

# Leadership passages and spirituality

*"we need to integrate spirituality into management ... no organization can survive for long without spirituality and soul" (Mitroff and Denton, 1991)*

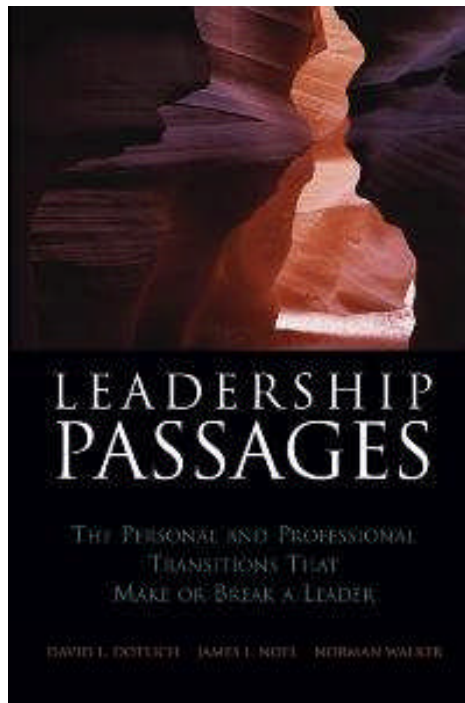
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# **A Qualitative Research**

Catherine Voynnet Fourboul & Quentin Lefebvre

# Methodology

- Qualitative research
- Grounded theory approach
- **Question raised**: what is the role of spirituality in helping to arouse, direct, mediate and sustain leaders in periods of passage?
- **Sample**: 10 french leaders evolving in medium and large french companies
- **10 recorded interviews** (1h30 average length) in 2009



# Leadership Passages

# Leadership passages

(Dotlich, Walker, Noel 2004)

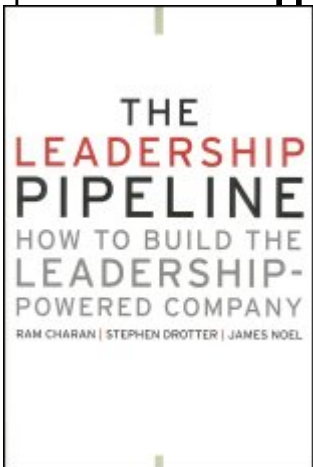
- Moving into a leadership role for the first time
- Accepting a stretch assignment
- Coping with a bad boss
- Dealing with significant failure for which you are responsible
- Derailing/Losing your job
- Being acquired/merging
- Living in a different country or culture
- Losing faith in the system
- Understanding the importance of children, family and friends
- Personal upheavals such as divorce, illness, and death

Leadership Passages: The Personal and Professional Transitions That Make or Break a Leader

# Typical leadership passages

(Charan, Drotter and Noel, 2001)

- From managing self to managing others
- From managing others to managing managers
- From managing managers to Functional manager
- From Functional Manager to Business Manager
- From Business Manager to Group Manager
- From Group Manager to Enterprise Manager



# Leadership passages

#	Titre	« Their key-passages »
1	Financial Director	Being acquired/merging
2	Branch CEO	Coping with a bad boss Accepting a stretch assignment
3	HRD	Firing people
4	Managing Director	Living in a different country or culture Personal upheavals : illness and death
5	CEO	Dealing with significant failure for which you are responsible
6	HRD	Accepting a stretch assignment
7	CEO	Moving into a leadership role for the first time Dealing with significant failure for which you are responsible
8	HRD then coach	Losing faith in the system
9	HRD (former)	<u>Accepting a stretch assignment</u> : taking the lead of fragmented/decentralised HR department and induce change in group work habits and culture through the creation of an information system
10	Managing Director of a Division	<u>Accepting a stretch assignment</u> : take the lead of a freshly acquired company in the US

# Synthesis



# Synthes (1/2)

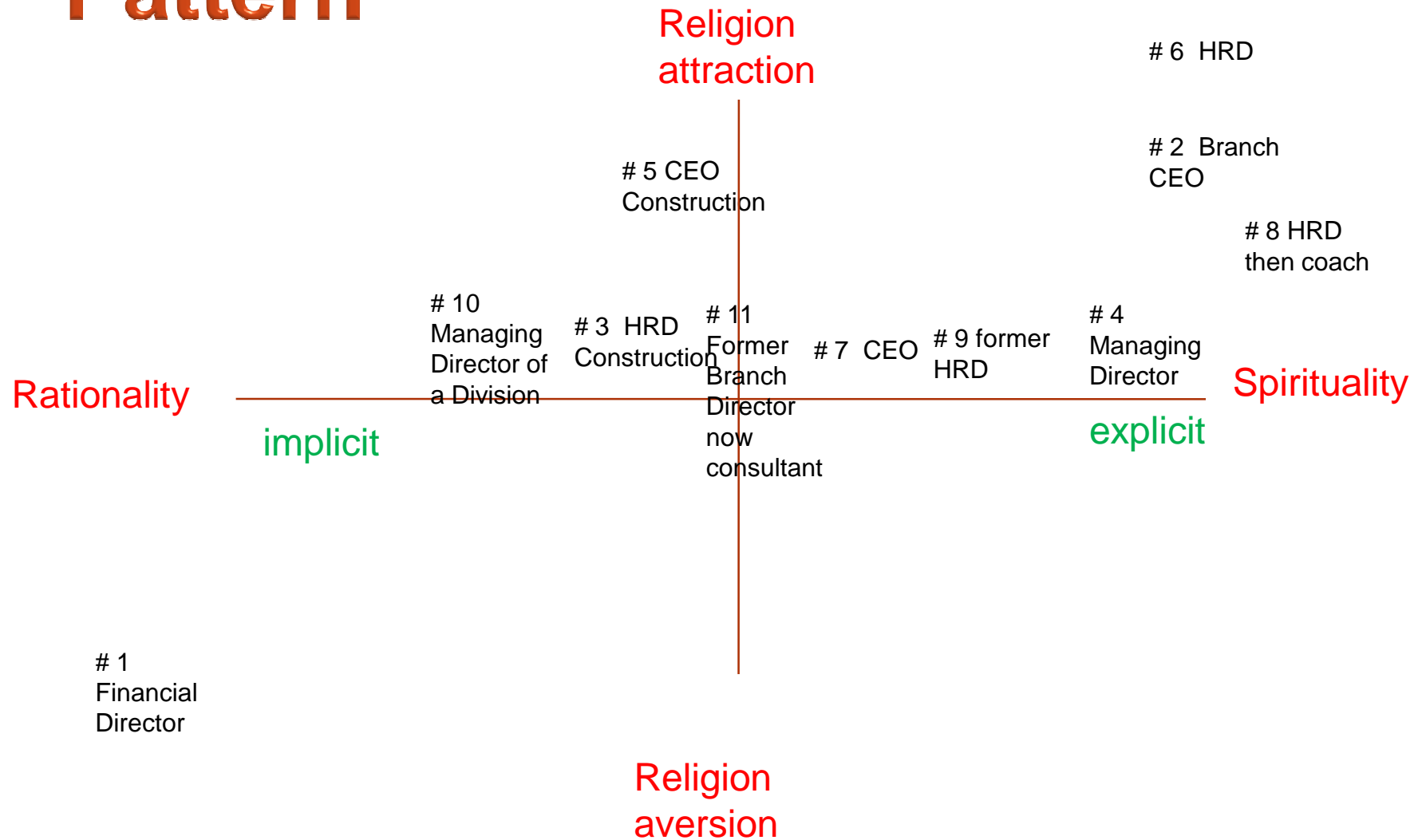
N°	Leaders	Passages	Spirituality
#1	Financial Director	Being acquired/merging,	Difficulty to define spirituality due to bad consideration on previous religion experience : mistrust but alignment with values (respect) – dominance of rationality
#2	Branch CEO	Coping with a bad boss, Accepting a stretch assignment	Positive connection between spirituality and religion even if spirituality is seen as different. Link between passages (hardship) and spirituality – other possibilities of dev. Helped by friend.
#3	HRD	Firing people	Difficulty to express himself about spirituality – focused on values and alignment with his own mission - introversion
#4	Managing Director	Living in a different country or culture, Personal upheavals : illness, and death	Very at ease and talkative about spirituality and the connection between two leadership passages and her spiritual experience. Use of coaching.
#5	CEO	Dealing with significant failure for which you are responsible	Not at ease about defining spirituality but implementing it through love and talent development. Considered as exemplar and iconoclast in the Cie

# Synthes (2/2)

N°	Leaders	Passages	Spirituality
#6	HRD	Accepting a stretch assignment Personal upheavals : illness, and death	Very talkative about spirituality, identified as a catholic HRD, responsibility and balance are guiding his reflection. Deep self reflection (self development) also about great leaders in France.
#7	CEO	Moving into a leadership role for the first time, Dealing with significant failure for which you are responsible	The notion of grace and the use of intuition help him to overcome the second passage. His family gives him a strong balance. He is not inclined at looking for an external spiritual help, has an attitude of observation and analysis.
#8	HRD then coach	Losing faith in the system	The connection passage and spirituality is obvious. She is deeply rooted in spirituality even if French institution are not a facilitator. Use of coaching.
#9	HRD (former)	Accepting a stretch assignment	Opposed to hyper rationality. Intellectual demand. Ability to position oneself into sth larger. Tension pulling oneself towards sth ideal.
#10	Managing Director of a Division	Accepting a stretch assignment	Not at ease about defining spirituality . Synonym of values like fidelity, transparency and religion.

# **Towards a model of leadership passages and spirituality**

# Pattern



# Questions

# Question 1 - Methodology

- **Which kind of methodology do you see as the most appropriate to study leadership passages and spirituality?**
  - Which kind of sample (age, position, background) ?
  - Which kind of methods for collecting qualitative information? Individual vs collective interviews? Sharing among “connaisseurs”— insiders only?
- Which kind of “tricks” could be used to conduce people to confide (ways to overcome difficulty to make people talk about personal shortcomings, failure situations – to express intimate feelings)
- Is there room for a quantitative approach of the subject? If so, how?

## Question 2 – Leadership passages and spirituality

- What is the evidence that spirituality helps leaders and others to master hardship during personal and organizational crises and how?
- What links could be construed between spirituality and leadership dimensions or roles (decision-making, ability to mobilize and create signification at work)?
- What can spirituality bring about in strategic actions, decisions, practices?
- Does it make a particular and significant difference? Conversely, how can personal and professional experiences nourish leaders' spiritual beliefs?

## Question 3 – From leadership passages to personal passages

- To your opinion are there some leadership passages that are more significant to develop leaders spirituality?
- Considering your personal experience, which kind of passages were the most significant in the development of your own spirituality?
- Is it necessary to experience significant passages to open oneself to spirituality?
  - Are there other ways of developing our spirituality?



## Question 4 – Rationality vs spirituality for leaders

- Is rationality an obstacle in developing spirituality? Conversely, is spirituality an obstacle to rationality ? Is it possible to be both spiritual and rational?
  - On a leader point of view?
  - On your own point of view?
- Expressing ones spirituality: is spirituality fully expressible and conscious?
  - what is the added value of expressing our spirituality? Is it necessary to explicit our spirituality to guide our action?