Introduction

The Spirit of Leadership

*There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to con-
duct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the
introduction of a new order of things, because the innovator has for
enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and
lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.*

—Machiavelli

When asked to consider a metaphor that best described her as a
leader, the principal blushed slightly. "Hmm," she mused. "I'm
not really a metaphoric thinker." Then, after a pause, she took a risk and
likened herself to a peach pit. "I guess you could say I'm at the core of pro-
viding fertile knowledge," she offered tentatively. Feeling encouraged, she
added, "The peach pit cultivates development much like what I try to do in
providing vision. My job is to allow information and experience to grow
around our mission to foster continuous growth." She sat back and smiled
sheepishly, obviously pleased with her new perspective. "You know," she
confessed, "I've never thought of myself like that. What a novel way to
describe my sense of purpose."

This is a book that tells similar stories about leaders. It digs deeper into
the spiritual myths that inspire their work. By accessing images and arti-
facts to describe their fundamental beliefs, we listened as principals used
metaphors to analyze and reframe their professional mission. Often their
stories created unique and refreshing views about their work and life
ambitions. For them, metaphors were the "right way" out of the left brain
to reveal deeper understandings about themselves.

The impetus for writing this book comes from our desire to find a way
into the realm of spiritual values that inspire educational leaders. From

countless conversations with principals, from essays they've written, from the rich tapestry of artwork they've created, and from artifacts they've shared, we discovered an alluring trove of stories revealing leaders' divine purposes in the form of three spiritual archetypes or personal myths. Archetypes represent universal, often idealized symbols that describe human experience and assist in the shaping of one's worldview (Kreffing & Frost, 1984).

The *Touchstone* leader represents the unwavering focal point of vision for his or her school community, frequently recognized by colleagues, students, and parents as the steadfast decision maker and change agent dedicated to moving the school culture forward. The *Advocate* is best characterized as the champion for a cause beyond oneself, routinely driven by an unswerving commitment to equity and fairness. The *Advocate* recognizes the school as a microcosm of larger society and is devoted to improving individual lives, communities, and institutions. The *Parent* symbolizes the archetypal leader who is admired as the icon of an ethic of care. This is the leader whose approach to his or her work is influenced by an instinctual desire to build relationships and nurture the educational community, to encourage people to discover their hidden talents in an environment of trust and support.

These archetypes are represented by what Paulo Freire (1986) called "thematic universes," or conceptual beliefs that stimulate leaders' desires and dreams as individuals and as professionals. As personal myths, the archetypes represent core themes that are perpetuated throughout peoples' lives. In another sense, we've discovered their spiritual intelligence, evidenced by unconscious insights about their personal journeys. "As the individual begins to reflect on his life through the archetypes and mythological images common to mankind, his awareness may begin to shift to a more universal perspective" (Wilbur, 1979).

When our leaders reflected on their metaphors, they discovered a new province for learning. Not only were their metaphors products of the imagination, but they also represented a process or avenue in which leaders could access personal myths or generative themes that instructed and guided their moral purposes.

The historical associations our leaders cherish as important lessons are enhanced in memorable tales and images that influence the relationship between their spirituality and school leadership. How connected they felt to issues beyond and within themselves and how well they aligned their public and private lives with deep and compelling values are all part of what Sousa (2003) called spirituality. We agree with his contention that all leaders are driven by the forces of spirituality. Our book discusses how the leaders we met translated their core values by way of metaphor into the following constellation of generative and spiritual themes.

- A cause beyond oneself
- An ethic of care
- A sense of purpose, reliability, and dedication to the school community
- A conviction to inspire others to seek their full potential
- An unconscious and compelling need to fulfill strong and intimate beliefs

We thought a lot about Janet Surrey and her colleagues from the Stone Center who studied female growth and development. They acknowledged a struggle to find a meaningful language to formulate and expand on the ideas and experiences of women. Rather than continue to search for alternative channels to explain women's history, they acquiesced to, in their words, "our old and awkward language." From our dialogues with leaders, however, we were surprised when metaphors revealed a provocative and powerful vehicle for describing both women's and men's deep and often unconscious convictions.

Our exploration and experimentation with imagery involved the integration of individual experiences, attitudes, values, and beliefs. Metaphoric thinking enabled our leaders to bring all those fragmented and compartmentalized elements together into the form of generative themes. Their subsequent reflection on those themes activated profound and enduring truths about their intrinsic purposes.

The unifying theory that merged the constellation of core beliefs and themes that perpetuated leaders' personal and professional behaviors was characterized by personal myths. The creation of personal myths evolved developmentally from identifying central themes of experiences, feelings, images, and behaviors that served as the primary motivation for the ways in which leaders behaved in the past and present. By revealing those myths through metaphoric reframing, these men and women gained a new sense of personal history and professional legacy that was transformative and inspired them with renewed energy and resolve.

In the first three chapters we've provided reflective essays as exemplars by school leaders to reveal the three archetypes: the Touchstone, the Advocate, and the Parent. These chapters address the purpose of the book by providing specific examples of each leadership archetype.

We'll also include in each section a developmental story about David, a principal whose professional journey characterized each of the archetypes and dramatized the progressive process associated with metaphoric reframing. We believe David's metamorphosis can be useful in the workplace to spur discussion "outside the box."

Each of the first three chapters will conclude with a reflection about the leaders we've selected and ways for readers to integrate these stories with their own professional work. We will also anchor these archetypes to

the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), whose goals are as follows:

> to stimulate vigorous thought and dialogue about quality educational leadership among stakeholders in the area of school administration. A second intent is to provide raw material that will help stakeholders across the educational landscape (e.g., state agencies, professional associations, institutions of higher education) enhance the quality of educational leadership throughout the nation's schools. (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996)

To remain consistent with the intent of this book, we'll also provide a variety of lenses and conceptual constructs for readers to reframe their thinking about leadership behaviors.

Chapter 4 focuses on metaphoric reframing as a vehicle for creative leadership. We look at significant writers who've written compellingly about leadership and discuss how their work instructed and inspired our perspectives and theories. Our analysis of the stories and metaphors created by leaders suggested to us that personal myths were responsible for the ways in which these individuals behaved and acted on their core values. Chapter 4 explains the relationship between metaphors and myths and their contribution to effective and compassionate leadership in schools and organizations.

Chapter 5 identifies practical applications of conceptual thinking through metaphor and organizational strategies for effective change. By the time you've finished reading our book and engaging with the activities, we trust that you'll have gained a clearer sense of who you are as a leader and how to enhance your repertoire with new and creative skills. Ultimately, we hope you'll discover a newfound sense of your own history that will inspire your professional work and enrich your personal life.