SPEAKING TRUTH

Watershed Moments in Global Leadership

High School Curriculum for Young Leaders

Speaking Truth: Watershed Moments in Global Leadership, is a curriculum that provides students and teachers with the opportunity to explore what motivates a person to act on his/her beliefs, when that action is fraught with challenges. Each Speaking Truth module explores the influences, motivations, choices and moral foundations of global change agents as inspirations for activism.

Over 1300 proposals were submitted to the National Council for the Social Studies for the 2014 annual conference. **Speaking Truth** was selected as a workshop option for participants. With more than 4,500 attendees and exhibitors from across the U.S. around the world, the Fund for the Future of our Children (FFC) had the opportunity to share this curriculum with an international audience as a model for introducing activism to young people, extending the legacy of leadership established by the likes of Congressman John Lewis, Malala Yousafzai, Daniel Barenboim, Wangari Maathai, Chico Mendes, Mohandas Gandhi, Ruth Messinger, Mario Gonzalez and Thich Nhat Hanh. FFC envisions today's youth as tomorrow's leaders for peace and sees its mission as nurturing those future leaders. **Speaking Truth** is a tool that educators can use to introduce students to what inspired activism in others and to facilitate student reflection on their own inspirations.

In collaboration with FFC, June Murray created the module format which highlights, watershed moments, role models, faith and the arts as influences for action in the lives of global leaders explored in each unit.

June Murray has been a social studies teacher for 24 years. A graduate of Villanova University (BA) and Simmons College (MA), June has taught in a variety of locations from Boston, Massachusetts, to Cali, Colombia. For the last eighteen years she has taught World Cultures at Hudson High School in Hudson, MA. World Cultures, an elective Social Studies class for 10th, 11th, and 12th graders was created by June when her students requested that she design a course that would engage them in study of the world beyond the limits of a Eurocentric World History curriculum.

June has coached students through the development of a student led initiative, Schools for Sudan that raised over $10,000 to build a high school in South Sudan and brought Emmanuel Jal, Sudanese musician and philanthropist to Hudson High School. Moved by their study of Human Trafficking June's students raised $2,000 designing t-shirts and holding assemblies as part of their How Much Am I Worth campaign.   She leads student trips to the Peruvian Amazon and Costa Rica, delivering school and medical supplies to rural villages and exploring the impact of ecotourism on a land and its people, and believes there is no greater joy than watching the spark of curiosity burn brightly in the young people with whom she works.

In 2013 June received the William Spratt Award from the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies for excellence in teaching secondary social studies. She was also honored by Hudson Public Schools with the Superintendent's Award for Curriculum and Instructional Leadership, for her guidance in retooling the 8th grade social studies program.

Fund for the Future of our Children (FFC)

Since 1993, FFC has worked to fulfill its mission of nurturing youth leaders in their efforts to create a more peaceful world while supporting collaborative projects committed to developing non-violent expression, global interactions, and cross-cultural understanding among youth.

With our longest-running and most successful program, Youth Leadership Grants, applicants research the Abrahamic religious traditions, investigating topics related to peace, leadership, and social justice, and then apply the wisdom from this study to develop a creative project to benefit their community, their nation, or the world. Through their grant projects, students learn the practical skills needed to change society for the better. This endeavor has been a meaningful experience for both FFC and the grant recipients as we have watched grantees grow and inspire others, while their projects bloom into moving examples of social change.

With the celebration of our 20th Anniversary in September 2013, we wanted to further expand our reach for a lasting and thoughtful impact on tomorrow's leaders. Thus, FFC has been developing the Speaking Truth curriculum. Many young people are searching, with open hearts and minds, for grounding and inspiration. They want to make a positive difference in their world, and they are capable of viewing the world in a new and different way from generations past. Using examples from the past and present, Speaking Truth seeks to help young people fill that gap, find grounding and courage that crosses traditional boundaries, and step into their roles as future leaders for peace.

The curriculum features a number of modules, each focusing on the life and work of one great agent of change, delving into that person's influences, motivations, choices, and the role of faith in their lives. The first module features civil rights leader, and now U.S. Congressman, John Lewis. Additional modules will highlight the lives of Malala Yousafzai, Daniel Barenboim, Wangari Maathai, Chico Mendes, Mohandas Gandhi, Ruth Messinger, Mario Gonzalez and Thich Nhat Hanh.

Through this curriculum, FFC aims to hold up examples and teach about the ways in which young people have and continue to stand up against injustice, work for peace, and speak truth. The open hearts and minds of youth recognize that truth has no boundaries, and Speaking Truth provides a way to nurture young people in their quest to build a better world.

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SPEAKING TRUTH: Watershed Moments in Global Leadership

High School Curriculum for Young Leaders

Using examples from the past and present, Speaking Truth: Watershed Moments in Global Leadership seeks to help young people find their voices and step into their roles as future leaders for peace. Taking a stand for peace and justice is difficult and requires great courage and conviction. How have people like Mario Gonzalez stayed strong in the face of discouragement, frustration, and even danger? The answer lies in their belief that they are part of something greater than themselves.

Curriculum Goals

- Highlight models of courageous leadership for peace and justice.

- Explore the sources of inspiration for action.

- Develop and deepen an understanding of how faith/conviction can inform social and political action.

- Introduce concrete skills for young leaders who wish to become agents for change.

How People Confront Situations in Dark Times with Action

Confronting difficult situations requires faith. Where does faith come from? Throughout history people have acted deriving strength from their beliefs. Watershed moments, role models and inspiration from the arts have strengthened their resolve. This FFC curriculum provides students and teachers the opportunity to look at some of the world's greatest change agents and the source of their strength; a belief in something bigger than themselves.

There are points along the way in each of their journeys when these leaders have confronted darkness with the light of faith.

Essential Questions

- Where does faith come from?

- What role does faith play in your (people's lives) life?

- Despite the consequences, why do some people have the courage to act on their convictions?

Introductory Lessons: Circulate Faith,
Inspiration Stations, Journaling from the Soul

Modules

Each module highlights a person who, through his/her actions and faith, has had a transformative impact on their world.

Within each module, lessons on Watershed Moments, Role Models, Faith, and Activism highlights these concepts in the lives of the people profiled.

Curriculum Overview

The culminating lesson of each module is a call to action, encouraging students to take all that they have learned from the Speaking Truth curriculum and implement that learning to make a difference. Fund for the Future of Our Children (FFC) has supported student activism for the past decade through the award of micro-grants. Examples of student-led initiatives, a micro-grant application, and inspiration can be found at www.futureofchildren.net.

Students are encouraged to envision and launch their own teacher-sponsored projects. FFC will award up to 10 matching grants of $1,000 each, up to $10,000, to projects that have raised their first $1,000 on their own. All matching grant recipients will be featured on the FFC website, serving as role models for other youth activists.

The following standards from the **Common Core** are addressed in the Speaking Truth curriculum.

Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

<u>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7</u> Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

<u>CSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9</u> Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Content Objectives

Students will begin to think about the concept of faith and its influence on human behavior.

Students will share their ideas of faith as they relate to the ideas of others.


Circulate Faith

Synopsis of Lesson

Students will each reach into a hat or basket and select a quote. The teacher will start to play music (some suggestions: "You Got To have Faith" by George Michael, Wavin' Flag by K'Naan, "It's Not My Time" by 3 Doors Down). Students will begin walking around the room. When the music stops they must find partners, read each quote to one another, and determine whether they are going to keep their quotes or exchange them. Have the students do 3-5 rounds of this exchange activity and then ask them to come together in a circle with their quotes.

Ask each student to share why they kept the quote they did and what that quote means to him/her.

Once students have had an opportunity to discuss their quotes write the word FAITH on the board, invite each student to come to the board and put down a word, phrase that they associate with FAITH from the class discussion. If the word he/she was going to write is already on the board, he/she should put a check mark next to the word.

End class by having students write a definition of the word based on the class activities.
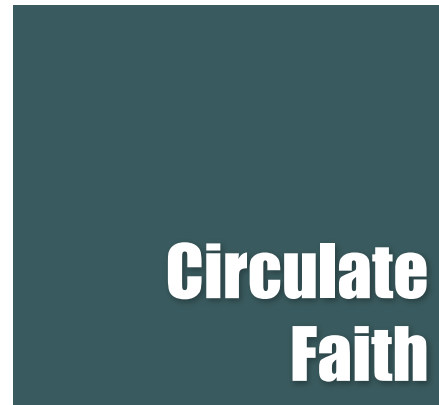
Quotes (17)

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." – Nelson Mandela

"Pilgrims are persons in motion- passing through territories not their own seeking completion and clarity; a goal to which only the spirit's compass points the way." – Richard Niebuhr

"To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest." – Mahatma Gandhi

"What you seek is seeking you." – Rumi

"Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action. " – William James
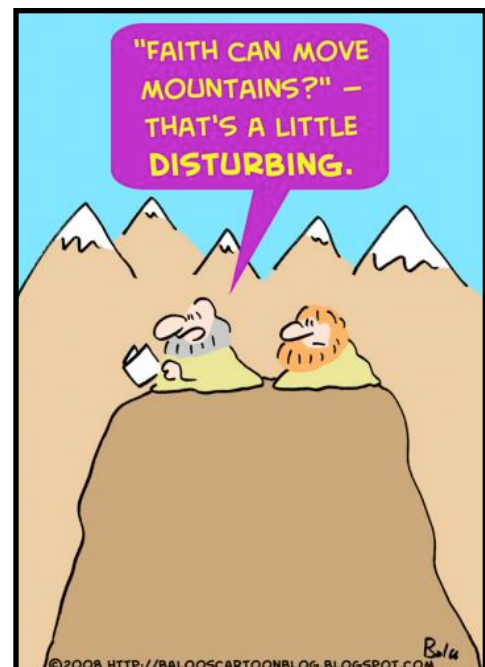
"The reason birds can fly and we can't is simply because they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings." – J.M. Barrie, *The Little White Bird*

"Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words." – St. Francis of Assisi

"Some things have to be believed to be seen." – Madeleine L'Engle

"I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day." – Abraham Lincoln

"Faith means believing in things you've never seen...like your feet!"

"Work without love is slavery." – Mother Teresa

"Faith consists in believing when it is beyond the power of reason to believe." – Voltaire

"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark." – Rabindranath Tagore

"Faith is not Desire. Faith is Will. Desires are things that need to be satisfied, whereas Will is a force. Will changes the space around us." – Paulo Coelho

"Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

"To one who has faith no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible." – St. Thomas Aquinas

"You block your dream when you allow your <u>fear</u> to grow bigger than your faith." – Mary Manin Morrissey

"Faith is a knowledge within the heart, beyond the reach of proof." – Kahlil Gibran

Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Content Objectives

Students will share their thoughts on concepts related to inspiring action.

Students will come to mutually agreed upon definitions of faith, belief, role models, duty and the arts.

Students will relate faith, belief, role models, duty and the arts to "fueling" activism.

Synopsis of Lesson

Write each of the following concepts on a large piece of paper or a white board. Place the papers around the room so that students will have space to congregate at each station.

Faith   *Belief*   *Role Model*   *Duty*   *Arts*

Divide students into 5 groups and have each group start at a different station. Ask each group to discuss the concept on the paper they are assigned and to brainstorm words, examples, ideas associated with that term. Remind them to think about how these words impact their lives. Make markers available at each station.

Have the groups move around the room spending 1-2 minutes at each location. If a student agrees with a word/phrase that has already been written on the paper, he/she can place a check mark next to that word/phrase.
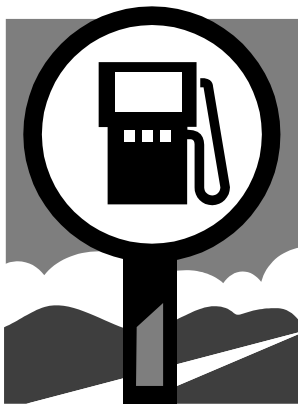
When the groups have visited each station and are back where they began, ask each group to look at what has been written and then share with the class what has been recorded about each concept. Encourage students to look for commonalities and to see if a definition of the concept emerges from the terms people wrote down.

Once the groups have reported out, ask the class how these concepts are related. Then share the following quote by Martin Luther King Jr. "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."

Use the quote to begin a class discussion on action and activism and how a person finds the courage to take that first step. How do the concepts the class just discussed encourage taking that step?

Students will capture their interpretation of the meanings of the words: Faith, Doubt, Purpose, Values, The Present.

In addition to exploring these words through writing, students will spend a week photographing their lives capturing the manifestation of these words in their day to day experiences.

Journaling from the Soul

Content Objectives

Students will create personal narratives related to each prompt.

Students will document their journaling with photos.

Synopsis of Lesson

Begin class with a writing prompt written on the board and a 10-15 minute free write. Students will share their pieces with each other. At the end of the unit students will select their favorite pieces and create a class journal/video/document.

Faith

"The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays." ― Søren Kierkegaard

What do you have faith in and why?

Doubt

"Doubt isn't the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith." – Paul Tillich

What things do I believe in that I cannot see?

Purpose

"He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how." – Friedrich Nietzsche

If there were only three things I could do in my life, what would they be?

Values

"Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny."

― *Mahatma Gandhi*

List the 5-7 values most important to you. Then ask yourself, if these are my values am I honoring them? If the answer is yes great, if there is room for improvement what could you change so that you were living more in alignment with what you value.

The Present

"The present moment is the substance with which the future is made. Therefore, the best way to take care of the future is to take care of the present moment. What else can you do?" – *Thich Nhat Hanh*

How you are living right now will make what you hope for a reality. What are you doing know that will lead you to where you want to be?

During the course of the *Speaking Truth curriculum* students will be tasked with capturing these words in images, through photographing their experiences. As a culminating project students may compile their writing and photographs into a journal- either print or video.

Pedagogical Overview

Spiritual intelligence is a set of abilities people use to apply, manifest, and embody spiritual resources, values, and qualities in ways that enhance daily functioning and wellbeing (Amram, 2007). People have these abilities to a greater or lesser degree.

These abilities are grouped into five broad domains: Consciousness, Grace, Meaning, Transcendence, and Truth.

This assessment can be used to engage students in conversation about what spiritual intelligence is and how it can influence decision making and leadership skills. This assessment was administered to business executives and a correlation between effective leadership and spiritual intelligence into was determined. A score of 4 or more in any area is a strength. After taking the assessment students will be able to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and engage in a conversation about how spiritual intelligence develops.

Frontloading may be required depending on how familiar students are with the vocabulary used in the assessment.

There are items that are "reversed scored". Upon completing the assessment, have students adjust their scores on those items before totaling their scores.

This approach offers students an opportunity to see the role that Spiritual Intelligence can play in leadership.

The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale

Zohar and Marshall define Spiritual Intelligence as "…the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value, the intelligence with which we can place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context, the intelligence with which we can assess that one course of action or one life-path is more meaningful than another." (p. 3)

Wolman (2001) defines spiritual intelligence as "the human capacity to ask ultimate questions about the meaning of life, and to simultaneously experience the seamless connection between each of us and the world in which we live" (p. 83).

Spiritual intelligence is a set of abilities people use to apply, manifest, and embody spiritual resources, values, and qualities in ways that enhance daily functioning and wellbeing (Amram, 2007). People have these abilities to a greater or lesser degree.

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Working across each grid in numerical order, score all the items on a scale from 1 to 6 based on the general frequency of your behavior over the past 6 to 12 months:

1 - Never or almost never

2 - Very infrequently

3 - Somewhat infrequently

4 - Somewhat frequently

5 - Very frequently

6 - Always or almost always

After you have scored all 70 behaviors, you will complete the spiritual intelligence score by finding your average score for each domain.

Consciousness

This domain reflects the ability to raise or shift consciousness, to tap intuition, and to synthesize multiple points of view in ways that enhance daily functioning and well-being.

Consciousness is divided into three capabilities: **Intuition**, **Mindfulness**, and **Synthesis**.

Intuition:

_____ 1. I pay attention to my dreams to gain insight to my life.

_____ 2. I remember to consider what is unspoken, underground or hidden.

_____ 3. I listen to my gut feeling or intuition in making important choices.

_____ 4. I listen deeply to both what is being said and what is not being said.

Mindfulness:

_____ 5. During an activity or conversation, I monitor and notice my thoughts and emotions.

_____ 6. I live and act with awareness of my mortality.

_____ 7. I look for and try to discover my blind spots.

_____ 8. In arguing or negotiating, I am able to see things from the other person's perspective, even when I disagree.

Synthesis:

_____ 9. In meetings or conversations, I pause several times to step back, observe, and re-assess the situation.

_____ 10. I can hold as true and integrate seemingly conflicting or contradictory points of view.

_____ 11. Even in the midst of conflict, I look for and find connection and common ground.

_____ 12. To solve problems, I draw on my ability to hold, accept and go beyond paradoxes.

Grace

This domain reflects inner-directedness (combining discernment and freedom) and love for life, drawing on the inspiration, beauty and joy inherent in each present moment to enhance functioning and well-being.

Grace is divided into six capabilities: **Beauty**, **Discernment** (ability to judge well), **Freedom**, **Gratitude**, **Immanence** (seeing the divine in the material world), and **Joy**.

Beauty:

_____ 13. I notice and appreciate the beauty that is uncovered in my work.

_____ 14. I appreciate the sensuality and beauty of my daily life.

_____ 15. I find ways to express my true self creatively.

Discernment:

_____ 16. My actions are aligned with my soul.my essential true nature.

_____ 17. I am aware of my inner truth, what I know inside to be true.

_____ 18. My actions are aligned with my values.

Freedom:

_____ 19.Because I follow convention, I am not as successful as I could be. (reverse scored)

_____ 20. I have a good sense for when my purpose requires nonconformity, out-of-the-box thinking, or taking an unpopular stand.

_____ 21. I have a hard time going against conventions, expectations, or rules. (reverse scored)

Gratitude:

_____ 22. My life is a gift, and I try to make the most of each moment.

_____ 23. I remember to feel grateful for the abundance of positive things in my life.

Immanence:

_____ 24. I am mindful of my body's five senses during my daily tasks.

_____ 25. In my daily life, I am disconnected from nature. (reverse scored)

_____ 26. I spend time in nature to remind myself of the bigger picture.

_____ 27. I enjoy the small things in life-such as taking a shower, brushing my teeth, or eating.

Joy:

_____ 28 .I bring a feeling of joy to my activities.

_____ 29. Even when I seem to have very few choices, I feel free.

_____ 30. I am frustrated by my inability to find meaning in my daily life. (reverse scored)

Meaning

This domain reflects the ability to experience meaning, link activities and experiences to values, and construct interpretations in ways that enhance functioning and well-being even in the face of pain and suffering.

Meaning is divided into two capabilities: **Purpose** and **Service.**

Purpose:

_____ 31. I hold my work as sacred.

_____ 32. In my day-to-day activities, I align my purpose with what wants to and needs to happen in the world.

_____ 33. I see financial rewards as being the primary goal of my work. (reverse scored)

_____ 34. I see advancing my career as the main reason to do a good job. (reverse scored)

_____ 35. I derive meaning from the pain and suffering in my life.

Service:

_____ 36. I feel that my work is an expression of love.

_____ 37. My work is in alignment with my greater purpose.

_____ 38. In my daily life, I feel my work is in service to the larger whole.

Transcendence

This domain reflects the ability to align with the sacred and transcend self with a sense of relatedness and holism in ways that enhance functioning and well-being.

Transcendence is divided into five capabilities: Higher self, Holism (viewing things as a system rather than the individual components), Practice, Relatedness, and Sacredness.

Higher Self:

_____ 39. I draw on deep trust or faith when facing day-to-day challenges.

_____ 40. I am aware of a wise or higher-self in me that I listen to for guidance.

_____ 41. I seek to know only what is provable and avoid the mysterious. (reverse scored)

_____ 42. My goals and purpose extend beyond the material world.

Holism:

_____ 43. To gain insights in daily problems, I take a wide view or holistic perspective.

_____ 44. I feel like part of a larger cosmic organism or greater whole.

_____ 45. Seeing life's processes as cyclical gives me useful insights to daily challenges.

Practice:

_____ 46. I have a daily spiritual practice such as meditation or prayer that I draw on to address life challenges.

_____ 47. In difficult moments, I draw on stories, quotes, teachings, or other forms of time-proven wisdom.

_____ 48. I have daily and weekly times set aside for self-reflection and rejuvenation.

_____ 50. I use rituals, rites, or ceremonies during times of transition.

_____ 51. I use objects or places as reminders to align myself with what is sacred.

Relatedness:

_____ 52. I work toward expanding other peoples' awareness and perspectives.

_____ 53. I draw on my compassion in my encounters with others.

Sacredness:

_____ 54. Experiences of grace or awe give me insights or direction in dealing with daily problems

_____ 55. I live in harmony with a force greater than myself, a universal life force, the divine, or nature

_____ 56. In my day-to-day tasks, I pay attention to that which cannot be put into words.

Truth

This domain reflects the ability to be present, to love and peacefully surrender to truth. This includes manifesting openness, presence, humility, and trust in ways that enhance daily functioning and well-being.

Truth is examined in six capabilities: **Egolessness, Level-headedness, Inner wholeness, Openness, Presence,** and **Trust.**

Egolessness:

_____ 57. Being right is important to me. (reverse scored)

_____ 58. When looking at others, I tend to focus on what they need to do to improve.(reverse scored)

_____ 59. I want to be treated as special. (reverse scored)

Level-headedness:

_____ 60. When things are chaotic, I remain aware of what is happening without getting lost in my experience.

_____ 61. I get upset when things don't go the way I want them to go. (reverse scored)

Inner Wholeness:

_____ 62. I am my own worst enemy. (reverse scored)

_____ 63. I accept myself as I am with all my problems and limitations.

Openness:

_____ 64. I resist events that I don't like, even when they need to occur. (reverse scored)

_____ 65. I hold resentment towards those who have wronged me. (reverse scored)

_____ 66. I strongly resist experiences that I find unpleasant. (reverse scored)

Presence:

_____ 67. My mind wanders away from what I am doing. (reverse scored)

_____ 68. I find it upsetting to imagine that I will not achieve my desired outcomes. (reverse scored)

_____ 69. I tend to think about the future or the past without attending to the present moment. (reverse scored)

Trust:

_____ 70. I am driven and ruled by fears. (reverse scored)

_____ 71. I have faith and confidence that things will work out for the best.

To score, average the item scores in each domain after correcting for reverse scored items (i.e. the score of a reverse scored item of 6 becomes 1, 5 becomes a 2, 4 becomes a 3, 3 becomes a 4, 2 becomes a 5 and a 1 becomes a 6).

_____ Consciousness _____ Grace _____ Meaning _____ Transcendence _____ Truth

Average the scores from each domain to get overall Spiritual Intelligence Score.

_____ **Spiritual Intelligence Score**

Amram, Yosi & Dryer, Christopher (2008). _The Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale: Development in Preliminary Evaluation (pdf)._ Paper presented at the 116th Annual (August 2008) Conference of the American Psychological Association, Boston, MA.
Available on www.yosiamram.net/papers/.

One definition describes leadership as "a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" (Chermers, 2001, p. 140).

There is a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices such as honesty, integrity, humility, listening responsively, and showing concern for others, and effective leadership.

Effective leaders manifest greater self-awareness and self-knowledge.

Spiritual Intelligence and Leadership

Current leadership constructs find that empathic and compassionate interpersonal relationships, inspirational motivation, inner-directedness based on self-knowledge, discernment, articulation, and embodiment of values, and the mobilization of meaning are central for effective leadership (Bass, 1990, 1997, 2001; Bennis, 2000, 2001, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Sternberg, 2007).

Excerpts from: Amram, Y., Luskin, F., Posner, B., & Shapiro, S. (2010). *The Contribution of Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence To Explaining Leadership.(pdf)* ITP, Stanford, & Santa Clara University Working Paper, Palo Alto, CA.

What do these domains have to do with leadership? How might Spiritual Intelligence impact a leader's effectiveness? How do you think your spiritual intelligence influences your actions?

Spiritual Intelligence can also play a significant role in the creation of positive societal change, as one directs inner strength, compassion knowledge to an external recipient. Spiritual intelligence emerges at the intersection of one's beliefs and how those beliefs inform our actions and leadership - especially to influence and inspire social change.

Content Objectives

Students will define and apply the concept of watershed moment to their lives and the life of Native American attorney Mario Gonzalez.

Synopsis of Lesson

Begin class by having students reflect on the following question. This can be done in writing or through class discussion.

Have you ever had to act when you weren't ready, when you knew that something had to be done but you really wished someone else would do it?

Watershed Moments

Build a definition of the concept **Watershed Moment**. Below are a definition and two literary excerpts on the concept:
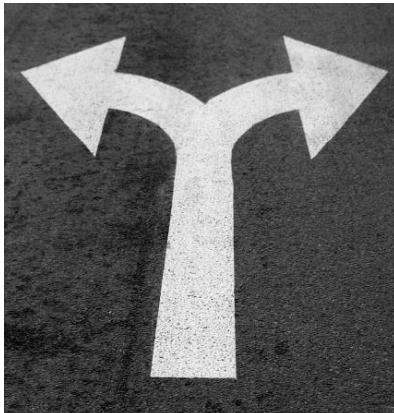
A watershed moment is used to refer to a critical defining moment at a point in time, a turning point (Ask.com).

"Every life has a **watershed moment**, an instant when you realize you're about to make a choice that will define everything else you ever do, and that if you choose wrong, there may not be that many things left to choose. Sometimes the wrong choice is the only one that lets you face the end with dignity, grace, and the awareness that you're doing the right thing. I'm not sure we can recognize those moments until they've passed us." – Mira Grant, *Feed*[1]

One never knows when that watershed moment will come. One never knows if there will be just one...or many.

It's easy to be virtuous, when virtue isn't challenged. It's easy to be faithful when faith is simply an abstraction. It's easy to be chaste, when no one's there to tempt us. It's easy to sacrifice...when that's your only option. We believe we are who we say we are...and all is fine and good...until that fateful watershed moment.

A watershed moment demands a decision, compels action.

A watershed moment can't be bypassed or sugarcoated with words.

A watershed moment demands that we reveal our true selves… our essence.

In that watershed moment, in the blink of an eye, we reveal our true character. From that moment on, from that decision forward, we are who we demonstrated ourselves to be. From that point on, words no longer define us.

When all is said and done...we are what we do.[1]

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[1] http://attwilightblog.blogspot.com/2007/11/watershed-moment.html

Where do you turn when things become difficult but you know you must keep going?

Family, Friends, Religious Beliefs, Artistic Expressions (poetry, drawing, music), School

Examine the lives of one or more of the Speaking Truth activists – John Lewis, Malala Yousafzai, Ruth Messinger, and Mario Gonzalez. What were their watershed moments? How did they respond when faced with challenges? How does this compare to where you derive your strength and inspiration?

John Lewis is a United States Representative from Atlanta, Georgia and a prominent figure in the American Civil Rights movement. He was one of the 13 original Freedom Riders and chairman of the organization which organized voter registration efforts that led to the pivotal Selma to Montgomery marches.

Malala Yousafzai was born in the Swat Valley of Pakistan and lived in the city of Mingora until she was 15 years old, when her life dramatically changed. Shot by the Taliban for advocating the education of girls and women, she has since become youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Ruth W. Messinger is the president and executive director of American Jewish World Service (AJWS), an international development organization providing support to more than 200 grassroots social change projects in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Mario Gonzalez has served as attorney to the Oglala Sioux Tribe and has worked tirelessly on Indian legal issues for decades. He has been instrumental in advocating for the Oglala Sioux (Lakota) people and their claim to the Black Hills of South Dakota.