

Grounded: in the Body in Time & Place, in Scripture

Tethered between Reality and Aspiration: Grounding and Formative Practices for Australian Leaders

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Meet the author

Rev Monica O'Neil is an experienced minister, facilitator, and strategy consultant with a demonstrated history of working in professional training, supervision, and coaching. She is the Director at Vose Leadership and lectures in Ministry and practice at Vose Seminary. Monica pastors Living Grace Dianella in Western Australia.

Chapter overview

This chapter explores the possibilities and difficulties raised by the tension for leaders of aspiring to be good while simultaneously being grounded in the “gutsy reality” of life. Shalom (which encapsulates love and justice) is identified as the human *telos* or aspiration point. As director of a leadership centre, Monica developed a charter of formation that explicates three virtues required to achieve this *telos*: mercy, humility, and endurance. Challenges to leaders include both the personal conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and external factors such as either hyper-positivity or hypercriticism from others. But hypercriticism can also come from within: “Imposter Phenomenon,” which is more commonly experienced by women than men. The chapter then describes Peter Senge’s model of transformation as process, and Joseph Kotya’s approach to transforming practices (based on virtue theory): prayer habits, friendship habits, and intentional relating habits, such as supervision. Through such practices, leaders may be grounded in both reality and in a vision of what might be.

General Study Questions

Question 1

In what ways do you experience a tension between your aspirations and your reality?

Question 2

Discuss your understanding of a “good life”.

Question 3

How is your community important for living such a life?

Question 4

Can you give some examples of the importance of adopting the posture of wounded healer? (p.269)?

Question 5

In what ways might leaders “eschew the pursuit of power and status” (p. 270)?

Question 6

What aspects of endurance do you find most difficult?

Question 7

Have you observed ‘imposter syndrome’ in yourself and/or others?

Question 8

How does/might your Christian community foster in its leaders

- disciplined prayer
- deep friendships
- transformative bible reading
- accountability and self-reflection?

Question 9

Where might we find the help we need to avoid the “temptation to pretense, to a theatrical performance of a clerical version of a self, and to ambiguity regarding the nature of servanthood”(p.279)?

Academic Questions

Question 1

How would you frame a “charter of good” (p. 268)?

Question 2

What scriptures would you draw on for this?

Question 3

Would you modify the three shades, each with three hues, proposed by the author? How and why?

Question 4

How do you understand the fundamental difference between Kohlberg and Rath’s secular framework for values formation and Christian virtue frameworks based on “prayer, community and theological reflection” (p.275)