LEADING TRANSFORMATION #12:
SOURCES OF GOOD CHARACTER (PART 3)

The FAMILY is the smallest unit in society. It is the right place for shaping character. The moral and ethical challenges of society are simply reflections of family dysfunctions; particularly due to the failure of parents to bring up children with carefully selected values.

EDUCATION is also an instrument for shaping character. My undergraduate training is in the physical sciences (chemistry), whilst my graduate education is in the field of social science (leadership). I did doctoral studies in the metaphysical sciences (theology and philosophy). My scientific approach to problem solving affects my outlook on life and particular issues; my methods for arriving at my choices, as well as how I execute on them. My spiritual background provides resources for discernment beyond the scientific realm. These all add to the complexity of my personality, and hence style of leadership.

The environment of education significantly affects expectations and aspirations; and shapes behavior.

Our SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS influence our character. We know the popular saying; “Bad company ruins good morals.” The converse is equally true. “Good company builds good morals.” “Show me your friend and I will show you your character.” If we desire to grow in integrity, we should intentionally ensure that we are hanging out with people of integrity. Why do great leaders fall? One simple reason is that they are in associations where people are drawing from them; and lack relationships where they are drawing from the strengths of others.

Humility is a characteristic of learners. We need others to make it. Let us choose to be in the companies of others who can refresh us and build into our lives. If we give all the time and do not receive from others, we end up operating our lives, leadership and services on empty tanks. Over time this translates into moral crises, and in some cases physical illness.

Finally, CRITICAL EXPERIENCES can also shape our character. There are experiences that shake the assumptions on which our worldviews (the lenses through which we view the world) are founded. When our worldviews fail to hold in challenging situations we open up to new alternatives. We seek to find new ways to make life meaningful. We shift paradigms and adopt new values. These shifts translate into new ways of looking at life, and new choices in values and behavior.

FAMILY, EDUCATION, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS and CRITICAL EVENTS/EXPERIENCES are additional factors that shape character.