

Colloquium Title: Development of Outstanding Leadership: A Life Narrative Approach

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Abstract

Developmental events of a sample of outstanding leaders experienced in early life were examined. Relevant sections of 120 biographies of outstanding leaders in the 20th Century were content coded using a life narrative framework. Results indicated that individuals evidencing a particular leadership type (charismatic, ideological, or pragmatic) and orientation (socialized or personalized) were linked to certain types of developmental events. Similarly, event content was found to vary between the leader styles. Specific kinds of experiences were also related to various indices of leader performance. Practical and theoretical implications of these findings will be discussed.

Note: This paper was published in *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19, 312-334, 2008, with co-authors Samuel T. Hunter and Michael D. Mumford.