The Oxford Handbook of Compassion Science

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Abstract
This chapter focuses on how leaders matter for the expression of compassion in organizations. Leaders are imbued with both instrumental and symbolic power to shape individual and organizational responses to suffering. To understand how leaders impact a system's compassionate responses, we focus on leadership moves, defined as actions taken by leaders in relation to those who are suffering and/or those who are seeking to alleviate suffering. We identify twelve leadership moves and offer a theoretical view of how these twelve leaders' moves impact the way emergent compassion processes unfold. We focus particularly on the importance of (1) how leadership moves shape the expression of suffering; (2) how leaders draw attention to pain; (3) how leaders feel and express emotion; and (4) how they frame and narrate suffering. This review illuminates the variety of ways that leaders matter and invites further research into new questions about compassion and leadership.

Key Words: leadership, emotion, sensemaking, role modeling, suffering at work

Work organizations play a pivotal role in both creating and alleviating suffering (Frost, 1999). In contemporary life, workplaces are the terrain where many people spend the majority of their waking hours. Work is often a crucial locus of identity for people (Ashforth & Mael, 1989), as well as a source of purpose, accomplishment, growth, and thriving (Sonenshein, Dutton, Grant, Spelman, & Suls, 2013). On the other hand, the absence of work can be a significant source of economic suffering for people and communities (e.g., Anderson, 2001; Wilson, 1996). The absence of work also causes mental and emotional pain that flows from a loss of identity, purpose, dignity, and meaningful engagement with others (Drier, 2007; Paul & Moser, 2009; Wilson, 1996).

In many instances of suffering, organizational boundaries become blurry. People bring suffering created at home to work, to school, to curricula, and to community organizations. Our independence with each other in getting work done makes it clear that we don't "check our suffering at the door." Likewise, suffering created in organizations also marches back home with people. The flow of suffering into and out of work contexts makes it important to understand, not just the individual science of compassion, but also how organizational leaders, cultures, structures, and practices shape the ability and willingness of organizational members to respond to suffering that crosses the impermeable membrane between work and home (Lilus, Worline, Damon, Kanos, & Maitlis, 2011). In this chapter, we focus particularly on leaders, who are imbued with the instrumental and symbolic power to shape individual and organizational responses to the presence of suffering in workplaces. Further, we focus on the actions and interactions leaders take—their "moves"—to unpack the process by which leaders influence an organization's compassionate responses to suffering.

To understand the process of leading in ways that draw out compassion in a system, we emphasize the
importance of understanding how leaders' moves impact a system's compassionate responses. In line with this goal, we adopt a social-interaction view of leadership, where "leadership" is defined, not as individualistic, hierarchical, or one-directional, but rather as "repeated leading-following interactions" (DeRue, 2011, p. 126). In this view, leadership is constituted through interactions between people in context. Leaders can influence compassion in organizations through their interactions with people, as well as through the ways they shape the work context. This definition assumes that leaders and followers co-construct relations, identities, and resources that create patterns at the collective level, and that is what we refer to as leadership (DeRue, 2011).

Compassion as a Process in Organizations

This chapter provides a view of compassion that is distinctly organizational. It builds on physiological and psychological research summarized and reviewed by other chapters in this handbook, but it also draws from the interdisciplinary science of organizational studies, which situates at the intersection of organizational behavior, sociology, psychology, economics, and organizational theory. While many readers familiar with the psychology of compassion will recognize the kinds of processes proposed here, organizational theory may be less familiar, with its strong ties to social structures, social processes, and collective outcomes (Scott & Davis, 2007; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2012). It is important to keep this level of theory in the foreground in order to understand the contextually embedded relationship between leadership and compassion. Accordingly, we integrate psychological and sociological approaches to compassion—expanding the psychological definition of compassion slightly to incorporate four social processes that are essential to compassion in organizations.

Some of the four-part process view that we adopt is evident in this volume's definition of compassion as "a feeling that arises in witnessing another's suffering and that motivates a subsequent desire to help" (Guerra, Rehner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010, p. 353). Dutton, Workman, and Hardin (2014), unpacking compassion as an organizational process, elaborate that this definition entails attention to and noticing of suffering, as well as interpreting or making sense of suffering in context, and these two processes inform the feeling that arises, as well as the motivation and the actions that are taken in response to suffering. We add the Dutton, Workman, and Hardin (2014) depiction of compassion as a social process to the account of compassion as an individual emotion. We therefore define compassion as a four-part process that includes (1) attention to suffering, (2) "sentimentalizing" about suffering, (3) felt empathic concern, and (4) action to alleviate suffering. This rendering of compassion as a four-part social process is depicted in Figure 31.1, adapted from Dutton, Workman, and Hardin (2014) review. It depicts essential aspects of compassion as a social process to help us map how aspects of organizations, including leadership, affect the process.

We will also unpack leaders' impacts on the compassion process in organizations in four steps that correspond to this process view. First, we ask how leaders structure attention or inattention to suffering. Second, we focus on how leaders shape the meaning of suffering. Third, we emphasize how leaders impact feelings of empathic concern as part of a process of compassion. And fourth, we emphasize that, in organizations, compassion comprises actions aimed to alleviate suffering, and leaders influence this critical phase of the compassion process as well.

Understanding Compassion as a Process

A process view of compassion necessarily moves us beyond an individualistic understanding, helping us see compassion as it unfolds between people in context. We will briefly discuss this understanding of compassion for those who are more familiar with an individual definition, using Figure 31.1 as a guide.

Point A of Figure 31.1 calls attention to how suffering emerges inside an organizational context in what Lillios and colleagues (Lillios, Worsline, Marlit, Kainos, Dutton, & Froon, 2008) refer to as "pain triggers." Pain triggers include suffering originating from work itself, such as being punished or bullied, for an error, as well as situations arising from life outside of work. Point A of Figure 31.1 also makes it clear that episodes of suffering launch an emergent process of organizing, where each subsequent aspect of the process is unique to that instance of suffering. Point B of Figure 31.1 emphasizes that suffering can be expressed in a variety of ways, and the expression of suffering is crucial to how the process unfolds. Organizational members must notice and make sense of expressed suffering in order for compassion to occur. People's willingness and ability to express suffering in organizations hinges on many factors, including personal worries about upsetting others (Goodrum, 2008), role expectations for professionalism (Atkins & Parker, 2012).

Figure 31.1: Essential aspects of compassion as a social process in organizations. Adapted from Dutton, Workman, & Hardin (2014). Companions of social psychology. Organizational Psychology of Organizational Behavior, 1, 127-145.
relational closeness (Clark, 1987), norms for emotional expression (Ellenbogen, 2007), and many others, including leadership (see Dutton et al., 2014). We focus here on the role of leaders and the effects of leadership on the compassion process for other organizational aspects and impacts of compassion, see Cameron, Chen et al. (2017).

Point C of Figure 31.1 emphasizes the important and central role of sensemaking or meaning-making in the unfolding of compassion as a social process. In organizations, each aspect of the compassion process hinges on the meaning that people make of what is happening. When people in organizations make sense of suffering in ways that suggest it is unprofessional or illegitimate (e.g., Goodrum, 2008; Simpson, Clegg, & Pittin, 2010a), compassion can be blocked. While we might wish that all expressions of suffering would be greeted with compassion, research shows that the "appraisals" or meaningful accounts people make of suffering feed directly into their feelings of empathy and willingness to act with compassion (Akinra & Parker, 2012; Goetz et al., 2010). Later, we discuss the important roles of leaders in shaping these appraisals and collective sensemaking in relation to suffering in ways that fuel or dampen compassion.

Point D of Figure 31.1 emphasizes that it is possible for suffering to be ignored in organizations. The context shapes what people attend to in powerful ways. Research indicates that attentional load, time pressures, and performance demands all influence whether or not suffering is noticed, even by those who are individually likely to act with compassion (e.g., Chugh, 2004; Darley & Batson, 1973). In one well-known social psychology study, participants who were recruited from a seminar were asked to prepare and deliver an impromptu three- to five-minute speech on the topic of "The Good Samaritan," a Biblical parable related to helping strangers. In one study condition, participants and were told that they were late and had to hurry to the room where the speech would be given. As part of the research design, all participants walked through an alley to get to the room where they would give their speech. In the hurry was a person slumped in a doorway who coughed and groaned as the participant walked by. The victim, actually a confederate in the study, recorded the degree of a subject's helping. Of the people who were told to hurry, only 10% stopped to help, even though they were hurrying to give a speech about the Good Samaritan (Darley & Batson, 1973). Work in organizations are full of time and performance pressures that preoccupy people and hinder their ability to notice the state of others. Point E of Figure 31.1 emphasizes that attention and the ability to appraise and make meaning out of the likelihood of felt empathic concern. Felt empathic concern is a primary component of the compassion process, and it is important in motivating compassionate action, as demonstrated by scholars such as Batson (2014). Here we simply point out that contextual factors are crucial in shaping the link between noticing suffering and feeling empathic concern. For instance, toxic work relationships can sour people toward one another in ways that lead them to feel indifference rather than concern toward one another's pain (Pron, 2003; Scandura, 1998). In some work organizations, which value independence and self-reliance rather than interdependence and mutual regard, people treat suffering from job stress and burnout with criticism rather than compassion (e.g., Meyerson, 1994). Widespread incivility in the workplace can lead people to become desensitized to or disregard indicators of pain or feel distress rather than empathic concern toward suffering (Pron 2003; Pearson & Porath, 2009). With regard to felt empathic concern and compassion in action, as we will show, leaders are an important source of modeling how to feel and how to act.

Point F of Figure 31.1 shows that all of these factors in the process contribute to the overall likelihood and shape of compassionate actions in organizations. Compassionate actions are highly diverse, ranging from something as seemingly minor as extending a supportive hand on a shoulder, to something as seemingly major as a large financial donation (Lillius et al., 2008). Even seemingly small acts of compassion in organizations are often perceived as significant, so the impact ascribed to these actions cannot be determined in advance or easily captured by outsiders (Lillius et al., 2008).

Point G of Figure 31.1 draws attention to the variety of outcomes of the unfolding process. Some of these outcomes are material resources, such as when co-workers donate money or other goods to alleviate suffering. Others are psychological resources such as social and emotional support for coping and recovery. Still others are meaning-based resources such as a different view of self or work or co-workers (Lillius et al., 2008). Giving, receiving, or witnessing compassion in an organization is expressed, and this influence is transmitted through the process of compassion in organizations. We define leadership move, in keeping with Goffman (1981), as actions taken in relation to others—that are behavior that constitute interpersonal interactions. Leadership moves related to compassion are actions taken by leaders in relation to others who are suffering and/or actions taken by leaders in relation to people who are seeking to alleviate suffering in the organization. For instance, someone in a formal leadership role giving a speech that draws attention to compassion being mobilized in an organization or making a leadership move related to compassion because it amplifies or enhances the attention to suffering and the actions being taken to alleviate suffering.

Theorizing about moves is common in organizational studies, building on a sociological view of interactions that comprise social structures. Moves are a form of practical knowing-in-action (Dutton, Ashford, O'Neil; & Lawrence, 2001; Penfold, 1992), or micro-routines of a routine (Gordal, Nelson, & Siino, 2015; Penfold & Rueter, 1994). Moves are interpersonal actions that fuel common organizational patterns. In relation to compassion, leaders' moves show us the ways that people in positions of influence can use knowing-in-action to influence whether or how compassion is enacted. A focus on leaders' moves emphasizes social process and leading-following interactions, helping to avoid seeing leadership as overly individualistic or confounding it with hierarchy and ascription (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). From this point of view, a leadership move related to compassion is never isolated to the person acting, but is part of a process in which multiple people are attending, interpreting, feeling, and acting in ways that shape compassion in the organization (Deal & Peterson, 1994; DeRue, 2011). Writing about how leaders shape schools, Peterson and Deal (1998) note that all leadership moves shape an organization's culture:

"The role of ... leaders in the crafting of cultures is pervasive... Their words, their nonverbal messages, their actions (we would add their emotions), and their accomplishments all shape culture. They are models, posters, poets, actors, and healers. They are historians and anthropologists. They are visionaries and dreamers. (p. 30)"

In similar fashion, we see that a wide variety of leaders' moves shape compassion as a social process in organizations and cultures. Their influence is pervasive in shaping whether and how compassion is expressed, the structure of leadership moves that shape the process of compassion in organizations. We define
Figure 31.2 Leadership moves that shape compassion in organizations. Adapted from Dutton, Workman, & Hackman (2016). Compassion at work. Annual Review of Organizational Psychology & Organizational Behavior, 1, 277–304.
sorrow" (p. 58). When leaders fail to acknowledge or express their own suffering, the silence often leaves organizational members uncertain about how to handle difficult issues or helpless to know what to do or respond to one another and those in pain (Dunton et al., 2002).

Senge and colleagues (2005) refer to "presence" as a core capacity of leaders who create change in systems by referring to presence in relation to time (conscious and aware of the moment), orientation toward others (deep listening and openness beyond preconceptions), and forces beyond one's control (letting go of old identities, crossing movement or evolution, participating in a larger field). This multidimensional understanding of presence offers links to the power of spiritual and wisdom traditions from around the world, as well as tapping into possibilities for shifts in groups and organizations (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2005). As a form of felt physical or psychological co-location, emotional openness, and participation in something larger than the self, this move of creating felt presence is a palpable experience (Hallowell, 1999).

Some scholars claim that organizations are spaces of authority, in which participants are socialized to accept meaning that others create for them, particularly others in positions of power (Gemmill & Oakley, 1992). Leadership presence can break down barriers created by power or status differences and emphasize equality and similarity through showing the ability listen and engage with one who is suffering (Frost, 1999; 2003). In a study of women who experienced miscarriages or stillbirths, Hazen (2003) found that the space for meaning-making granted by co-workers mattered in whether or not the experience of suffering made work more or less meaningful (see also Hazen, 2008). Those whose suffering was greeted with clichéd responses that imposed meaning on them (e.g., "You are young; you have time to have another child") experienced what the researchers called "disenfranchised grief" and did not experience suffering as a source of meaningful engagement with colleagues. As a result, work became less compassionate and meaningful. Alternatively, women who were greeted by colleagues, including supervisors and leaders, who simply listened and engaged in being what Hazen (2003, p. 163) described as "witnesses ... to the mother's story of what happened" were able to use their experiences of suffering to ultimately see their work as more meaningful and to develop more compassion in their work lives over the long term. Overall, managers, supervisors, and leaders' capacities to engage as witnesses to the story of what happened in people's suffering create a form of felt presence that imbues the expression of suffering with meaning and offers the workplace as a space of growth in relation to suffering.

SUMMARY
Table 3.1 summarizes the leadership moves discussed in this section (moves 1 & 2). By creating space for the expression of suffering, leaders open up or close down people's willingness to be with one another as a community in the midst of suffering (Dunton et al., 2002). By creating felt presence with those who are suffering, a leader shifts toward participating in ways that are larger than the self, helping develop a sense of oneness, whole-ness, open-heartedness, or grace that invites transformation of suffering (Senge et al., 2005). These moves are referenced in Figure 3.1 of Chapter 3.2, which shows that creating space for the expression of suffering and creating felt presence are fundamental to shaping compassion as a social process in organizations. If these moves are absent, it will be less likely that compassion is expressed, because it will be more difficult for people in the organization to notice, make meaning, feel and act in ways that coordinate and mobilize helpful action in response to suffering. On the other hand, when these moves are done with skill by leaders, compassion in organizations becomes more likely because it becomes far easier for many people in the organization to notice, make meaning, feel, and act in ways that alleviate suffering.

Leaders Direct Attention in Organizations
What leaders pay attention to in matters of organization. In part, this is because they can direct resources toward issues that garner their attention. In addition, others are likely to pay attention to issues leaders focus on. How leaders shape and direct their own and other people's attention in regard to suffering can dramatically shape the compassion process. Here we articulate three leadership moves related to attention: In move 3, leaders can counter the attentional effects of power that inhibit their ability to notice others' full human state, fostering greater compassion. In move 4, leaders can explicitly direct attention to suffering and compassion in their organizations. In move 5, leaders can influence practices and routines that affect whether and how suffering and compassion are regularly given attention by many members of the organization.

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(continued)
suffering are often ambiguous, especially when people strive to stifle their suffering. For leaders, cues may be ambiguous because people often attempt to keep their suffering out of the eye of authority. Leaders should foster greater attention to suffering and compassion in their organizations by developing and listening to their intimations about the state of others, engaging in active listening, and seeking out additional information (Way, 2010). Unfortunately, time pressures and the pace of work for leaders may keep them from engaging in this kind of attention, which requires effortful thinking and conscious deliberation (Clough, 2004). In order to counter this, leaders can ask managers, project leaders, and members of their teams to help make suffering obvious and direct their line of sight. One organization we studied had a policy of notifying its top leaders of significant suffering of the lives of employees within 48 hours, bringing more suffering to the conscious attention of leaders in a systematic manner that they were less likely to overlook.

Research supports the power of this leadership move as well. Fluke (1993) shows that holding and endorsing explicit values related to humanity and egalitarianism can shift the attention of those in power toward greater compassion. Fluke (1993) also illuminates the power of self-concepts for leaders, such as being fair-minded or caring, and suggests that recalling these self-concepts and values can reduce the effects of power on attention. Growing emphasis on mindfulness and contemplation for leaders and leadership development (e.g., Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Jinka, 2015) suggests that these types of interventions can also help leaders notice more suffering and give greater attention to compassion in their organizations.
attention-based view of organizations assert that organizational-level outcomes such as adaptation or strategic success follow from the way that attention is allocated across the organization (Ocasio, 1997; 2011). Leaders therefore must use all the tools at their disposal to direct attention in ways that create a focus of time, energy, and effort on a selected set of action repertoires that are important for the organization (Ocasio, 1997). Organizational scholars refer to this collective capacity to pay attention to selected actions as "attentional engagement," defined as an organization's "intentional, sustained allocation of cognitive resources to guide problem solving, planning, sensemaking, and decision making" (Ocasio, 2011, p. 1288). We suggest that this move helps leaders direct the attentional engagement of their organizations toward compassion.

We return to Jeff Weiner's example at LinkedIn to demonstrate how his emphasis on compassion management has infused attention to compassion into the organization's everyday work practices. A case study that focused on how interns are recruited and hired at LinkedIn (Dutton & Reed, 2014) documents a hiring routine that is informed by how candidates respond to an instance of employee suffering. The human resource leader who developed this hiring practice links his efforts to develop compassionate hiring routines to Weiner's valuing of compassion. This leadership move shifts a routine that many people participate in to include attention to compassion.

SUMMARY

Table 31.1 summarises the three leadership moves described in this section. Point 2 in Figure 31.2 depicts how these leadership moves related to attention are likely to affect the overall compassion process by shaping what people notice as part of their work environment. Three insights emerge from considering these attention-based leadership moves. First, what leaders attend to is shaped by their position in the social system. Accordingly, leaders are not simply acting in an effort to counter the effects of status and power on their ability to attend to the full humanity of those in lower-status or lesser- position positions. Second, the symbolic power of leaders enables them to direct others' attention to suffering and compassion in ways that can dramatically increase compassion in organizations. And third, leaders' attention is often infused into routines and practices that shape the attentional engagement of the whole organization, and thus attention gets directed to compassion as a priority in daily work.

Leaders Influence the Sense People Make of Organizational Events

The idea of sensemaking figures prominently in the model of compassion as a social process, connecting each aspect of the compassion process, as shown in Figure 31.2. This concept is linked to the idea of "appraisals" that figures into individual responses to suffering (Atkins & Parker, 2012; Goetz, Kelman, & Simon-Thomas, 2010). Organizational scholars posit that the organizational context and organizational interactions figure prominently into the creation of meaning, and as such, the creation of meaning is not only an individual-level but also a collective-level process—suffering every aspect of organizational life (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Sensemaking is a theory that explains the process by which people exert effort to understand or interpret meaning to events, issues, or situations that are ambiguous, contradictory, or confusing, and how organizations influence this effort to impute meaning (Weick, 1995; Mattila & Christianson, 2014). Smircich and Morgan (1982) point out that organizational leaders are critical for sensemaking, as leaders help make the world sensible to organizational members.

From this perspective, organizational members "surrender their power to interpret and define reality to others" in leadership positions, and leadership roles formalize and institutionalize the leader's right to define the nature of experience (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Some scholars refer to leaders' engagement in this process as "sensemaking," defined as an attempt to "influence the sensemaking and meaning construction of others toward a preferred redefinition of organizational reality" (Cossis & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 442). Through sensemaking, leaders' shape, not only organizational members' attention (which overlaps with what was discussed above), but also their feeling, and action (Mattila & Lawrence, 2007). While direct research on how leaders make sense of suffering and compassion is limited, we draw on theories of sensemaking and sensegiving to articulate two leadership moves that shape compassion in organizations by how they modify the interpretation and meaning of reality. In move 6, leaders influence the interpretations of suffering and compassion as relevant and legitimate in the organizational context. In move 7, leaders give sense to suffering through their use of narrative vision, rituals, and stories.

Move 6: Legitimizing Suffering and Compassion as Part of the Organization's Work

The move in which someone interprets that another person deserves compassion dramatically impacts their willingness to feel empathy and act with compassion (Atkins & Parker, 2012; Goetz, Kelman, & Simon-Thomas, 2010). In organizations, people's deservingness or the worthiness of responding to suffering is often contextual or unclear. Leaders can foster compassion in organizations by making suffering look worthy of our compassion. They can also provide followers with a sense that it is legitimate and valuable within the purview of their work to act with compassion. We saw a vivid example of this in one leader's communication about a stigmatized form of suffering that impacts organizations at many kinds of suicide. Here is an excerpt of a message this leader sent to the entire university community upon the suicide of a student. Pay particular attention to the moves in this leadership communication that convey deservingness and legitimate compassion as part of the work of the university community:

You likely heard that, last weekend, we lost a student, a young man who tragically took his own life. Suicide is not easy for many of us to talk about. You may not want to even read further. I ask that you do, for the well-being of us all.

As uncomfortable as the topic may be, it is truly amazing how many of our lives have been or will be touched by suicide and the mental distress and disease that underlies it: family, friends… suicide is endemic among those in the typical college-age group. I feel this pain past year and your year. Can we change that?

My life has been affected, having lost a college-age son to this epidemic. Our reluctance to talk about such topics—suicide, depression, other mental distress and disease—is a failure. I concluded, part of what can make ailments like depression the deadly diseases that they can be. Because of the stigma surrounding such topics, people do not bring the manifestations of a usually very treatable problem to the attention of others. In my layman's view, our brains are very powerful and, mental ailments can use that awesome brainpower, refuse to let others know their very existence from the person with the ailments. Ditto consequences can then results.

So, I took a vow, no matter how personally painful it was, to never be so embarrassed or afraid to talk about these subjects. Or, about my own.

That is step one and I encourage you to consider joining me in that vow: break the stigma surrounding these topics by being willing to discuss them just as you would any other ailment to which we beautifully complex human beings are sometimes vulnerable (personal communication, reprinted with permission).

In this campus-wide communication, the leader's move to give sense to the suffering and compassion makes this suicide relevant to the entire community and the goals of the university. The leader's move hopes to shift followers' 'appraisals of suicide, which may be greeted with scorn or fear, and conveys instead a sense of empathic concern and an opportunity to act with compassion toward one another as "beautifully complex human beings." The leader's message goes on to emphasize what members of the university can do, beyond being willing to feel empathic concern for mental ill- ness among those in the community: extending the message by enumerating possible actions, the leader's sensemaking also shapes the appraisals of members about whether they have any capacity to alleviate this suffering, emphasizing resources to take action. Research demonstrates that when we interpret that we can act to address suffering, compassion is more likely (see Atkins & Parker, 2012; Goetz et al., 2010; Lazrus & Folkman, 1984).

Simpson and colleagues (2014a) point out that not all compassion action is legitimate in organizations, so leadership moves can help enhance the legitimacy of compassionate actions. When suffering and compassion are interpreted as legitimate, they are seen by many in the organization as appropriate and normal elements of a person's experience. Thus, while a leader emphasizes the appropriateness of addressing suffering like suicide, the suffering and the compassionate action to alleviate that suffering take on more legitimacy throughout the organization. Organizational research emphasizes three types of appraisals that can help leaders legitimate suffering and compassion (Atkins & Parker, 2012):

1. Appraisals of the goal-relevance of the suffering in the organization—i.e., is it in the scope of my work to address this suffering?
2. Appraisals of the deservingness of the suffering—i.e., are the people suffering worthy of my concern?
3. Appraisals of the degree to which organization members believe they can bring about desired outcomes—i.e., is there something I can do from my position in this workplace?
We see all three of these types of appraisals in the university president’s communication, which is part of what makes it such a strong message in support of compassion in his organization.

When leaders make sense of reality in ways that consistently emphasize the legitimacy of responding to suffering with compassion, and offer appraisals that support acting with compassion, as this university president did, this move amplifies the likelihood that people across the organization will feel empathic concern and act with compassion.

**Move 7: Giving Sense to Suffering in Rituals and Stories**

We expect leaders to synthesize information and use it to create an overarching vision that others can adopt and use to guide their actions (Ciocca & Chritsopodi, 1991). Leaders can help people throughout an organization make sense of suffering and act with compassion by incorporating compassion into their overarching vision and their stories of success. In our study of an organizational response to members who lost everything in a fire, we saw the power of a leader who engaged in storytelling about the suffering and linked it to an overall vision for the organization as a caring community that “takes care of its own” (Dutton et al., 2006). This sense-giving move by the leader tied the suffering engendered by the fire to the vision of the community as whole, activating collective empathy and spawning coordinated compassionate action. Leaders’ moves in relation to conveying an overarching vision that fosters compassion often take the form of a story or a narrative, as in this case. Stories like these “frame” experience and help members of the organization understand what is more or less important in ways that guide future organizational actions (Flaas & Zajic, 2006; Smircich & Morgan, 1982).

When we point to organizational culture, we often point to a leader’s role in rituals. Rituals are essential in cultures because they reinforce assumptions about the nature of the organization, the emotion-display rules in operation, and the behaviors expected by groups. Here, the president told us of his visits to see the people impacted by the fire (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Rituals are also important and impactful moments for sensemaking (Matilis & Lawrence, 2007). In one study, we witnessed a ritual by a leadership team in the death of an employee’s family member. This leader asked the entire organization to join in a circle of silence. This ritual invited members of the organization to participate in a compassionate response to loss and reinforced the value of compassionate community. This leadership move offers a clear example of how leaders can deploy rituals in the service of enhancing the organization’s compassion.

**Summary**

Table 31.1 summarizes two leadership moves that are important to see, and offer appraisals that support acting with compassion, as this university president did, this move amplifies the likelihood that people across the organization will feel empathic concern and act with compassion. These interpretations can amplify compassion in organizations by making suffering and compassion seem more relevant and legitimate. A second insight is that leaders’ moves can harness the power of ritual to affirm and catalyze compassion in cultural rituals. These rituals reinforce cultural assumptions, and leaders can shape the rituals in ways that give meaning to suffering and invite people to participate in the compassion process in new ways.

**Leaders Shape the Context for Empathic Concern**

While cognitive and rational views have dominated organization theory, attention to emotion in organizations has exploded over the past two decades, with evidence showing that emotion is intrinsic to the social ordering of activity (Ellenbein, 2007; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Leadership research also shows a growing emphasis on the centrality of emotion, particularly theories that emphasize charisma and transformational qualities of leaders (e.g., Bass, 1985; House, 1977; Conger & Kanungo, 1998), as well as those that emphasize the importance of the relationship between leaders and followers (e.g., Uhl-Bien, 2006). In fact, differences in the use of emotion and emotion-based influence distinguish between what has been called “transactional” or “exchange-based” leadership and “transformational” leadership (House, Woycke, & Arthur, 1998). These leadership moves that are related to emotion because they impact the likelihood that an organization’s members will feel empathic concern in response to suffering. In move 8, leaders shape emotion through contagion processes. In move 9, leaders influence the quality of emotion in the organization’s culture through their impact on connections between people. In move 10, leaders’ moves affect the emotional climate.
expect to be met. This is vital to gain respect and loyalty. (Worline & Boi, 2006, p. 118)

We posit that leaders' moves that enhance the quality of connections between people will amplify compassion in the organization, because other researchers also demonstrate that relational action such as respectful engagement, trusting, and helping create an organization where people are more attuned to one another, feel greater psychological safety, and care more about one another's well-being (Dutton, 2003; Carmelli, Dutton, & Hardin, 2015; Haas & Lehmann, 2014). Researchers who investigate ethical leadership emphasize the importance of caring and supportive relationships with followers (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Likewise, theories of authentic transformational leadership propose the impact of leaders largely through the quality of relationships between leaders and followers (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Sonn, 2005). While the quality of relationships between leaders and followers is likely to affect many aspects of the compassion process, and in this sense, these leaders' moves have overlapping effects, here we emphasize the importance of the quality of connections for the likelihood of widespread feelings of empathic concern as part of the collective compassion process.

**MOVE 10: SHAPING EMOTIONAL CULTURE AND CLIMATE**

"Organizational culture" refers to "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves its problems of external adaptability and internal integration" (Schein, 2010, p. 18). This pattern will be taught to new members as "the correct way to perceive, think, and feel" (Schein, 2010, p. 18). In this way, organizational culture matters greatly to the expression of compassion. Compassionate leadership will take different forms in different organizational cultures. Leaders also shape cultures (Schein, 2010). We posit that leaders' moves can shape the emotional culture for compassion.

One instance comes from Par Christen, former president and CEO of HopeLab, a technology-think-tank in Silicon Valley. Pat wrote a thank-you letter to members of her organization that exemplifies how leaders reinforce a culture of compassion, or what we have called compassionate love (Barsade & O'Neill, 2014). In the excerpt of this letter, pay particular attention to how this leader conveys compassion and love for the ways that members of the organization have responded to suffering and adversity.

When I turned to look at one of you, table-by-table, I was struck with memories, not of your accomplishments, but the stories of suffering and times when we struggled as individuals, as teams, in community.

Some of these struggles are quite public and the challenges and setbacks are well known to us all. Some are deeply personal and private. At the time we endured them, they precipitated feelings of exasperation, anger, shame, annoyance, sadness, amazement, even joy. My point now is not to enumerate that list for you; indeed many of these stories are not mine to share publicly. My point here is to tell you that it is that list that moved me most deeply.

That list that demonstrates our deepest commitment to ourselves and to community. This struggle to preserve in the face of deep challenge and adversity is not always present. We are a mess at times as we navigate our shortcomings, our losses, and those places where we do not live up to our highest aspirations. But what I want you to know is that I was simply overcome by and in awe of what you have done—each of you—to perceive, to be better, to try again, to pick yourselves up, to remake and to face the fray, to not give up on yourselves, on one another, on our work, on our community, on our world (personal communication, shared with permission).

In Par's celebration of her organization, her words as a leader not only display empathic concern (move 8) and influence people to engage in higher-quality connections (move 9), they also serve to shape an enduring emotional culture of love that is capable of calming errors, struggles, and suffering with compassion.

Recent organizational research supports the importance of emotional aspects of culture (Barsade & O'Neill 2014). This research draws out the impact leaders have on creating an emotional culture in which people can feel empathic concern for the suffering of others. Barsade and O'Neill (2014) define a "culture of compassionate love" as one in which "showing caring, tenderness, and affection for people at work is a natural part of what being at work means." In this way, leaders can shape the norms for caring, tenderness, and affection in organizations.

**SUMMARY**

Table 3.1 summarizes the three moves we have articulated in relation to emotion and felt empathic concern as part of the compassion process. They are also depicted in Figure 4.3, which shows how leaders' moves that influence us when we felt empathic concern continue to shape the way the compassion process unfolds or fails to unfold. Elaborating these moves gives insight into the ways that leaders can shape the emotions of followers. Compassion can be hindered when leaders fail to engage in moves that create compassionate concern. Compassion is advanced by shaping the emotional culture toward compassionate love and cultivating high-quality connections between leaders and members. When leaders like Sarah or Pat, who are described here, use these moves to create contagious empathic concern and shape a culture of affection and care, such moves leave a lasting trace on the entire organization's likelihood to respond to suffering with compassion.

**Leaders Are Powerful Models for Action**

Some of the oldest and most well-established ideas about the importance of leaders is that they provide examples for others to follow (Burns, 1978). The theory of transformational leadership rests on assumptions that leaders are capable of creating transformation in those around them by first shifting themselves and then by behaving in ways that others can emulate. (Burns, 1978; Quinn & Quinn, 2009). While we have already given a number of examples of leaders serving as models for compassionate action, here we emphasize two leaders' moves related to action and modeling. In move 11, we focus on how leaders' actions provide a blueprint for others' actions through emulation of leaders as a model for action. In move 12, we emphasize how leaders' moves model ways to catalyze resources that can be directed toward the alleviation of suffering.

**MOVE 11: MODELING COMPASSIONATE ACTION**

Research on ethical leadership demonstrates that social learning—seeing leaders act ethically—affects followers' ethics (Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardo, & Salvador, 2009). Popular books on ethical and moral leadership also emphasize the power of modeling empathy or compassion. Sinkl's (2014) Leaders Eat Last is an examination of the lessons of military leaders on collaborative leadership. He concludes that leaders who accomplish extraordinary feats in the military do so by drawing on empathy that is largely cultivated by leaders who model it. A vivid example of many of the leadership moves we have described here, including modeling compassionate action, comes from an account of the response of Reuters to the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, as described in a case by Dutton, Patick, & Quinn, 2002a, 2002b. Reuters provided services that were essential to the operation of the United States Military and as well as valuable financial information services and global news. In the attack on the World Trade Center, Reuters lost several employees. They also experienced the destruction of a significant data center and the loss of crucial infrastructure that connected them to their clients. Phil Lynch was serving as president of Reuters America on that day. After watching the World Trade Center towers burning, he knew that he would need to establish a command center for the crisis. Convincing the Reuters boardroom into a hub for handling the response, Lynch and his executive team set and reiterated priorities that guided their actions: "People first, then customers, then the business" (Dutton et al., 2002a, p. 5). This is an example of moving from emotion to action in response to suffering, as well as move 7, giving sense to a difficult, ambiguous situation in ways that make compassion more likely.

Phil Lynch and his team issued regular updates about the crisis, employees' safety, and activities to help the recovery, emphasizing again and again those three priorities. Theorists of adaptive leadership (e.g., Heifitz, 1994) emphasize behaviors of leaders and how those behaviors provide a model that helps mobilize, motivate, orient, and focus the attention of others in the organization in order to adapt to difficult challenges, particularly staying calm, focused, and present in the midst of adversity or suffering. Lynch exhibited this form of adaptive leadership modeling as he encouraged Reuters employees globally to do whatever it took to restore personal capacity and get customers up and running. On global teleconferences dedicated to answering questions, Phil Lynch responded openly about what leaders were feeling, as well as the steps Reuters was taking. This offers an example of move 1, creating spaces for the expression of emotion, as well as move 8, displaying empathic concern that was contagious to followers.

Phil Lynch gave a directive for people interacting with the families of those who were missing: "It's all about the families. Just remember, it's all about them." Reuters' employees who witnessed Phil Lynch meeting with the mother of an employee who had died were moved by his presence, and additional stories of support and caring were unearthed and shared. This offers an example
O'more 2, creating felt presence, as well as more 10, shaping an emotional culture toward love and concern. Theorists of authentic leadership (e.g., George, 2003) emphasize compassionate action as essential to demonstrating authenticity as a leader, demonstrating "heart" through actions that model sensitivity toward others. One employee described Phil Lynch as an overall model of compassionate action this way: "Watching Phil Lynch get so involved with the families—so quickly, so deeply into their personal lives, being there in comforting them, involved with their personal pain—I saw the heart—not just the company, not just technology and lines—I saw the heart of the company in him responding to the families." (p. 8). This is an example of what we mean by modeling. This form of modeling is evident in theories of serv- ant leadership, where leaders put followers first and show empathy in action to emphasize that followers and followers' concerns are a priority for the leader (Izod, Panacusa, Musee, Hu, & Wayne, 2014). As demonstrated by this follower's quote, "Phil Lynch's actions model a compassionate response in ways that shift the likelihood of many in the organization to engage with suffering with compassion." MOVE 12: CATALyzING RESOURCES Researchers often focus on leaders as points of leverage in an organization because they control access to important resources such as time, money, and connections with others. How and when lead- ers unlock access to resources is important in help- ing to alleviate suffering. Leaders' moves that direct resources toward compassion are also symbolically important by illustrating values in action (Podolny, Klaasen, & Hill-Pepper, 2004) or reinforcing cul- tural assumptions that people and relationships matter (Schein, 2010). We saw this in Phil Lynch's response to the terrorist attacks. Lynch catalyzed resources such as comfort and emotional support for the families of employees who had worked there. He also catalyzed resources for a memorial service that brought the families together with Reuters' employees. He helped catalyze new resources for community services, authorized town hall meetings for people to come together to share and hear stories and ask questions, and poured resources into rebuilding the operations of the lost data centers. Because of the resources he helped catalyze, Reuters employ- ees installed an astounding $200,000 of equipment within a 9 days. These moves to catalyze resources allowed the company to save the business needs, the clie- rent needs, and the business needs that restored the backbone for financial trading and economic stabili- ty in the United States. Research in organization theory shifts the view of resources from a focus on fixed entries, such as money, toward dynamic value that is created by resources-in-use (Feldman, 2004). This view broad- ened our understanding of "resources" by shedding light on resources created in interaction, such as trust, respect, or legitimacy (Feldman, 2004). Feldman and Woffle (2011) illustrate resource theory with the example of a pile of paper money, which is valuable in one way when it is burned to create warmth, but valuable in a very different way when used for exchange. Drawing on resource theory, we posit that leadership moves have the power to catalyze resources such as attention, empathy, legiti- macy, social and emotional support, collective iden- tity, shared meaning, and discretionary efforts, and to put these resources to use in the service of compas- sion. Again this move may overlap with some of the moves previously discussed, as when leaders cat- alyze attention or emotion, but here we articulate separately to emphasize the enormous importance of resourcing in alleviating suffering. Sometimes leadership moves that catalyze resources are pointed at a specific cause of suffering they catch an organization by surprise, like a crisis, a dis- aster, or an unexpected illness or injury, as was the case for Phil Lynch. Adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009) theo- rizes suggest that one of the most important roles of leaders in times of surprise is to identify adapt- ive challenges and to mobilize resources to meet them. Surprises offer leaders the opportunity to see holes in the organization's safety net and to mobilize resources that make rapid response to suffering more reliable over time. John Chambers, former CEO of Cisco Systems, approved the institutional- ization of a rapid response team for employee disas- ters after Cisco employees became seriously ill in part of the world where advanced medical care was not readily available to them. Whenever Chambers found through a surprise that the organization was unprepared to respond to suffering in appropriate ways, he catalyzed new policies and procedures to ensure that Cisco could respond to suffering with compas- sion in the future. SUMMARY Table 3.1 summarizes two moves related to modeling and leaders' actions. Points 5 and 6 of Pignons discuss work, including the role of compassion on the compassion process. By articulating these as distinct leader's moves, we gain insight into the fact that leaders' instrumental actions mat- ter for compassion in organizations (Anastakis & House, 2013). When actions model compassion, they serve as a blueprint for followers' actions (Baas & Avolio, 1990). And when leaders' instrumental actions serve to change an organizational policy or implement a practice that creates compassion, these resources-in-use also inspires others to emulate the action and direct additional resources toward allevi- ating suffering. How Leaders Shape Compassion Processes in Organizations Table 3.1 summarizes all twelve of the leader- ship moves we have identified from this review of the leadership literature as it relates to compassion in organizations. Figure 3.2 depicts compassion as a process and makes clear the points at which dif- ferent leader's moves impact the way the process unfolds. Together, the table and the figures clearly show a variety of effective leaders have on the unfold- ing of compassion in organizations. Ranging from how leaders act to how they feel and express emo- tion, from how they frame and narrate suffering to when they attend to, and from how they use their presence to how they create a space for the expres- sion of suffering, obviously leaders matter. When we look at dramatic or extreme cases, such as the Reuters response to the terrorist attacks, we can see how these moves are intertwined with one another and build on one another over time. When leaders offer their own very human regard for the humanness of others, and when this human-to-human regard and presence becomes the centerpiece of attention, feeling, communica- tion, and action, organizations literally come alive with compassion. One Reuters employee described this way: "It was so human. It was not about do we have to check our financial services? It was about 'Where are our people? People, then clients, then the business. It made me proud to work here. I gained more of a sense of respect for the company, and I have been here for a very long time." (Dunton et al., 2002b, p. 9). In the past several years, compassion has become a more mainstream topic for research in organization and related disciplines. In 2010, a worldwide gathering of business scholars at the Academy of Management was dedicated to compassion and care in organizations (see also Tsui, 2013), along with issues journals dedicated to these topics (e.g., Rynes, Barronke, Dunton, & Margolis, 2012). As compassion grows in viability for research attention, it is likewise grows in viability for leaders' attention. Visible leaders and thought leaders in successful organizations, such as Jeff Weiner or Simon Sinek, bring new power to dialogue about compassion and its role in business. Increasing dehumanization of work and employee disengagement adds urgency to compassion as a leadership concern. This review shows that research on leadership and compassion is still in its early stages. However, identifying leadership moves that matter creates a call for research that tests the power and impact of these moves to shape compassion and alleviate suffering. We hope that many researchers will join in investigating how leaders contribute to enliv- ening their followers' humanity. This call opens a window into a new reality in which the world's organizations, while pursuing their day-to-day missions of commerce, innovation, or service delivery, simultaneously hold the possibility to become one of the world's most powerful vessels for compassion. 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