission for a student. New in my role and feeling dependent on his assessment of me, I did not have the courage to dialog about this mistrust. The quality of our relationship varied greatly. While I was there, I never understood what I had done to damage our relationship. Two years after I had left, he met with me to apologize if I had felt any strain in our relationship. He told me that he struggled with me because of statements another woman had attributed to me the summer he hired me as coordinator. Through time and experience, he had decided that those statements were not true.

The discomfort of that year coupled with my love of middle school children motivated me to apply for another middle level associate principal position. I became disheartened when I learned I was not selected for the interview panel. I doubted my capabilities, certain that Human Resources had labeled me “unhireable” from my previous year’s interviews. I began to wonder how incompetent I was or if my physical characteristics were hindering my chances.

Candace, my learning partner, helped me self-assess my strengths to gain the courage to reenter the application process. During this year through a special appraisal project created by the alternative school principal, I was to find a “learning partner.” The principal had decided that traditional appraisal was meaningless. He directed us to find someone with whom to talk about professional issues. He believed that these conversations would lead to more self-assessment and growth than his appraisals. Candace, my “learning partner” was an educational administration doctoral student who had previously been a middle level principal in Idaho. We first met when Candace was a graduate assistant. I guest spoke on at-risk students to her beginning education students. I chose Candace because of the thoughtfulness with which her students addressed at-risk issues. Candace and I met about every three weeks for one to two hours. These meetings helped me frame and grow through my experiences at the alternative school. She served as my mentor, my role model, and learning partner. Our conversations modeled equal sharing. Our professional and personal relationship continues today, seven years strong. Candace has been an

integral part of the development of my self-image as a capable, competent woman.

Candace encouraged me to apply for a high school associate principal position to test the hypothesis that I had not passed the Human Resources litmus test to be an administrator. We talked about leadership. She practice interviewed me and gave me a list of potential questions. I applied, received an interview and was hired. I felt relief and excitement.

I became part of a seven person administrative team in a 7-12 building with 2000 students. The special education coordinator and I were the only females on the team. The second time I met the principal, he handed me a ring of master keys to the building. He could not have understood what this meant to me. He opened the world of leadership to me. I instantly felt his trust. He put up no barriers to my success. He asked clarifying questions; he supported; he encouraged. When he told me at the end of my first semester there that I should be a building principal, I accepted that as a possibility. Later that year when his secretary called me his “right hand man” I beamed proudly.

During my three years in this position, I painfully learned about the climate and culture of an administrative team and how it affects the building climate and culture. I struggled in my relationship with another associate principal. I believe he unintentionally patronized me as a woman and as a first year administrator. He would interfere with interactions I was having with staff, students, or parents, completing whatever transaction was occurring. At first, I believed it would be

inappropriate to confront this behavior in front of the staff, students, or parents.

When he took the microphone from my hand during a staff meeting when I paused to gather my thoughts to effectively and succinctly answer a question, and then he proceeded to answer incorrectly, I was furious. I stood and looked at him in disbelief. When he finished the interruption, I took the microphone back from him and finished my part of the presentation. I did wait until after the meeting to confront him. He told me that he was rescuing and protecting me from a difficult situation. I told him that he demeaned and devalued me in front of the entire staff and that I neither needed nor wanted his rescues or protection. I then proceeded to recount all the times I felt that he had demeaned and devalued me. I never collaborated well with him before that incident. After my confrontation of him, my attempts at collaboration ceased. From that point on I assertively called him on his inappropriate behavior toward me. This relationship was detrimental to the administrative team as well as to the faculty and students. Unfortunately for my professional growth, he built the master schedule and administered the instructional and activity budget, two skills I needed to learn to become a principal. Because of our relationship, he never shared that information with me. Katie sought positions to gain the knowledge of the skills of principal and learned them bit by bit. Barb developed her skills on the job with support of her colleagues. I relied heavily on my learning partner to help me overcome this barrier.

As a beginning administrator, I was constantly learning the skills I needed to become a principal. An incident occurred when I was facilitating a meeting that

caused a staff member to view me as purposefully demeaning, devaluing, and humiliating her in public. She believed I was acting from a masculinist base of power and dominance. This incident still carries such intimate pain for both of us, it cannot be detailed on these pages. Apologies, tears, mediations, and a reprimand I received from my principal never resolved this incident for the staff member. I carry in my psyche the baggage of someone believing I would purposefully humiliate someone in public as I lead and interact with any group. Her feelings provided a filter of caution when I facilitate groups. This incident humbled me when I needed humbling. It was difficult for me to accept that others would perceive my actions as dominance seeking because of my title of principal. Katie spoke briefly of an incident where a principal publicly demeaned her but asked me to not detail it in my writing. That principal definitely operated from a masculinist power base of power and domination.

It was during my second year as a high school associate principal that I began gathering data from Katie. When I listened to Katie describe the female elementary principal who forced her from her first administrative job, I thought of the woman assistant superintendent who told me I was too fat to be a leader. I also thought of the alternative high school principal's recent disclosure of another woman's words unbeknownst to me interfering with my relationship with him. Katie's statements about the lack of collaboration that existed for her to be a disciplinarian also made me think of my lack of relationship with one of my male colleagues. Katie deliberately sought jobs that taught her scheduling, budgeting, supporting curriculum

and instruction, and discipline, all of the skills that she needed to be a high school principal. I knew that I, too, would have to go elsewhere to learn some of those skills.

During my third year as associate principal I began collecting data from the elementary principal that dropped out of the study. As a woman of color who was in high school when *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* occurred, she told me of what it was like to be a “colored student” bussed to an all white school in Illinois. She told me how a white salesclerk’s scorn at her pronunciation of potato caused her as a nine-year-old to go home and study standard English from television game shows. She made lists of words she heard, looked them up in the dictionary, then practiced pronouncing words as she heard the announcers pronounce them. In high school and college, she continued to persist and excel at her studies although she believed no one expected her to succeed. Her journey to the principalship was rich with stories of struggle and triumph. The barriers she had overcome as both a person of color and as a woman put into perspective for me how easy my journey to administration had been. I regret that her move made it impossible to include her story in detail in this research.

In March of my third year as an associate principal, a middle level principalship came open. I did not know how to build a master schedule. I had not been responsible for a budget. I had supervised counselors and the counseling program, appraised teachers and managed the discipline of 400 students. In spite of

an obvious lack of comprehensive administrative skills and experiences, I believed I had the leadership skills to be a principal. After conferring with my principal and my learning partner, Candace, I decided to apply. I was thrilled to make the interview panel. On the day of the interview, I wore a traditional, masculinist influenced, blue suit with my hair tied up in a business like manner. My appearance was so far out of the norm for me, that my teenage children accused me of “sucking up” and being a “hypocrite.” The six hour long separate interviews exhausted me. I believed I did well in all but one interview. I became flustered and demonstrated my lack of experience when being interviewed by the associate superintendent and superintendent. When I received my rejection call a week later, I was not surprised but was nonetheless disappointed. Katie did not speak of rejection as part of her experience seeking administrative positions.

Until I was rejected, I had no idea how much I wanted to be a middle level principal. About a month later, another middle school principalship came open. The opening was not advertised. Without an interview process, the superintendent appointed an elementary principal to that position. I interpreted that to mean that I did not have what the district wanted in a principal. Two weeks later, another middle level principalship was advertised with the notation that previous applicants need not apply. The message was clear. I would not be a middle level principal in this district. I again turned to my learning partner, Candace, for solace and wisdom. My rational self knew that I was deficient in the technical skills of being a principal. I also lacked

extensive middle level experience. Only three years of my career had been in a middle school. My emotional self still desperately wanted the job. I began to make peace with myself and started to ponder life as a career associate principal.

The school year had ended. On the following Monday, I was on a three way call trying to mediate between an angry parent and a student unwilling to go to summer school when my secretary interrupted me to tell me that the associate superintendent was on another line for me. My mind raced to find the error I had made that she was calling for me to correct. Instead she told me that they still had not decided who was to be the person appointed to the remaining middle level principalship. They were considering previous applicants and wondered if I would be interested. Without hesitation I replied that it would be a wonderful school for me. A long pause followed that I had to interrupt. I asked if she had any more questions for me. She said no. Still uncomfortable with the silence, I blurted back, "But I have better answers this time." She laughed and said that would not be necessary and thanked me for showing interest. The peace I had been developing within myself had been blown up by a 90 second phone call. I ran to the office of the person who first said to me that I should be a building principal. My principal knew nothing of the phone call and tried to calm me. He reminded me that the phone call meant that I had qualities that they would consider. I was principal material. Now it was a question of when and where.

That evening around 5 p.m. the question was answered. The assistant

superintendent of human resources called me at home to offer the job of principal. I demonstrated neither restraint nor calmness as I immediately accepted the position. I had no idea of what the job of principal really meant.

In its most recent years, the building of which I was to be principal had experienced much chaos and turmoil. Discipline was not occurring as staff and parents believed it should. The master schedule was incomplete and inaccurate. The associate principal with whom I would team had been hired the previous November to help bring order to the building. The principal I was replacing was leaving for a principalship in another state. The staff was grateful to the new associate principal for her discipline approach and ability to build an accurate master schedule. They were puzzled by my appointment since I was not on the interview panel but they seemed happy to have a new principal. The honeymoon did not last long!

It became apparent through many interactions with teachers that my philosophy of education was in opposition to theirs. When I refused to discipline a student for sleeping in class and instead suggested to the teacher that she examine her instruction as well as research if there were health or family reasons for the student's sleeping, the teacher loudly proclaimed to the rest of the staff that I had low expectations for student performance and behavior. From there the conflict snowballed. I repeatedly emphasized that excellent instruction eliminated behaviors out of the norm and that I was thrilled to deal with out of the norm behaviors. Staff repeatedly responded that it was the administrative team's duty to make students

behave so that they could teach excellently. At a staff meeting that the associate principal was facilitating about discipline, a staff member rose, looked at me and said, “Bess, you’re a nice person but you are not what we need here. The kids here can be assholes and they don’t need a Father Flanagan. They need someone who can be tough. You aren’t what we need!” I stood in disbelief. I was appalled that a staff member would publicly call students assholes during a staff meeting. I did not respond to the comment. The associate principal continued with the agenda. I went home shell-shocked and unsure that I was the woman for the job. I knew that the staff wanted a principal who dealt with students from the masculinist power base of dominance. I knew because I did not operate from a power base of dominance with staff, a staff member felt free to make such a statement at a staff meeting. I reflected on Katie’s statement that she is authoritative with the students and participatory with the staff. I could not imagine anyone saying something like that to her. After a long walk that evening, I decided I needed to meet with the associate superintendent who supervised me to inform her I was not who the staff wanted as principal.

Sensing my urgency, the associate superintendent met with me the next afternoon. As she inquired why I had the urgent need to meet, I stared at her and bluntly asked, “Did you hire me to build a bigger and better prison because that is what the staff and most of the parents want?” She seemed startled by my question. I sighed deeply when I heard her say, “No, I did not.” We then discussed the tension between creating a safe and orderly learning environment through punitive actions

and creating a safe and orderly learning environment through improved instruction. I returned to school with the knowledge that my philosophy of education was why I was hired and that the district office supported my actions. I distributed a survey built off of qualities that the staff told me they valued right after I was hired. About 90 percent of the staff returned the surveys. The dismal results reinforced that the staff felt I was not doing or supporting what they valued. During the next week, at plan period staff meetings where I met with 10 staff members at a time, I shared the results and asked for their insights to help me be true to my philosophy while meeting their needs as well as student needs. I ended each discussion with the declaration that my intention was to retire from this school in 20 years. I was not going to leave! I would later learn that a group of staff believed they could get me to leave as they had gotten rid of the previous associate principal and principal. At the end of that school year, due to early retirement incentives and resulting transfers, I was able to hire 22 new staff, a third of the staff. It is during this same time period that I began my interviews with Barb. I found Barb's story so different than mine. I could not relate my building experiences to her district office job. I connected strongly to her belief system.

I often wonder why I was unable to develop the kind of relationship I had with my high school principal with my associate principal. Was it a gender issue or a personality issue or both? There was always a tension between us. Although we did not see eye to eye philosophically, we managed to work hard together to do what was

right for students. Her skills and talents were different than mine and complimented mine well. Unfortunately this did not make us a stronger team. I suspect for a multitude of reasons, we took turns being the “queen bee” protecting our domain from each other. We were unable to share leadership successfully. At the end of our second year together, another principal hired her as his associate principal.

My third year as principal brought new challenges. With the arrival of a new inexperienced associate principal, I decided to learn how to build a master schedule so that he could concentrate on learning other parts of his job. I was committed to developing a positive, productive, growing relationship with my new associate principal. Issues of safety became more tenuous as staff, students and parents responded to Columbine. Amidst all of this change, the building climate and culture managed to become more centered on student achievement. Student behavior was still a concern but most staff readily embraced their role in student behavior. After three years, I finally believed I was the right woman for this job.

CHAPTER 5

Narrative Analysis Summary

For both Katie and Barb, themes identified strongly coincided with Regan and Brooks (1995) feminist attributes of relational leadership, collaboration, intuition, vision, courage, and caring.

Regan and Brooks (1995) defined collaboration as “the ability to work in a group, eliciting and offering support to each other member, creating a synergistic environment for everyone.” (p. 26) Collaboration was the strongest and most reoccurring attribute for Katie and Barb. Katie collaborated with her new principal colleagues in the development of a new model of shared responsibility for discipline among associate principals. When Katie met with students although she labels it as listening only, I believed her actions were collaborative because she empowered students to become active members of their own community. Katie consciously communicated in varying styles to improve the flow of information to foster communication among staff and administration. Barb’s teaching, team leading, and administrating depended on her collaboration with other staff and children. From implementing nontraditional curricular units to addressing standardized test scores, Barb succeeded due to her ability to get groups of people to think and work together.

Regan and Brooks (1995) defined caring as “the development of an affinity

for the world and the people in it, translating moral commitment to action on behalf of others.” (p.27) Barb and Katie’s stories illustrated their mission to children and their learning. As leaders, Katie and Barb have dedicated their lives to the communities they serve. Caring emerged from their actions and decisions.

Regan and Brooks (1995) defined courage as “the capacity to move ahead into the unknown, testing new ideas in the world of practice.” (p. 29) Barb demonstrated this type of courage when she addressed standardized reading scores through honest confrontation and then collaboration. Barb could have isolated herself at district office blaming ineffective building principals and ineffective teachers. Instead Barb immersed herself in facilitating solutions. Barb did not know what instructional conferences would produce until several occurred. Barb’s venture into buildings to be at the center of dialog about learning sparked many teacher driven changes in instruction. The courage that emerged from Katie’s story was one of power and authority when dealing with students in discipline situations. This is the traditional courage of masculinist roots based on a warrior model not the courage described by Regan and Brooks (1995).

Regan and Brooks (1995) defined intuition as “the ability to give equal weight to experience and abstraction, mind and heart.” (p.33) Katie did not intuit as Barb did. Katie based her actions and decisions on facts more than feelings. Barb relied heavily on “just knowing” that the job she applied for was not the right fit. It was more of a feeling than a list with more cons than pros. Barb’s intuition was an

important element of her decision making.

Regan and Brooks (1995) defined vision as “the ability to formulate and express original ideas, enabling others to consider options in new and different ways.” (p. 36) Both Katie and Barb had strong vision in their work. Katie could see how different a high school would be with shared responsibility for discipline. She collaborated with her colleagues to make that vision a reality. Barb’s teaching enabled students to see the world through social change. Barb as associate superintendent saw the connections between the principals she supervised and how teachers taught thus impacting student learning.

Katie, Barb and Leadership Theory

Research of the last thirty years defined leadership, described characteristics and components of leadership, and proposed theoretical models of leadership (Taylor, 1994). Yet no definitive answers exist on the most effective way to lead. Where do Katie and Barb "fit" into the development and examination of leadership theory?

Trait approach. Early research on leadership concentrated on the characteristics of leaders. The trait approach to leadership study, identified personality, physical, social, intellectual characteristics that effective leaders possessed (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Researchers also emphasized the traits and skills that contribute to effective leadership. Taylor (1994) summarizing leadership trait theory research, found it both contradictory and inconclusive. Although attribute lists of effective leaders continue to be generated, the focus of research on leadership changed from what a leader "is" to what a leader "does."

Behavioral approach. Focusing on what a leader "does" gave birth to the behavioral approach in leadership research. The behavioral approach sought to identify behaviors and behavior patterns that characterize effective leadership. In the 1940s, University of Michigan began studying business leadership. Complementary studies at Ohio State resulted in the identification of two distinct styles of leadership, production-oriented and employee-centered, being identified (Hoy & Miskel, 1987; Taylor, 1994). Harvard studies of group leadership identified leadership behaviors as task leader and the social leader (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Behaviorist thinking led to the efficiency movement that infiltrated both business and education (Goodlad, 1978; Hoy & Miskel, 1987; Taylor, 1994). Leaders influenced by this research concentrated on business details such as budget, scheduling, and personnel. Schmuck (1992) described these leaders as technicians applying behavioral skills. These skills were based on the belief that their behaviors would elicit certain other behaviors from staff, students, and the community. What the behaviorist approach failed to address was the context in which these behaviors occurred.

Situational leadership. Addressing the context of where and with whom the leader was enlarged the research from previous studies of what the leader is or does. Blanchard and Hersey (1993) developed the construct of situational leadership. Situational leadership was based on the relationship between the directive behavior a leaders gives; the supportive behavior the leader provides; and the developmental level that a follower demonstrates while performing a task. Blanchard (1985) contended that there was no one best style of leadership. Effective leadership was using the strategy that was appropriate to the developmental level of the people to be influenced. Fiedler and House in separate theories of leadership interrelated leader

traits, leader behaviors and situational variables (Hoy & Miskel, 1987). Taylor (1994) cited a 1987 Leithwood and McLean study, which reinforced the concept of situational leadership by documenting effectiveness in department heads who were situationally sensitive. The situation, the "where" of an educational leader, centered itself in the core of a school's existence, the instruction.

Instructional leadership. In the 1970s, effective schools research honed in on this core, instruction. The principal as an instructional leader was identified as one of the critical elements of an effective school (Wellisch, 1978; Yukel, 1982; De Bevoise, 1984). Several researchers articulated the leadership traits, behaviors and situations of instructional leadership. Principals were to directly participate in classroom instruction by managing curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, and by appraising both the curriculum and teachers (Taylor, 1994). Instructional leadership incorrectly implied that the principal was the curriculum and instructional expert of a school instead of the problem solver or resource finder (Poplin, 1992). Glickman (1991) and Stronge (1990) made a case for encompassing the vital role of instructional leader into a broader vision of a principal's leadership.

Transformational leadership. This broader vision of leadership came to be known as transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1990; Brandt, 1992; Leithwood, 1992). Incorporating previous theories and approaches to leadership, the ability to foster acceptance of purpose and mission as a school and to inspire everyone to be driven to achieve the mutually generated and embraced goals are the hallmarks of transformational leadership (Bass, 1990; Pate, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1990). Bennis and Nanus (1985) added the Wallenda factor and empowerment to the characteristics of transformational leaders. The importance of the inclusion of

visionary characteristics into transformational leadership was reinforced by the research of Lesourd, Tracz and Grady (1992) which validated a leadership instrument that identified visionary propensities in leaders. Sagor (1992) found that successful schools had transformational leaders as principals. Fullan (1992) and Bennis (1991) began to raise questions about the feasibility of transformational leadership. Fullan addressed the question of whose vision while Bennis wondered if the demands and time consuming nature of transformational leadership sabotaged its own success. Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers (1992) suggested that leaders became enveloped in controversies that with non-participatory leadership they did not encounter. Mitchell and Tucker (1992) and Leithwood (1992) agreed that finding the balance between top-down leadership and the facilitative power of transformational leadership was the challenge of the restructuring of the 1990s.

Moral leadership and community building. Sergiovanni (1990, 1992, 1994) suggested that moral leadership resulting from adding shared values to transformational leadership could build a community of learners and leaders that could meet the restructuring challenges faced by the schools. In Value-Added Leadership (1990), Sergiovanni described the four developmental stages of leadership: bartering, building, bonding, and binding. Cognizance of the stage at which a leader was functioning enabled that leader to ascend into higher stages. In bonding and binding the teacher and principal committed to a set of shared values. Sergiovanni further developed this concept by identifying the sources of authority (bureaucratic, psychological, technical rational, professional, and moral) in Moral Leadership, Getting to the Heart of School Improvement (1992). In Building Community in Schools, Sergiovanni posited that "once a community of mind

emerges" (the result of binding and bonding practices of leadership derived from professional and moral authority) the "we" of that community becomes a substitute for singular leadership. Thus the community becomes "self-managing" and "self-leading."

Katie prides herself on being a woman of action not words. She readily admits to changing her behavior, voice, and actions to match the staff member with whom she is working. Situational leadership depends on the context to dictate the leader's actions. Katie not only depends on the context but on whom the main players are. High academic achievement for the majority of students permeates the culture of Katie's high school. During my interviews with and observations of Katie, her actions with the student council and at sporting events built community from which she builds on the common beliefs and values of academic achievement. Overt stories of transformational and instructional leadership did not emerge.

As a transformational leader, Barb consciously places student achievement at the center of her decisions and actions. As the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction, she facilitates her vision of each student achieving more through participatory principal councils and individual school instructional conferences. Relationship building entrenched in provocative dialog furthers the agenda of adult responsibility for student learning.

Katie, Barb, and Shakeshaft's Stages of Research

Absence of Women. The first stage of research about women in educational administration is the documentation of the absence of females in administrative positions. Women are underrepresented in administration and overrepresented in

teaching. This is true in the Katie and Barb's district. When Katie was hired, she was the only female high school principal in her district. Barb replaced a female assistant superintendent. Both Katie and Barb have been joined by one more female colleague at their job description.

Search for women administrators. The second stage of research on women in educational administration searches for women who are or have been educational administrators to identify their characteristics and to uncover any "great women." It often uses the characteristics and achievement of male administrators as the standard to which women are compared (Shakeshaft, 1989). Shakeshaft's (1989) summary of research on the characteristics of female administrators found that the profile for a typical women administrator differed in several ways from the profile for a typical male administrator: "Specifically, women in all levels of administration are older than men in similar positions, are less likely to be married, are more often members of minority and ethnic groups, more often come from more urban backgrounds, are politically more liberal, identify as non-Protestant more often, are more likely to have been a teacher for a longer periods of time, and earn less for doing the same job as a man." (Shakeshaft, 1989. p. 61) Katie and Barb did not match the Shakeshaft (1989) profile. They were not older than their male counterparts. They were married. They were white Protestants and moderate Republicans. They both taught less than ten years before entering administration. In their district, the salary schedule is inflexible with no variance for gender. Shakeshaft (1989) also documented through different studies the establishment of distinctly different career paths for men and women.

Career paths are often mapped through the informal networks that many administrators create. Hudson (1994) studied, using a stratified sampling design, the

use of informal job contacts among women, men, Blacks, and Whites. Hudson hypothesized that men are more likely than women, and Whites are more likely than Blacks, to learn about jobs through informal sources. No statistically significant differences existed in the use of informal job contacts between men and women or between Black and Whites. When analyzing the data as women and Blacks as compared to White males, a significant difference existed. Women and Blacks used informal job contacts in greater proportion than White men. This contradicted many commonly held beliefs. Katie developed an informal network among her administrative colleagues in her district. Barb did not consciously develop a network for the purpose of career advancement.

Much of the literature on the characteristics of male and female administrators drew contradictory conclusions or claims that men's and women's styles differ along gender-stereotypic lines (Shakeshaft, 1989). Eagly, Karau, and Johnson (1992) used meta-analytic techniques to provide a systematic, quantitative integration of the available research comparing the leadership styles of male and female principals. Reviewing 50 studies, they analyzed three aspects of leadership style: interpersonal orientation, task orientation, and democratic versus autocratic leadership styles. The largest difference produced was in the area of democratic versus autocratic leadership styles. Female principals led in a more democratic or participative style and less autocratic or directive style than male principals. Interpersonally oriented styles showed negligible differences whereas task orientation was somewhat higher for females. Katie identified her leadership style as participatory with staff and authoritarian with students. Her student council forums indicated that she was also participatory with students. Katie believed it essential when she became a principal

to reorganize job responsibilities among the administrative team to involve each administrator in the “big picture” of school operation. The instructional conferences Barb initiated to respond to poor standardized test scores were a primary example of a democratic response to a crisis situation.

Women as disadvantaged or subordinate. The third stage of research on women in educational administration questioned why so few women led in schools by surveying attitudes toward women and experiences women have had. Through this research, barriers to advancement for women have been identified (Shakeshaft, 1989). In reviewing and synthesizing 125 studies, Shakeshaft (1989) stated that "the cause of all barriers to women in school administration that have been identified in the social science literature can be traced to male hegemony." (p. 83) This androcentric society created an atmosphere where both overt and covert sexual discrimination thrived. Female administrators of color must also overcome the barrier of racial discrimination. Katie faced head on the androcentric challenge that she had to prove that she could do high school discipline before she could be a high school principal. The implication that a woman may not have the “toughness” to effectively discipline high school students was overt. Katie successfully conquered that barrier. An incident of sexual discrimination and harassment perpetrated on Katie by a male superior held such painful memories, Katie asked me to delete the details from her story. Katie did not view the incident as a barrier to her career advancement but as an example of inappropriately wielded male power. Barb did not encounter barriers in her career ladder in her current school district. The question and comments by the superintendent search company’s representative to Barb’s current superintendent revealed a prejudice about female administrators who did not have their own children.

Barb purposefully commented to the search company's representative about her trip to share the holiday with a family friend's child in Spain to hurdle this perceived barrier that childlessness presented to the superintendency.

Women studied on their own terms. In the fourth stage of research on women in educational administration, women described their experiences and lives giving voice to the female perspective of educational administration (Shakeshaft, 1989). In these studies, women need not be compared to men to be given meaning (Shakeshaft, 1989). Helgeson (1990), in The Female Advantage, Women's Ways of Leadership, wrote detailed portraits of four business women in a format she labels as diary studies. Their stories illustrated what Helgeson called the feminine principles of leadership: "principles of caring, making intuitive decisions, not getting hung up on hierarchy." (p. 5)

Wesson and Grady (1994) through two studies, obtained data from surveys and telephone interviews to examine the perceived sources of job satisfaction, personal benefits of the job, self-fulfillment, and personal strengths of female superintendents. From their data, they concluded that both rural and urban female superintendents possessed similar leadership qualities. These women superintendents identified themselves as change agents and had successfully implemented a collegial, collaborative style of leadership in a highly bureaucratic, structured system.

Katie and Barb's stories are fourth stage research. Katie and Barb's narrative give voice to the female perspective of educational administration.

Women as challenge to theory. The stories of stage four provided the data to be synthesized for stage five. Researchers questioned how theory must change to be inclusive (Shakeshaft, 1989). Helgeson (1990) challenged Mintzberg's study of male

managers with her female diary studies. The women she studied led through a supportive, inclusive web structure as opposed to the hierarchical structure of Mintzberg's men. Wesson and Grady (1994) concluded their study about female superintendents with the statement: "they are operationalizing leadership skills that fit a new leadership paradigm, a paradigm that values change and connectedness. (p. 423)

Pavan and Reid (1994) studied four urban Chapter 1 principals where student achievement was higher than expected. They found that these principals were actively engaged with both students and teachers about teaching and learning. Characteristics and behaviors identified in instructional and transformational leaders were prevalent in all of these women. Pavan and Reid (1994) concluded: "Thus, this study confirms what research over the past 25 years has demonstrated: that those principals, predominantly women, who emphasize instructional issues in a supportive climate have more productive schools." (p. 437)

Transformation of theory. Stage six research extrapolated to incorporate new knowledge from the other stages with traditional educational administration research into theories that explain both men and women's experiences (Shakeshaft, 1989). Helgeson (1995) modeled this in the business world with her model, the web of inclusion, she proposed for business to be successful in the next century. "Even more than a pattern, the web of inclusion can be defined as a process, a method, a way of thinking about tasks and accomplishing them in time. And because webs may be different in size and shape, and serve different purposes at different stages, they are perhaps best described in terms of the principles by which they operate." (p.24) The web, born from feminine principles of collaboration and leading with voice from the

heart, proposed a gender-bias free model from which all may function and grow.

Feminism

Multiple definitions of feminism as well as multiple perspectives of what constitutes feminist research methodology exist. Reinharz (1992) in Feminist Methods in Social Research summarized her book into 10 themes, emphasizing that feminism is a perspective not a research method. Reinharz also stressed that the researcher frequently becomes an integral part of the research. “Once the project begins, a circular process ensues: the woman doing the study learns about herself as well as about the woman she is studying.” (127) Telling my story became part of the learning process of this research. Reinharz characterized feminist research as “self-reflexive, collaborative, attuned to process, oriented to social change, and designed to be *for* women rather than only *of* women.” (p. 269) Her writings further clarified the purpose of this study from a feminist framework.

Feminists write case studies for the same reasons that nonfeminist scholars write them – to illustrate an idea, to explain the process of development over time, to show the limits of generalizations, to explore uncharted issues by starting with a limited case, and to pose provocative questions. (p. 167)

With two limited cases I told the story of the development of two female public school administrators’ leadership careers. The narrative data produced no generalizations but posed a plethora of provocative questions.

Grogan (2000) identified the postmodern feminist themes of discourse, subjectivity, knowledge and power, and resistance to reconceptualize the

superintendency from 50 years of research. Informed by Foucault's use of the term discourse to understand how language positions people in power and subordinate relationships, Grogan (2000) explained that a woman superintendent becomes subjectified while reconciling the discourse of administration with the discourse of mothering or partnering. When Katie's personal and professional life collided at the football game, Katie chose to sit with her predecessor as opposed to making room for her simultaneously arriving husband. Katie's actions indicated no subordination in her relationship with her spouse. Her deference to her predecessor could be interpreted as an example of subordination discourse. Katie explained it as her being respectful. Radical feminism would suggest that in reality Katie's relationship with her predecessor gave him power and rendered her powerless. As a principal, Katie has not experienced subordination as she had in her journey to the principalship.

Barb was profoundly disturbed by the superintendent search company's representative's questions and observations about motherhood and female superintendent candidates. The male based company oppressed and subjectified Barb on the basis of not having children. The irony of this oppression arose from the company's embracing of the ethic of care (Grogan, 1998). Historically having children had been a barrier to obtaining a power position, now Barb's competency was being questioned because this man believed she could not possess the ethic of care without being a mother. Barb carefully provided evidence to this man that she was connected to children in a personal sense. A male dominated system

manipulated her discourse during her search for the superintendency. In her own district, Barb did not fight oppression from the males who fostered and supported her success. Barb did not adopt male values to advance within a traditional, bureaucratic system. Barb as associate superintendent had influenced the district to become more collaborative and problem solving based.

Doing this study during my own journey to the principalship created much cognitive dissonance for me as well as reinforcing that generalized feminist stereotypes gleaned from narratives of women's experiences are invalid. Each woman has a unique story and experience (Reinharz , 1992). I expected to hear similar stories of objectification and marginalization that I experienced when my physical appearance became more important than my knowledge and skills. Barb and Katie did not tell such stories. The oppressive interaction of the middle school staff with my discourse of caring when I became a middle school principal forced me to examine and reexamine my beliefs, actions, and vision. The feminist construct of male dominance and oppression existed as a conceptual model of student management desired by the staff. Gupton and Slick (1996) explained that the woman leadership style of "open, trusting, compassionate, understanding, and supportive of continuous learning" is not about being nice but about empowerment, productivity, and outcomes. (139) To some of the staff, my discourse was too nice. Katie had a similar experience when she was told by her superiors that she had to prove she could do high school discipline to be a high school principal. Her proving ground was

successful because this has not been an issue in her principalship. Barb never a building administrator had not experienced this tension.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Regan and Brooks (1995) identified feminist attributes of relational leadership. Katie possessed both masculinist and feminist attributes of leadership. The stories Barb shared illustrated strong feminist attributes. Katie's and Barb's paths to leadership differed greatly. Katie planned and selected positions that prepared her for her ultimate goal of being a high school principal. Barb did not have a career plan. Someone else selected each position for her as she journeyed to her current position of associate superintendent. When Barb did decide to seek the position of superintendent, her intuition told her the new position would not be the right fit.

When Barb and Katie reviewed their narratives their analysis varied. Barb believed her story and style was illustrative of being a woman. Barb told me, "Women and men differ in their thinking. Women think and act in interlocking circles. Conflict threatens the continuity of the circle. Women go to great lengths to not break circles. We avoid conflict because it is tragic to break circles. Women strive for connections. That is why women's intuition is strong and true. Men think of life as ladders to climb. Conflict knocks people off the ladder. Thus many men seek and are comfortable with conflict." Being a woman and being a leader are

intertwined for Barb. Katie believed her “womanness” has nothing to do with how she leads. She attributed her way of leading to her personality and each situation. In reviewing her narrative, Katie giggled with delight when she quipped, “I’m sorry for not being more feminine, NOT!” With only two informants, this study can neither support nor negate that leadership is gender based. Their stories shatter the statistically constructed woman of educational research.

Katie’s and Barb’s stories underline the need for more storytelling and study of women. Aspiring women administrators need to see themselves reflected in the literature. Writing Barb’s and Katie’s stories have given rise to more research questions than answers.

Further Research Questions

Are the feminist attributes of leadership as posited by Regan and Brooks (1995) valid? Is the Helgeson (1995) web of inclusion model of leadership gender based?

Are women mentoring women? The effect of female relationships on women leaders needs to be studied. A strong female mentor was absent in each of the informants’ journeys. A female mentor has been my only path to sanity in my principalship. I am not sure I would have survived those two difficult first years of my principalship without my learning partner. Does the queen bee syndrome really exist? Does the queen bee syndrome explain the lack of women mentoring women?

Does the gender of a mentor have impact on the leader? Are women leaders who are mentored by men different than women leaders who are mentored by women? How are they different? What is the long term impact of same gender or cross gender mentoring on leadership style?

Does a woman being married and having children impact how she leads? Do school districts consider marriage and children a positive or negative characteristic of an administrative candidate? Barb reacted strongly when her superintendent told her of the search firms question and comments about her not having children. If marriage and children are a positive characteristic, does sexual orientation thus affect leadership style or the employability of a female candidate?

What role does a spouse or partner play in the development of leadership? Katie spoke of her spouse's support. Barb rarely mentioned her spouse during the interviews. How does an administrative position affect a marriage? What is the rate of divorce in female administrators? Is it different than male administrators?

Is leadership style more dependent on location such as building versus district office than on gender? Is leadership style more dependent on job title than gender? Was Katie who she was because she was a building principal? Would Katie be different if she became a superintendent? Were the differences between Katie and Barb related to job location and job title?

Do women leaders have to behave differently than men leaders to demonstrate that they can be authoritative? I struggle with staff members perceiving me as weak

because I do not believe in punitive consequences. This did not seem to be an issue for Katie or Barb. Or do some women believe that they have to behave differently to demonstrate power? From where do these beliefs originate? Are they gender based, leadership style based, personality based and/or experience based?

What constitutes a more effective leader, management skills or leadership abilities? What situations necessitate one being more important than the other? Katie had skills in place when she became a principal. Barb learned the skills as she acquired each new position. I did not have the prerequisite management skills for the principalship I entered.

Are leadership style and leadership behaviors consistent through personal and professional life? If not, how does this impact the effectiveness of the leader? If there is inconsistency is it tied to gender role expectations that vary from home to the workplace? Does this dissonance contribute to burn out?

The questions this study surfaced stress the need for further research that examines the impact of gender on current leadership theory and practice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Participant Consent Form

IRB # 96-09-018 EX

The Leadership Stories of Women Public School Administrators

You are invited to participate in a program of research being conducted by Elizabeth Sullivan Scott for her doctoral dissertation in Leadership/Higher Education in UNL Teachers College. The purpose of this study is to tell the leadership stories of Three women public school administrators.

The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

You are invited to participate in this study because you are a female, public school administrator.

You are being asked to participate in 4 taped interviews and 4 half-day observations during a 1 month period during the 1996 -1997 school year. You are also being asked to share documents such as journals, resumes, correspondence, and any other artifacts that will tell your story of leadership. There is minimal risk associated with this research. Tapes will be secured in a locked storage facility and destroyed two years after the project is completed.

All data collected is available only to you and the researcher. To permit analysis of data, copies will be made of any documents and transcriptions. These copies will be identified only by the last four digits of your parent's phone number. Information obtained in the study may be published but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time during the study without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator or the University of Nebraska. Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may ask any questions concerning the research before agreeing to participate and/or during the study. If any questions you have on your rights as a research participant are not answered satisfactorily by the investigator, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board at 472 - 6965.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Elizabeth Sullivan Scott, M.S., Principal Investigator
Miles Bryant, Ph.D., Secondary Investigator

488-1735
472-3726

IRB # 96-09-018 EX**The Leadership Stories of Women Public School Administrators****1.) SIGNIFICANCE**

This study will explore the critical life events shaping the leadership of four women public administrators. Leadership research, based primarily on male subjects, provides models and theories of leadership conspicuously devoid of the growing, female experience in educational administration. This study will provide women the opportunity to see themselves in the educational literature as well as add to the body of knowledge combining the areas of leadership, feminism, and educational administration.

2.) METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study will employ a multiple case study design. I will spend one month collecting and analyzing data from each informant. Data collection will consist of four one-hour, open-ended interviews; four half-day observations in the informant's work place; and a gathering of archival and current documents from the informant. Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed verbatim by me. All data will be identified only by the last four digits of the informant's social security number. All tapes will be kept under lock by me, and after two years and the completion of the study, all tapes will be destroyed.

Data analysis will be conducted simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation and narrative report writing. As data are collected, continual categorizing and coding will occur. Field notes, log, and diary will be continually reviewed to determine accuracy in coding, categorizing, and identifying patterns and themes.

3.) SUBJECTS

I purposefully selected a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, a high school principal, and an elementary principal to share the critical life events that shaped their leadership. The superintendent of a rural school district is a European American woman with fourteen years of administrative experiences (6 years current superintendent position; 5 years elementary principal; 3 years elementary assistant principal). The assistant superintendent of an urban school district is a European American woman with 19 years of administrative experience (9 years current assistant superintendent position; 5 years personnel administrative assistant; 4 years as assistant director of a Teacher Crops project). The secondary principal of an urban high school is a European American woman with 11 years of administrative experience (3 years current principal position; 5 years assistant principal; 1 year as a middle level assistant principal; 1 year as an elementary coordinator; 1 year as a staff development coordinator). The elementary principal of an urban elementary school is an African American woman with 5 years of administrative experience (1 year current principal position; 4 years as an elementary assistant principal). The superintendent and the elementary principal were educated outside of this geographic area and also have held administrative positions in other parts of the country. These women were selected because they provide multiple perspectives (different levels, different job descriptions, and a different ethnic group) to my study.

4.) EXEMPT JUSTIFICATION

This research will be conducted in an established educational setting. The informants will have full control of the information they divulge during interviews and in documents they provide. Informants will also review written narratives after

data analysis and may remove or change any statements. Informants will sign an informed consent form and will have the right to remain anonymous. This research project has the approval of the superintendent and associate superintendent of the two school districts involved. They are both informants for this study. This research project does not involve sensitive topics or vulnerable subjects.

5. &6.) INFORMED CONSENT

A copy of the informed consent form is attached. I will ask all four informants to sign the form and will provide them with a signed copy.

7.) QUESTIONNAIRES

All interviews will employ an open-ended format. The inductive nature of qualitative research will allow for questions to emerge that will explore and describe how critical life events shape leadership. The first interview will focus on demographic detail and decisions to become an administrator. The second interview will address experiences as an administrator. The third interview will discuss conceptualizations of leadership. The fourth interview will address topics brought forward in the other interviews. No specific questionnaires or surveys are planned for this study; attached is a list of “starter” questions intended to elicit decision making strategies and experiences as administrators.

8.) OTHER APPROVALS

No other approvals should be necessary for this project.

9.) FUNDING PROPOSALS

There is no outside funding for this project.

Appendix B
Individual Informant Time Line

Informant: _____ **Month:** _____

	Data	Location		Day/Date/Time
Week 1 Interview 1	_____	_____		_____
(Interview Protocol and Archival and Current Document Request)				
Observation 1	_____	_____		_____
Week 2 Interview 2	_____	_____		_____
(Member Check on Interview 1 and Observation 2; Document Gathering)				
Observation 2	_____	_____		_____
Week 3 Interview 3	_____	_____		_____
(Member Check on Interview 2, Observation 2, and Documents)				
Observation 3	_____	_____		_____
Week 4 Observation 4	_____	_____		_____
(Document Gathering from month)				
Interview 4	_____	_____		_____
(Member Check on Case Write-up and Closure)				

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

Informant: _____ Tape Number: _____
Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Interview Number: _____

Possible Interview Questions:

Interview 1:

Establish demographic information. (education, age, family, current position)

How did you decide to become an educational administrator?

What did you do to achieve that goal?

What special memories do you have of that journey?

What painful memories do you have of that journey?

Interview 2:

What different administrative positions have you held?

What were those jobs like?

How would your colleagues at each job describe you?

What were your challenges?

How did you meet those challenges?

Interview 3:

Describe a leader you admire and tell me why.

Describe your leadership style.

Describe a situation where you haven't been "true" to your leadership style.

Interview 4:

Questions will emerge from data analysis.