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The Inner Leader in Transformative Leadership: Personal Transformation through Trauma Integration and Spiritual Development

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Abstract

This article analyzes the role of personal transformation in the context of transformative leadership, focusing on the processes of trauma integration and spiritual development. Trauma integration facilitates access to the inner leader through a gradual process of increasing awareness of unconscious patterns. Spiritual development expands consciousness developing the capacity to hold in awareness both the inner and the outer world, contributing to the self-transforming mind, an open and adaptive engagement with the world. These two aspects of personal development support leaders to de-construct oppressive structures in their own consciousness and engage in awareness-based social transformation. Trauma integration and spiritual development contribute to the Being dimension of the Inner Development Goals framework, creating access to the inner compass and increasing self-awareness, authenticity, openness and presence.

Keywords/key phrases: transformative leadership, inner leader, personal transformation, trauma integration, spirituality, self-transforming mind

1. Introduction

Leadership is a complex, dynamic concept that transcends disciplinary boundaries, as it involves psychological development, interpersonal relationships, social and organizational structures. Empirical research on leadership has mainly focused on leaders' behaviour, interpersonal power relations and organizational skills, but in the last few decades we have witnessed an increased interest in the inner world of leaders, their personal capabilities and their spirituality (Berkeley et al., 2024; Fry, 2003; Ritz & Rimanoczy, 2021; Bruce & McKee, 2020; Scharmer, 2018). Leaders are increasingly invited to understand what really matters for people at a deep, human level, by connecting to their own core humanity and transforming their consciousness (Hougaard & Carter, 2018). What strategies contribute to the inner development of leaders so that they contribute to positive and sustainable social transformation?

The framework of Inner Development Goals (IDG) provides a model of integral development that includes aspects previously ignored in leadership theories, such as unconscious psychological barriers in one's relationship to the self and others that influence behaviour

(Ankrah et al., 2023). Personal growth or transformation implies changing mindsets and beliefs, expanding consciousness and a more open way of being the world (Neal, 2018). This article relies on psychological theories of trauma integration and spiritual development to offer a nuanced approach to the meaning of personal transformation in transformative leadership as a process of deep consciousness shift through increased awareness of the unconscious. This shift is possible by restoring access to the inner leader, expanding self-awareness to include unconscious elements, and developing capacity for self-transformation.

Our focus on the Being dimension of the IDG frameworks complements other studies on the IDG competencies. Shtaltovna et al. (2024) analysed the development of diverse cognitive skills crucial for engaging in the VUCA world, arguing for an integrative, democratizing curriculum design in business schools. Cognitive skills such as complexity awareness, sense-making and visioning are interconnected with the level of consciousness development and awareness that underpin the Being dimension we will analyse here. Strategies for the development of cognitive and collaborative skills are more well-known in the leadership scholarship than the ones for developing capacities of Being with its subscales of inner compass, self-awareness, integrity and authenticity, presence (IDG, 2024). While the process of personal transformation has been examined by many scholars as a shift to more complex consciousness (Frizell & Banner, 2018), there are fewer accounts of the important role of trauma integration in leadership development, a contribution we hope to make in this paper.

We will use Schwartz's (2021) theory of Internal Family Systems to explain the process of trauma integration as increased access to the inner leader. Spiritual development will be explored through the framework of self-transforming mind (Kegan & Lahey, 2009), a capacity developed through mindfulness and presencing. The self-transforming mind refers to the ability to hold in awareness both the inner and the outer world, adapting one's worldviews to new contexts.

The inner leader has been defined as the spiritual core of the psyche (Schwartz, 2021). It is comprised of a set of capabilities that Schwartz (2011) outlines as the 8 Cs: compassion, courage, curiosity, calm, confidence, clarity, creativity and connectedness. The inner leader is a regulatory function of the self, based on complex self-awareness and constant, open adaptation to new learning. The inner leader is the equivalent of the inner compass in the IDG framework, a self-regulating, core function of consciousness. Traumatic experiences destroy trust in the inner leader, fragmenting the psyche in repressed and protective parts, with the latter taking control over the functioning of consciousness (Schwartz, 2021).

The basic practices for reconnecting to the inner leader are trauma integration, mindfulness, self-awareness and self-reflection, a commitment to testing and improving the results of one's actions (Taylor, 2015, p. 184). The inner leader emerges through a process of increased awareness and integration of unconscious content in one's awareness. It governs the process of vertical growth as a movement towards second level of awareness when people can examine and transform the frames of references, they unconsciously use to see the world (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Trauma integration increases awareness of unconscious patterns that perpetuate suffering for oneself and others, a particularly important process for leaders (Hübl & Avritt, 2020; Kass, 2017). We explore trauma integration and spiritual development as two strategies for personal transformation in the context of transformative leadership, an integral leadership framework that highlights personal, organizational and social transformation (Anello et al., 2014; Shields, 2020).

2. Personal Transformation in Transformative Leadership: Self-Awareness, Integrity and Ethical Commitment to the Common Good

Transformative leadership is a critical leadership theory that emphasizes “inclusion, equity, excellence, and social justice” (Shields, 2011, p. 3). Shields (2020) highlights transformative leadership as a response to the urgent needs we witness in a world fractured by injustice, inequality, ecological crisis and dramatic changes that cannot be addressed only through rational and technical approaches. Her framework emphasizes social justice, equality, human dignity and democracy as principles grounded in leaders’ universal values and moral courage. Caldwell et al. (2012, p. 176) highlight integrity and moral duty as character traits of transformative leaders that are needed to complement professional competence. This focus on integrity, positive inner traits and moral duty situates transformative leadership as a paradigm deeply rooted in self-awareness and personal transformation. The invitation to become a transformative leader is an inclusive and courageous “ethical stewardship” that implies integrity, realization of the harm created by social injustice and ethical commitment to the common good (Caldwell et al., 2012, p. 177).

There are three crucial differences between transformative leadership and other leadership paradigms: first, leaders are not only people in power position but anyone in a position of influencing others (Anello et al., 2014; Montuori & Donnelly, 2018). From that perspective, everyone is invited to take responsibility for the kind of world they create through their influence. Second, the purpose of leadership is not to promote the agenda of a particular organization, but to uphold the humanistic ideals of social justice and the common good by engaging in organizational and social transformation (Shields, 2020). The third specific aspect of transformative leadership is the crucial role of personal transformation as a necessary condition for overcoming bias, prejudice, fear, limiting unconscious beliefs, and becoming anchored in the universal aspirations for social justice, freedom and well-being for all (Shields, 2020; Anello et al., 2014; Caldwell et al., 2012; Bruce & McKee, 2020).

Transformative leaders need more than adaptability and effective response to complex social systems in order to innovate and re-construct them according to these aspirations. They need to uproot and transform patterns of oppression in their own minds and access their inner leader as a source of compassion, courage and creativity. Sustainable, positive social transformation is possible through increased awareness of the inner and outer oppressive structures, creation of new practices based on commitment to social justice and universal values. The mindset of transformative leaders implies an expansion of consciousness, as leadership that engages spirituality in the quest for social justice (Montuori & Donnelly, 2018).

Shields (2020) grounds transformative leadership theory in two main premises: first, that oppression, lack of safety, fear and marginalization limit achievement and second, that encouragement and equality of individuals increase their capacities to build democratic systems (p. 8). The opportunity for creating democratic systems lies in the development of people against the existing limitations caused by social injustice and inequality. It also lies in increased awareness about ways of being and mental models that contribute to and perpetuate suffering. Transformative leaders can create conditions for inclusion, democracy and equality if they first transform their own internalization of oppression or injustice. Secondly, transformative leaders in positions of privilege need to examine their unconscious bias and limiting beliefs, becoming aware of their blind spots and internalization of harmful ideologies. Oppressive social

conditions create oppressive inner conditions that leaders can unconsciously reproduce in organizational cultures (Briciu & MacDonald, 2024; Palmer, 1994). Transformative leaders need to be grounded both in the contemplative and the political world, an idea that places awareness of one's inner world as equally valuable to knowledge about the social and political system (Shields, 2020, p. 18).

Shields (2010) highlights 8 tenets of transformative leaders: “acknowledging power and privilege, articulating both individual and collective purposes, deconstructing social-cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity and reconstructing them, balancing critique and promise, effecting deep and equitable change, working towards transformation...demonstrating moral courage and activism” (p.8-9). Along the same line with Shields (2020), Anello et al. (2014) define transformative leadership as strongly grounded in universal ethical principles and evidence-based understanding of reality. They focus on six dimensions of transformative leadership as guiding principles: “service-oriented leadership, personal and social transformation, moral responsibility to investigate and apply the truth, essential nobility of human beings, transcendence and development of capabilities” (Anello et al., 2014, loc. 1406-07, Kindle ed.). The authors ground the principles of transformative leadership in an ethics of universal values, highlighting the importance of individual integrity, commitment to self-development, and the ongoing cultivation of leadership capabilities anchored in love, justice and courage (Anello et al., 2014). Anello et al.'s (2014) transformative leadership model includes the spiritual values of transcendence and seeing the nobility of all human beings that are not present in Shields' (2020) definition. The framework of transformative leadership highlights the importance of personal development as the cultivation of leaders' self-awareness, integrity and positive inner qualities.

Transformative leadership aims to deconstruct oppressive power structures through the commitment to personal, organizational and social transformation for the common good. This process of personal transformation starts with trauma integration and increased awareness of internalized power structures that create fragmentation, fear and inner conflict. It means accessing the inner leader that can regulate the diversity and complexity of the mind through awareness and self-reflection. In order to allow others to be whole, leaders need to access their own integrity and overcome their inner fragmentation. Taylor (2015) uses the metaphor of the craft of leadership, where the raw material for improving and mastering the craft is the self of the leader. What do we mean by the self of the leader and how is it implicated in personal transformation?

Personal transformation implies the expansion of consciousness, transcending the limitations of one's familiar frame of reference, deepening of awareness and openness to change, a constant process of evolution (Neal, 2018, pp.9-10). The processes of deepening self-awareness through trauma integration and spiritual development correlate with expansion of awareness, conscientization, more complex and adaptive behaviour (Day & Lance, 2004, p. 45). Personal transformation engages the Being dimension of the IDG framework as a process of increased awareness of one's unconscious mind, integrity and authenticity, and the capacity for self-transformation.

Scharmer (2018) used the concept of “blind spot” to signal “the source from which leaders' actions and perceptions originate” (p. 33), the unconscious aspects of the self that remain unknown without practices for transformation. The inner journey to self-awareness equips leaders to understand and work with the complexity of their own mind. It also enables them to

self-transform by reflecting on the impact of their worldviews and actions. Personal transformation helps leaders understand the close relationship between their worldviews, emotional patterns and their actions, increasing their capacity to self-regulate and self-transform.

3. The Inner Leader and the Democracy of The Mind

Who is in charge of our inner world, the witness to the “I” of subjective experience and action? What dynamics structure the inner space from which leaders make decisions, influence others and take action? The inner world of leaders is informed by values, beliefs, emotions, thoughts, perceptions and worldviews that emerged through their interaction with their cultural environment. If most leaders lived in cultural environments based on power and privilege, in systems that upheld violence and injustice, how can they free themselves from the pernicious effects of these systems? How can they become aware of the unconscious patterns they developed under the influence of power, oppression and violence? Most theories in psychology speak about the dualism of the self, separated between the conscious and the unconscious mind (Jung, 1967), but we currently have definitions of the mind that explain the interaction between the two (Schwartz, 2021). What was traditionally defined as an individual mind is not an entity but an open, dynamic and complex mind system in constant interaction with the world (Siegel & Drulis, 2023).

We will start with the definition of the mind offered by Daniel Siegel (2020), professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine, who developed the field of interpersonal neurobiology. Siegel (2020) sees the mind as “the emergent, self-organizing, embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information” (p. 4). This definition frames the mind as a dynamic process of interaction between a person’s inner world and the outer world, based on subjective experience and awareness of one’s subjective experience. He argues that the mind is not reduced to brain activity, but it is also an aspect of the body and relational processes (Siegel, 2020, p. 5). The mind is not a static, internal structure, but a dynamic and adaptive process of interaction. Relationships with others and the environment are constantly re-shaping neural connections. The healthy functioning of the mind relies on optimal self-organization or integration, a harmonizing process of the mind, body and relationships that Siegel (2017; 2020) calls *mindsight*. *Mindsight* enable individuals to regulate and integrate various functions of the mind: emotions, memories, thoughts, relationships (Siegel, 2017, p. 123). The inner leader carries the function of *mindsight*, as the capacity to hold in awareness the diverse aspects of the inner world as a dynamic system that needs harmonizing and regulating to achieve a desired goal. This is a process similar to the way a leader gathers a team and inspires people to work together for achieving a desired goal.

Psychologist Richard Schwartz (2021), the founder of Internal Family Systems, defines the mind as a family of different parts governed by the inner leader. Traumatic events can destroy a person’s faith in the inner leader and the inner world starts being dominated by protective parts that try to keep the distressing emotions at bay (Schwartz, 2013, p. 807). IFS views the mind as a dynamic system of parts that are divided into two main categories: the “exiles”, and the “protectors” (Schwartz, 2013, p. 808). Exiles are all the emotions and reactions associated with painful, distressing experiences (traumatic events) that have been repressed and are kept away in the unconscious. Protectors intervene to make sure individuals stay away from accessing the painful emotions provoked by exiles, through repression or avoidance (Schwartz, 2013, p. 808). Leaders whose inner world is dominated by protective parts tend to project

unconscious beliefs or repressed emotions onto others, they tend to use power as a protective mechanism, and they have more difficulty relating to others with integrity and compassion (Chappell et al., 2019).

The inner leader is a state of “spacious awareness” that can be achieved through compassionate engagement with protective parts (Schwartz, 2013, p. 809). It has the self-regulating function to lead the complex world of the self in a democratic way without repressing certain parts or giving control to others, while also maintaining a state of open connectedness to others. It enhances self-awareness and capacity for self-transformation. Compassionate integration of the exiled parts of the self and staying with the negative emotions that come from traumatic experiences create the space for self-awareness, integration, and authenticity. The integration of repressed parts in one’s consciousness is important for reducing inner conflict and trauma-based triggers, creating more self-aware and intentional responses. This inner structure reflects a democracy of the mind as a way of functioning that is not based on repression, control, and protection. Without access to the inner leader, different parts take overprotective roles, influencing a person’s actions and reactions (Schwartz, 2023). Repression reinforces the separation between conscious and unconscious, reducing critical self-awareness and building defence mechanisms (Briciu & MacDonald, 2024). The inner leader restores positive functioning and moves the self towards integration (wholeness) and connectedness with others. Trauma integration means the inclusion of unconscious aspects into one’s consciousness and increasing access to the inner leader. This is a missing aspect from most leadership development programs that do not engage the unconscious (Chappell et al., 2019). The inner leader is a self-regulating capacity of the mind through expanding self-awareness, integration and openness of the self to interconnectedness. It contributes to the inner development goal of Being that includes inner compass, self-awareness, openness and authenticity.

FIG. 1. THE INNER DEVELOPMENT GOALS FRAMEWORK



Source: <https://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/framework/> (Accessed May, 2023)

Critical reflection on personal beliefs and assumptions is a foundational principle of transformative leadership (Shields, 2020; Bruce et al., 2020). This requires engagement with bias, power, and trauma conditioning that come from the internalization of oppressive social

norms (de-construction) and the anchoring of the self in ethical intention, universal values and the vision of possibility (re-construction). The evolving expansion of awareness to unconscious aspects of the psyche is a form of personal development that liberates leaders from automatic reactions, habitual ways of thinking, assumptions of being right (Arnold & Schön, 2021, p. 60). This leads to the capacity to observe and change their own thinking, emotional reactions, and behaviour as they engage with others and the world. As Calderon de la Barca et al. (Feb., 2024) state, “deepening awareness of our own unconscious, default trauma responses and assuming accountability for them is a vital capacity for social change leaders, since we carry our trauma history and unconscious trauma responses into the roles we assume in the systems we are trying to change.”

Personal development programs that do not address the powerful grip of unconscious, trauma-based patterns on the psyche, attempt to build positive traits on moving sands. Without the integration of the different parts of the self into consciousness, the inner world remains fragmented and dualistic, sabotaging the actions and intentions of leaders (Welwood, 2000). We will examine trauma integration as a process for increasing awareness of unconscious aspects and restoring trust in the inner leader.

4. Trauma Integration: Bringing Exiles into Consciousness

Psychological research on trauma supports the insight of transformative leadership theory that what we call inner world is the result of various socio-cultural and historical factors that influence how we show up in the world (van der Kolk, 2015). Human consciousness is largely determined by the social interactions with the environment, which influence the structure of the inner world.

This section explores the importance of trauma integration for leadership development, an area less prominent in leadership training, since it is mostly seen in the context of therapy. However, it is an important paradigm for the development of leadership skills because of the impact leaders have on others and their influence on organizational culture. Leaders have the “power to create the conditions under which other people must live” and as such, they may cast light or shadow, according to the state of their inner world (Palmer, 1994, p. 24). Leaders’ level of consciousness influences the structure of an organization, its culture and dynamics (Neal, 2018, p. 7). The decisions they make have important consequences and ethical implications (Day, 2000). Leaders need to face their own shadows and go in the deep inner journey of facing them because only by doing so, they can connect to their spiritual core, or “the hidden wholeness of their humanity” (Palmer, 2009, p. 28). The journey of trauma integration means increased awareness of repressed content and restoring trust in the inner leader, the core aspect of the Self that is compassionate, courageous, calm and connected.

Trauma research shows how the effects of hegemonic structures, violence, marginalization, oppression and neglect are buried in the unconscious and the body (Hübl & Avritt, 2020; Rizeq & McCann, 2023). These effects “leave traces on our minds and emotions, on our capacity for joy and intimacy, and even on our biology and immune system” (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 1, Kindle ed.). Trauma exists and gets reproduced in social systems that influence psychological functioning and relationships (Calderon de la Barca et al., 2024). The prevailing narrative on trauma focuses on its effects on individuals, obscuring the systemic conditions that contribute to it (Calderon de la Barca et al., 2024). More recent approaches to trauma highlight its intergenerational, collective dimensions that makes it all pervasive and systemic, rather than

isolated, individual experiences (Maté, 2009; Calderon de la Barca et al., 2024). From that perspective, trauma work is an essential aspect of the triad of personal, organizational and social transformation that underlie transformative leadership.

Trauma adaptation is an experience of being stuck in survival mode, spending most of one's energy to protect from the intrusion of repressed content that threatens one's inner world. Traumatic effects range from the distressing symptoms of PTSD to the long-term effects of inner fragmentation, protection mechanisms, disconnection and dysregulation. Trauma leads to difficult relationship to the self and the world, emotional dysregulation, decrease of self-worth and risk behaviour (Rizeq & McCann., 2023). One of the most destructive effects of trauma is the disruption of the relationship to the self and others (Maté, 2009). Trauma blocks access to the inner leader because it creates dissociation, dysregulation and inner conflict.

Trauma integration means for Schwartz (2021) the acceptance of all parts, and engagement with personal suffering through the compassionate and calm perspective of the inner leader. It implies awareness of intense negative emotions that require safe and compassionate accompaniment. This type of work creates the most resistance and it needs a high level of motivation given the vulnerability and sustained effort it entails (Frizzell & Banner, 2018, p. 7). The process of compassionate awareness and discovery of wholeness through an integration of protective parts liberates the energy of the psyche to focus on connection rather than protection, on pursuing one's passion rather than protecting one's pain. It liberates the self from the control of certain parts and enables a person to exercise leadership from a place of open self-awareness. As Palmer (2009) states, "good leadership comes from people who have penetrated their own inner darkness and arrived at the place where we are at one with one another, people who can lead the rest of us to a place of "hidden wholeness" because they have been there and know the way (p. 21-22). The integration of different parts of the self that have been exiled and disconnected by trauma leads to expanded self-awareness, integrity and openness, important capabilities for transformative leadership. The journey into the darkness of the unconscious is a journey of recovering one's wholeness by holding in awareness patterns of fear, shame, pain and despair that structure the inner world as result of traumatic experiences.

The psyche is organized as a system optimized through the inner leader, which requires the same skills as leadership of a group: listening, caring, inclusion, and creating unity in the group of inner parts. Trauma integration implies a re-tracing of distressful events or situations in order to bring back from exile the displaced parts of consciousness and increase access to the core self or the inner leader. While trauma integration is a framework for increasing access to the inner leader and repairing the relationship to the self, spiritual practice enhances the capacity for self-transformation. The next section focuses on spirituality as a means to develop the inner capacities for self-awareness and self-transformation.

5. The Paradigm of Spiritual Development for Self-Awareness and Self-Transformation

Spirituality is an important framework for the personal development required by transformative leadership (Guenther, 2024; Sanders et al., 2003). Anello et al. (2014) highlighted the spiritual aspects of transcendence and recognizing the essential nobility of all beings, while Shields (2020) recognized the importance of mindfulness practice to support the creation of a hopeful vision for the future. While there are no unified definitions of spirituality in leadership, many scholars refer to specific inner capabilities: self-awareness, inner development, self-leadership,

integration of spiritual behaviours in the workplace (Lyons & Rekar, 2022) connections with self, others, environment, and a higher power (Howard, 2002), hope, faith, vision and altruistic love (Fry, 2003); meaning, fulfilment and belonging (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Personal transformation through spiritual practice means a process of expanding consciousness through self-awareness and self-transformation (Dent et al., 2005; Wilber, 2000).

Self-awareness implies attention re-directed to the source of our experience, “bending the beam of observation back into its source” (Scharmer, 2013, p. 114). The process of trauma integration increases awareness and critical conscientization of unconscious patterns and impulses (Sherrell & Simmer-Brown, 2017). Self-awareness has been studied in relation to emotional intelligence and mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2014; Pearson, 2020). Self-awareness as a competency of the inner leader means the ability to recognize how trauma and internalized oppressive worldviews influence one’s beliefs and actions. It entails awareness of the repetition compulsion tendency to perpetuate trauma, noticing one’s blind spots (Scharmer, 2018). While self-awareness is “the building bloc” of the inner leader, self-transformation or adaptability is the capacity to work with this building bloc to solve problems and make decisions (Hougaard & Carter, 2018, p. 23).

The process of expanding self-awareness increases secure relational attachment to the world, integrity and openness as essential qualities of Being (Kass, 2017). While spiritual practice contributes to psychological maturation and development towards the stage of integral consciousness (Wilber, 2000), it needs to be accompanied by trauma work in order to avoid the dangers of shadow issues (Frizzell & Banner, 2018, p. 11). As the first section has shown, transformative leaders need to balance critique and promise, to de-construct systems of oppression in their inner world and in social systems, creating a vision anchored in the common good.

A study done by Potential Project with tens of thousands of leaders highlighted three crucial inner competencies: mindfulness, selflessness and compassion (Hougaard & Carter, 2018, p. 8). Mindfulness creates focus and awareness, which allows an experience of open flow between the inner and the outer world (Kabat-Zin, 2004). It strengthens the capacity for sustained attention and expands self-awareness to include thoughts, emotions and sensations. Mindfulness contributes to psychological maturation as expanded consciousness, intra and interpersonal skills, and ethical action based on complex awareness of context in relation to one’s inner world (Frizzell & Banner, 2018, p. 10). The openness of the self enables self-transformation as intentional alignment between one’s moral values and one’s actions. This is an important trait of transformative leaders as exemplars who walk the talk by aligning their thoughts with words and action (Neal, 2018, p. 13).

Psychologists Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (2009) use the concept of “self-transforming mind” to define a developmental level of openness and self-awareness in action. “The self-transforming mind can stand back from its own filter and look back at it not just through it. And why would it do so? Because the self-transforming mind both values and is wary of any one stance, analysis or agenda” (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 73). The self-transforming mind can hold both the inner and the outer world in awareness and remain open to constant adaptation, without clinging to a certain belief, perception of solution. It can hold paradox and increases understanding of one’s worldviews and patterns, so they become amenable to change. It facilitates the shift to higher levels of mind complexity as gradual process of differentiation and integration where each element that was subject at a certain level becomes object at the next

one (Day & Lance, 2004, p. 43). This develops the capacity to respond more effectively to the complexity of the world (Kegan, 1994, p. 33). It is a process of increased awareness and ability to self-reflect that frees a person from the unconscious repetition of trauma patterns. Personal development in this case means awareness of the dynamic interaction between one's inner world and one's social context, and the ability to transform one's worldview. The self-transforming mind involves the capacity to question and even transform one's own agenda in light of new information, increasing mental complexity and flexibility (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 74). There are numerous studies that correlate mental complexity with increased leadership effectiveness (Kegan & Lahey, 2009, p. 77). The self-transforming mind for transformative leaders implies an increased level of self-awareness and openness to negotiate their worldviews in the ethical commitment to the common good. It is a level of psychological maturity indispensable for organizational and social transformation needed in our time (Frizell & Banner, 2018, p. 5).

MIT professor Otto Scharmer regards personal transformation as a process of reconnecting the individual self with the collective or higher Self through increased awareness and mindful presence. The individual 'self' (using lowercase s) represents who we are due to our history (i.e. our childhood, education, social and cultural community). The second 'Self' (using capital S) concerns our highest future possibility (Scharmer, 2018). Scharmer argues that the histories of violence inherent in our social systems keep these two aspects of the self-separated, leaving many people disconnected from the deep source of their humanity (Scharmer, 2013, p. 110). This idea of the Higher Self parallels the metaphor of the inner leader as the spiritual core of the self (Schwartz, 2013). Scharmer (2018) introduced the method of presencing as a process that combines mindful presence and sensing the future that wants to emerge. He sees presencing as a process to connect the individual self with the Higher Self. This allows leaders to become aware of their inner world as interconnected with the social world. In order to engage in the act of "presencing," leaders need an open mind, open heart and open will. This framework structures personal development as an increasing level of openness that takes place at all levels of experience: thought, feeling, action. (Scharmer, 2018, p. 31). Spiritual development contributes to all aspects of Being outlined in the Inner Development Goals (See Fig. 1, p. 10). The self-transforming mind is a self-reflective, adaptable worldview that contributes to the Being dimension of the IDG but is also influences all other dimensions. We hope further studies will show its impact on all aspects of the inner development goals.

TABLE 1. TABLE CAPTION

Trauma Integration	Spiritual Development
Access to the inner compass	Mindfulness
Integrity and authenticity	Expanding awareness of inner-outer dynamics.
Complex self-awareness	Self-reflection
Democracy of mind	Self-transforming mind
Openness to change	Skills for dealing with complexity
Presence	Ethical worldview

Source: own compilation

6. Conclusion

This paper examined the meaning of personal transformation in transformative leadership through the two processes of trauma integration and spiritual development. Trauma integration is a process of restoring access to the inner leader as a self-regulating function of the mind, while spiritual development increases the capacity to self-transform creating more alignment between one's intentions and one's actions. The inner leader increases awareness of unconscious trauma patterns and shifts one's consciousness from fear and protection to calm, compassion and connection. It contributes to the inner development goal aspect of Being, as access to the inner compass, self-awareness, integrity and authenticity. Spiritual development contributes to self-awareness and the capacity to self-transform by increasing alignment between one's ethical commitments, values and actions. This study proposed the inclusion of trauma integration and spiritual development approaches in leadership development, with significant implications for the inner development of leaders. These approaches are not common in leadership development programs in business schools but there is more attention nowadays to the ways trauma impacts leadership (Hübl & Avritt, 2020) and the impact of spiritual development on systems transformation. They have practical implications as strategies for awareness and deep personal transformation. The IDG framework provides a platform that validates the important role of ways of being, thinking and relating for social transformation.

Both approaches contribute to the aims of transformative leadership to deconstruct oppressive systems and engage in social transformation from an inner place of self-awareness, integrity and openness. They create a consciousness shift to higher levels of mind complexity better adapted to engage effectively with organizational and social transformation. The commitment of transformative leaders to social justice, inclusion, equity, and the common good can benefit significantly from self-awareness about the ways their own consciousness may reproduce and uphold oppressive structures. Accessing one's inner leader as the core, authentic self, and the spiritual practices of mindfulness and presencing contribute to the self-transforming mind as a way to engage in leadership from an open, expanding consciousness as the inner source for social transformation.

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