

**Mental wellbeing as a dimension of a balanced  
life: a personal and professional leadership  
perspective**

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## SYNOPSIS

Due to gigantic strides in the development of technology the individual is challenged with developing new mental abilities to reach higher levels of functioning. Individuals need to become personal leaders which implies seizing control of their lives. This control refers to all dimensions of a person's existence: physical, social, spiritual and mental. Individuals need to strike a balance between these dimensions.

There appears to be a lack of awareness of the power of mental abilities and the potential which these mental abilities hold. As this problem was investigated from a personal leadership perspective, the aims of this research were:

- to define the nature of the mental dimension by means of a word and concept analysis and literature study;
- to identify the contribution of the mental dimension to personal leadership based on a study of relevant literature.

In chapter two it was found that the mental dimension encompasses anything concerned with the mind and intellectual activities, such as thought, consciousness, reading, memory, writing, and similar mental processes. In light of this, the development of the mental dimension can enable individuals to function optimally.

Components that comprise the mental dimension were identified. These components are measurable characteristics which future researchers may use to develop a questionnaire to assess the extent to which individuals are making the most of their mental dimension.

The broad categories of mental abilities are:

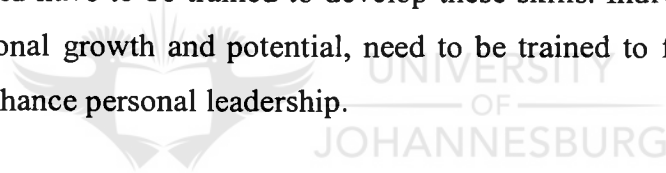
- Reasoning powers
- The development of potential
- Personal management

In chapter three the various components of the mental dimension were linked to the personal leadership framework. This link showed how the mental dimension contributes to the personal leadership process which consists of three phases which comprise answering the following three questions:

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- How am I going to get there?

Each of these three phases have mental abilities which facilitate the growth through that particular phase. It was also indicated that individuals need to develop their mental capabilities as well as their physical, social and spiritual dimensions in order to be balanced. The mental dimension thus enhances personal leadership.

Individuals need the mental capabilities identified in this essay in order to function to their fullest potential with regard to personal leadership. Those who do not possess these characteristics would have to be trained to develop these skills. Individuals who want to enhance their personal growth and potential, need to be trained to focus on the mental processes which enhance personal leadership.



## OPSOMMING

Vanweë die snelle vooruitgang op die gebied van tegnologie staan individue voor die uitdaging om nuwe verstandsvermoëns te ontwikkel om sodoende hoër vlakke van funksionering te bereik. Individue moet persoonlike leiers word en dit beteken dat hulle beheer van hulle eie lewens moet neem. Hierdie beheer verwys na alle dimensies van 'n mens se bestaan: fisiek, sosiaal, geestelik en verstandelik. Individue behoort 'n balans tussen hierdie dimensies te handhaaf.

Dit blyk dat daar 'n gebrek aan bewustheid van die krag van verstandsvermoëns en van die potensiaal wat hierdie vermoëns inhou, bestaan. Aangesien hierdie probleem vanuit 'n persoonlike leierskapspektief ondersoek is, was die doelstellings van hierdie navorsing:

- om die aard van die verstandsdimensie met behulp van 'n woord- en konsepanalise en 'n literatuurstudie te definieer;
- om die bydrae van die verstandsdimensie tot persoonlike leierskap te identifiseer gebaseer op relevante literatuur.

In hoofstuk twee is bevind dat die verstandsdimensie alle aspekte van die verstand en intellektuele aktiwiteite soos denke, bewussyn, lees, geheue, skryf en soortgelyke prosesse omvat. In die lig hiervan kan die ontwikkeling van verstandsprosesse bydra tot die optimale funksionering van die individu.

Komponente van die verstandsdimensie is geïdentifiseer. Hierdie komponente is meetbare kenmerke wat toekomstige navorsers kan gebruik in die ontwikkeling van 'n vraelys om te bepaal of individue hulle verstandsdimensie optimaal benut. Die breë kategorieë van verstandsvaardighede wat geïdentifiseer is, was:

- Redeneervermoë
- Die ontwikkeling van potensiaal

- Persoonlike bestuur

In hoofstuk drie is die verband tussen die komponente van die verstandsdimensie en die persoonlike leierskapsraamwerk aangetoon. Hierdie verband toon hoe die verstandsdimensie 'n bydrae tot die persoonlike leierskapsproses kan maak. Hierdie proses bestaan uit drie fases wat as die beantwoording van die volgende vrae beskou kan word:

- Wie is ek?
- Waarheen is ek op pad?
- Hoe gaan ek daar uitkom?

Elkeen van hierdie fases berus op die gebruik van verstandsvermoëns wat groei in daardie fase moontlik maak. Daar is ook aangetoon dat individue hulle verstandsvermoëns in samehang met hulle liggaamlike, sosiale en geestelike dimensies moet ontwikkel om gebalanseerd te kan lewe. Op hierdie wyses dra die verstandsdimensie by tot persoonlike leierskap.

Mense behoort die verstandsvermoëns wat in hierdie essay geïdentifiseer is, te ontwikkel om hulle potensiaal in terme van persoonlike leierskap te ontwikkel. Diegene wat nie oor hierdie vermoëns beskik nie, behoort daarmee toegerus te word. Individue wat hulle persoonlike groei en potensiaal wil bevorder, moet veral opgelei word om te fokus op die verstandspesesse wat bydra tot persoonlike leierskap.

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## CHAPTER 1

### CONTEXT AND RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 1.1. CONTEXT

Most individuals grow up believing that there is a limit to what they can achieve, and, as a result, start living out these beliefs. Dyer (1992:217) refers to this as a “big lie”. Many people then complain that they are unhappy with their current situation. Individuals think about the problems in their lives, and, in turn, want to change their lives. People want to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the pressures of daily life which are inescapable (Butler & Hope, 1995:4). Furthermore, those individuals who realise they need to change aspects of their beliefs and thinking in order to function optimally, often fail to carry out these changes (Kaplan, Sallis & Patterson, 1993:309). Individuals need to change the way they think, they need to change what they think about, and they need to change their paradigms and view their lives from a different perspective. Tucker-Ladd (1999) believes that mental factors play a key role in an individual’s motivation to change. If individuals believe that they are in control of their lives, then they will be more motivated to change.

Yet why should individuals want to change? In what way are mental abilities pertinent in an individual’s life? The reason is illustrated in various situations confronting modern society.

It has become more prevalent that adults do not read seriously anymore, do not write creatively, or do not process information which is different to their current way of thinking (Covey, 1994:294). Reading, writing and information processing are all considered mental abilities (Covey, 1994:295). Technological advances such as computers and radio and television networks have allowed people to think less for themselves and far less independently than they are able to. It appears that people rather want to spend their free time watching television or engaging in similar mindless activities rather than doing something constructive (Covey, 1994:295). The

deduction can thus be made that individuals are not making full use of their mental abilities.

On the other hand, technology has also created a need for higher levels of intelligence (McLean, 1970:6). As a result of this need, the individual has a greater potential to function the very best that they can in the sphere of their mental abilities. Technology has created a shift in the nature of work from “the back and the hands to the brain and the spirit” (McLean, 1970:277). In light of this, technology has provided new opportunities for learning, and the demand for learning has increased, for example, the majority of people need to learn to use a computer. In order for the individuals to adapt to the demands of technology, they need to think differently.

Levels of education have seemingly decreased, and the rate of drop-outs from school has increased. As early as 1965, Torrance and Strom (1965:25) documented that the number of drop-outs had increased and, because there was a decrease in the job opportunities for less-educated people, these drop-outs were experiencing greater unemployment. This problem has only grown more adverse since then.

Ironically, in today’s society, people want to be successful and improve their life circumstances, as success equates to a rich and fulfilling life (Howard & Patry, 1935:3). The problem is, to achieve this, individuals need to study further and grow in their knowledge and mental abilities.

Highlighted thus far are various situations for which individuals need good mental abilities. However, people have been paying little attention to their mental abilities. Briefly, the mental dimension may be viewed as that part of the individual which is concerned with thought, consciousness, memory, reading, writing, and other similar mental processes (Covey, 1994:295). Individuals have disregarded their mental dimension in the sense that they do not pay it enough attention and they do not focus enough on positive aspects in life - ours has become a society obsessed with negativity (Sboros, 1999).

Thus it may be deduced that individuals are faced with the general problem that, judging by the above-mentioned societal situations, they **are paying little attention to their mental abilities and thinking skills, and may possibly not know how to improve their mental abilities and thinking skills.**

The general problem can be narrowed down into a more specific research problem for this essay.

## 1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM

As mentioned previously, not enough individuals are aware of the potential of their mental dimension. They do not stop to think about their current mental level, nor do they think about their mental growth. They therefore do not decide on which aspects of their mental dimension they want to focus on and improve.

This problem is further compounded when it is viewed from a personal leadership perspective. Personal leadership is a value-based, principle-centred, inside-out approach to gaining control of one's life and living a happy and fulfilled life (Covey, 1994:42-43), and to live a more productive life (Russell, 1996:50). It is based on knowledge of who one is, where one currently is, and where one is going. A personal leader needs to develop in a balanced and holistic manner. Therefore all the individual's dimensions such as the physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions should be improved (Covey, 1994:288).

As the focus of this essay is to be the mental dimension from a personal leadership perspective, the principles of personal leadership need to be clarified further.

Personal leadership is a proactive focus on normal individuals (Covey, 1994:103). It is for individuals who are striving for a more balanced lifestyle, who want more focus in their lives, and who want to manage their time better (Covey, 1994:15). Personal leadership is about reinventing your own life (Russell, 1996:xi).

Everyone enters this world with so much potential, but very few individuals use this potential to the full (Smith, 1998). Individuals therefore have a choice with regard to their lives. They need to recognise that the patterns of their lives may be ineffective, and proactively begin to change those patterns (Covey, 1994:103). Personal leadership is thus about bringing out the best within oneself (Russell, 1996:33). In order to do this, an individual needs to be self-aware: aware of their own thoughts and know what is important to them (Covey, 1994:132). Knowing oneself is one of the key elements of personal leadership (Russell, 1996:238), along with, amongst others, the skills of time management, communication, and people skills (Russell, 1996:257). Lastly, Russell (1996:42) explains that personal leadership is learning from one's own and from others' experiences, and from observing others. Covey (1994:98) stated that individuals need to begin with the end in mind. By this he means that individuals need to know where they are going, so that they can better understand where they currently are, and that they can take steps in the right direction to take them to their destination.

To know oneself and what one wants from life, one needs to ask the following three personal leadership questions (Smith, 1998):

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- How am I going to get there?

Therefore, personal leadership may be regarded as growth through these three phases. The mental dimension plays a vital role in an individual's growth through these three phases, as one needs to think about oneself, and where one wants to go, to plot the course of how one is going to get there.

Within a personal leadership framework, the research problem can be seen as consisting of the following sub-problems:

- **What is meant by the mental dimension?**
- **How does the mental dimension contribute to personal leadership?**

### 1.3. THE AIM

In view of the research problem, the aim of this essay can be stated as an investigation of the contribution of the mental dimension to personal leadership. More specifically, the objectives shall be as follows:

Firstly,

- **to define what is meant by “mental dimension” in an operationalised way.** By operationalisation, the characteristics of the mental dimension will be compiled (Mouton & Marais, 1994:65). This will assist in clarifying the mental dimension, as one needs a functional and operational definition in order to live a better life. One cannot live a better life unless one has tangible characteristics to measure one’s life against.
- **to describe the relationship of the mental dimension to the other life dimensions.** The four life dimensions are the mental, social/emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions. Covey (1994:289) describes the physical dimension as that which concerns the physical body such as exercise and eating habits. The spiritual dimension revolves around one’s core values and commitment to one’s principles (Covey, 1994:292). Lastly, the social dimension comprises one’s relationships with others (Covey, 1994:297).

Secondly,

- **to identify the role and contribution of the mental dimension in personal leadership.** Certain aspects of the mental dimension will be identified which can serve as examples of how the mental dimension manifests itself within a personal and professional leadership framework. By identifying these aspects, future researchers will be enabled to develop a questionnaire to assess the mental dimension; creating a means for individuals to determine where they currently stand regarding their mental dimension, and where they want to be. This, in turn, will enable individuals to acknowledge which aspects comprise their mental dimension, and they can obtain ideas on how to improve the mental dimension.

Guilford (1997:9) stated that knowing what one does mentally gives one some control over one's mental functioning. This knowledge will empower individuals to take ownership of their mental dimensions and subsequently change and take control of their lives. Bunsee (1997) can also be quoted by saying that "whoever controls one's mind controls one's whole being".

What has been outlined above is what this essay aims to achieve. However, how are the objectives going to be achieved?

#### **1.4. METHODOLOGY**

##### **1.4.1. Research Strategy**

The research strategy to be followed in this essay is mainly a descriptive one whereby the aim is to systematically describe the phenomenon of the mental dimension. Smith (1995:28) considers research of this nature to be descriptive because it involves "systematic, accurate and factual description" of the mental dimension.

On a broader level, the aim of this research essay is fairly general as the objective is to reach conclusions which hold true for all individuals (Smith, 1993:30). However, the research strategy shall be more Herrmanneutic in nature in the sense that an attempt is made to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the mental dimension.

##### **1.4.2. Research Methods**

To determine the meaning of the mental dimension, a literature study will be undertaken (Smith, 1993:41). This procedure will help determine what has already been published on the mental dimension within a personal leadership framework. An overview of relevant literature will be used in subsequent chapters to elucidate the identified characteristics. Sources shall range from books and newspapers to journal articles and internet articles. This clarification will include a word and concept analysis to explain the mental dimension and personal leadership. Word analysis will

enable the definition of unknown and vague words with the aid of dictionary definitions, and concept analysis will allow for the explanation of concepts within the context of personal leadership (Smith, 1993:44).

## 1.5 MOTIVATION

From the context discussed above, it can be seen that a study such as this is important. From a personal and professional leadership perspective, a study regarding the mental dimension is most useful. Personal and professional leaders strive to enhance their own quality of life (Maister, 1997:15-16) and to assist other individuals in enhancing their quality of life. Personal leaders follow an inside-out approach, which means that they realise the value of having to change themselves before they can expect anyone else to change. In other words, only when they change their own mental functioning, can they expect others to do the same (Covey, 1994:43). As with professional leaders, if they change their mental functioning, then others will follow their example.

Robbins (1992:309) documented that most individuals resist change, and that a new level of thinking, that is, awareness of one's mental dimension, is required to experience a new level of personal and professional success. Herrmann (1990:313) explains how being aware of one's mental functioning makes one more creative, and thus it is easier for one to deal with change. Plus, he states that if individuals are aware of their mental dimension, then they are able to make better choices in their lives, especially when it comes to choosing a field of study or a career. It thus appears that if the individuals feel in control of their lives, then they would be happier and more contented people, resulting in turn, in a more fulfilled society. Therefore motivating individuals to change and improve their mental functioning is an important challenge facing personal and professional leaders. Thus, by enabling individuals to take control of their minds, they can take control of their lives.

In light of the above, it may be deduced that the mental dimension impacts on one's behaviour and on one's quality of life.



## 1.6. PARADIGM

Each person will have different views regarding the current level of their personal functioning, and it is up to each person to decide for themselves whether or not they need to change. If an individual decides to implement changes in their lives, then the responsibility lies with the individual to be committed to continuing on the path to change. This is the anthropological view of man that underlies this study.

From this existential point of view, it must thus be kept in mind that individuals are free to choose their actions in any given situation (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1992:423). If a person wants to function at their optimum, then they should take action now - they must take responsibility for their own functioning. Also, each individuals' ideas on optimal functioning are determined by their values. Each person can formulate their own goals and strive for perfection (Louw, 1992:94).

Continuing with this existential view, is the humanistic perspective that man is a sum of his parts (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1990:33). This is an holistic view of a person. The ensuing implication of this is that a person cannot achieve a balance in life by only focusing on one part or neglecting any of the parts. Balance in life cannot be achieved by only focusing on the mental dimension or by neglecting the mental dimension.

## 1.7 COURSE OF THE STUDY

This research script is divided into four chapters. In this chapter, the research design was presented. In essence the chapter pertains to what the problem at hand is, and what the researcher wishes to achieve with this research essay.

Chapter two will focus on the definition of the mental dimension, why the term mental dimension is being used in this essay, and on the various aspects of the mental dimension. The research methods utilised here will be a literature study, word analysis and concept analysis.

In chapter three the focus turns to the role that the mental dimension plays in personal leadership. The concept, “personal leadership” shall briefly be discussed and a literature study will be conducted to explore the role of the mental dimension in personal leadership.

The final chapter will provide a summary of that which is contained in the previous chapters. Findings and recommendations will also be discussed.



## CHAPTER 2

### ANALYSIS OF THE MENTAL DIMENSION

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

From a personal leadership framework, individuals need to be able to assess, evaluate and improve their mental dimension. Should an individual not know where they currently stand with regard to their mental dimension, then they will not know how to change and improve their mental dimension, and, in turn, improve their total well-being. Individuals need to be aware of the difference between current reality (who and where they are) and their ideals of who, what and where they want to be. Only once they are aware of this dissonance can they take steps to meet the goals which they have set for themselves regarding their mental dimension. As will be shown, the mental dimension plays a pivotal role in a balanced life.

Dicks (in Sutherland, 1971:vii) stated in 1950 that mental health was becoming a new goal that individuals are striving for. “Can man, with the knowledge he has gained of how he grows and is maintained as a person in his society, put this knowledge to use so that he may realise more of his potential?” (Sutherland, 1971:vii). Individuals are not always aware of the potential that lies within them, as was mentioned in chapter One, and will be reiterated during the course of this chapter.

Chapter one provided an outline of the direction of this study. The aim of the study was stated, along with the methodology to be used in achieving that aim. Chapter two will now focus on elucidating the concept mental dimension. The aim of this elucidation will be as follows:

- To formulate a definition of the mental dimension by means of word and concept analysis. To clarify this concept further, the word “mental” will be distinguished from the word “intellectual”.
- To obtain the views of various authors on what the mental dimension is by conducting a literature study. These views will provide us with different components of the mental dimension.
- The different components of the mental dimension as set out in the previous aim will then be explored further using the various literature sources. The reason for this is to determine operationalised variables of the mental dimension, which may then be used to devise a questionnaire by future researchers.

To begin with, what follows are word and concept analyses of “mental” and “dimension”.

## **2.2. DEFINING THE MENTAL DIMENSION**

### **2.2.1 WORD ANALYSIS**

When deciding on the focus of this essay, the decision which needed to be made was whether to refer to the mental dimension or to the intellectual dimension. After careful consideration, the word mental is considered to be more appropriate than the word intellectual. The following analysis will provide the reason for selecting the concept mental dimension.

#### **2.2.1.1. A word analysis of “mental”**

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1995:851), the word “mental” derives from the Latin “mens mentalis” which means “mind”. It refers to

that which is of or in the mind, and which is done by the mind. Expanding on this definition of the word mental is Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary (1944:453). Here, mental is defined as that which pertains to the mind or intellect, as well as anything which wholly depends on the mind. Mental has also been defined as that which is performed by the mind (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1987:1201). It pertains to intellectuals or intellectual activity. Once again, The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1987:1201) defines mental as that which is of, or pertains to, the mind, and includes mental powers and intellectual activities. The Oxford English Dictionary (1961:341) concurs with all the above definitions of the word mental, adding that mental is characterised by the possession of mind, and that it includes that which is intellectual.

The word "intellectual" derives from the Latin "intellectualis" meaning intellect (Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English 1995:707). Intellectual is defined as that which relates to the intellect. Intellect, in turn, is derivative of the Latin "intellectus" which means understanding (Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, 1995:707). The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1987:990) defines intellectual as that which pertains to the intellect and its uses, and is used to describe individuals who possess or show intellect or mental capacity. These definitions of the word intellectual are added to by Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary (1944:384), where intellectual is described as relating to the intellect or understanding. A further definition of intellectual is that it is that which is characterised by the possession of understanding and having intellectual capacity (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1961:369).

It can thus be deduced from the above dictionary definitions of mental and intellectual that the word mental encompasses far more than the word intellectual. Mental includes anything concerned with the mind and intellectual activities. Intellectual, however, includes the intellect and understanding. Intellectual is but one part of mental. In light of this, the "mental dimension" is a more preferable description than "intellectual dimension", as mental embraces the definition of intellectual as well.

### 2.2.1.2. A word analysis of “dimension”

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1995:378) regards the word dimension as that which is a specific aspect or facet of a situation. It is that which has scope and importance (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1987:555). In the context of this essay, the mental dimension is a specific aspect of a balanced life, as are the other life dimensions such as the physical, spiritual and social dimensions.

### 2.2.2. CONCEPT ANALYSIS

The word mental has different meanings in different contexts. This problem is compounded by the fact that different authors have diverging views on the concept mental dimension. Mental is used in both positive and negative contexts. Attention will first turn to the use of the word mental in differing contexts.

In most contexts, the word mental has mainly negative connotations, as can be seen in a few descriptions of these concepts in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1995:851).

**Mental handicap** has been used to describe the condition in which “the intellectual capacity of a person is permanently so much lowered or underdeveloped as to prevent normal function in society” (Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, 1995:854).

**Mental illness** has for decades been used to describe serious abnormalities in an individual’s behaviour or thinking capacity (Concise Dictionary of Current English, 1995:852). Similarly, Vitus (1975:5) described mental illness as the condition which results when “a person’s problems become so serious that they interfere with normal life”.

In opposition to these negative uses, Dannenmaier (1978:2) describes **mental health** as behaviour which satisfies an individual's physical, emotional and intellectual needs which is satisfactory to both the individual and society. Mental health allows the individual to use their talents and optimally satisfy their needs. Furthermore, mental health refers to an individual's psychological well-being and satisfactory adjustment to society as well as to successfully adapting to the ordinary demands of life (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 1987:1201). Corbin and Lindsay (1997:223) add to this description by referring to mental wellness as a condition in which the individual has the ability to cope with daily events in a positive manner. Torrance (1965:16) concurs with this view of mental health postulating that if the individual is mentally healthy, then they can deal with the stresses of the world in terms of their potentialities. Indicating that mental health is within the individual's control, Brockbank and Westby-Gibson (1966:5) state that "it is a man's way of life which is ultimately the central theme of the so-called field of mental health".

In light of the above uses, the word mental can have different meanings, depending on the context. In this essay, the focus is far more positive. It explores how the mental dimension can enable an individual to function not only normally, but optimally in society, in a way that fosters positive behaviour and increases one's thinking capacity.

There are some authors who have referred to the concept mental dimension as such or some version thereof. What follows are the views of Herrmann (1990), Covey (1994), Covey, Merrill and Merrill (1994), and Buzan (1988).

Covey (1994:304) does, in fact, refer to the concept mental dimension. He likens the mental dimension to personal management. One has to plan one's life, and in doing so one has to prioritise goals, engage in effective time management, and organise and execute activities to reach one's goals. The mental dimension includes knowledge and perspective in decision-making moments (Covey et al, 1994:181).

Furthermore, Covey (1994:302) states that the mental dimension deals with the recognition, development and use of talent. Buzan (1988:28) identifies mental skills in his writings. He considers planning, reading, general attitude, analytical thinking, leadership, and goal setting to be important. Craxi and Craxi (w.d.) state that the mind is the place in which thought is formed.

By increasing one's realm of knowledge, one can increase one's options. In addition, one can increase one's knowledge base by becoming involved in continuing education (Covey, 1994:304).

Herrmann (1990:431) although not referring to the mental dimension per se, defines optimal functioning as "having superior reasoning powers", so that the individual is not only able to acquire and retain knowledge, but can understand people and interact with them effectively.

Thus, from Herrmann's (1990:431) definition, reasoning powers may be regarded as an aspect of the mental dimension. That which enables individuals to acquire and retain knowledge are the mental skills. Buzan (1988:28) identified thinking as a mental skill. Other mental skills which have been identified are attitude (Covey, 1994:23) and metacognition (Louw, 1992:84; Gerdes, 1989:178). Covey (1994:302) points out the development of talent as an aspect of the mental dimension, and illustrates that a means of improving this aspect is education (Covey, 1994:304). Buzan (1988:23) considers reading to be a part of the mental dimension, and Covey (1994:294) considers writing to be a part of the mental dimension. Finally, Covey (1994:304) regards personal management as an aspect of the mental dimension, with organising and planning being the major activities.

From the views above, it may be deduced that the mental dimension thus encompasses the following aspects:



- Reasoning powers, which enable the individual to acquire and increase their knowledge. The main elements of this aspect may be regarded as:
  - Thought and various types of thinking
  - Mental attitude
  - Metacognition and metacognitive abilities
  
- Developing mental potential, includes expanding one's mental dimension, and enables a person to understand and interact with others. There are three ways in which potential may be developed:
  - Education
  - Reading
  - Writing
  
- Personal management, which includes characteristics such as:
  - Organizing and planning
  - Decision-making



As stated previously at the beginning of this chapter, these various components will now be explored in more detail.

### **2.3. ASPECTS OF THE MENTAL DIMENSION**

In order to provide future researchers a base from which to work when creating a questionnaire to assess an individual's mental dimension, the components of the mental dimension need to be operationalised. Characteristics, which can be measured, need to be identified. The aspects identified in the previous section are such characteristics.

### 2.3.1 REASONING POWERS

The three main elements of reasoning powers which have been identified as pertaining to the mental dimension are thoughts, metacognition, and mental attitude.

#### 2.3.1.1. Thought

“Many people would sooner die than think. In fact they do” (Russell in Halpern, 1997:1).

Thoughts may be regarded as contents of the mind (Butler & Hope, 1995:77). Often, thoughts may not even have been put into words before – they may merely be ideas. Knowledge is found in thought (Halpern, 1997:1). Thus thinking is needed to make better use of information which the individual has gathered (De Bono, 1992:5). De Bono (1992:9) stresses that individuals may be good thinkers without being intellectuals. Thinking is a mental process or activity which is done by each individual in the mind (De Bono, 1991:31). It is one’s mental processes which makes one human as the processes are involved in everything that people do (Tucker-Ladd, 1999). Thus it may be deduced that one’s thoughts makes one human.

“We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world”.

The Buddha (in Tucker-Ladd, 1999).

Furthermore, De Bono (1991:31) considers thinking a rational process. Whenever individuals think, they make choices, and the ability to make choices is solely a human ability (Nelson-Jones, 1989:1). In addition, freedom of choice is a personal leadership characteristic (Covey, 1994:71). Individuals even need to decide whether they want to think or if they have to think (De Bono, 1992:50).

The poet, William Blake used the phrase “the mind-forged manacles” to describe how individuals allow their thought patterns to inhibit their innate abilities and potential (Van Dijk, 1999). It is this way of thinking that gets people to where they currently are, but will not get them to where they want to go (Robbins, 1992:309).

Robbins (1992:311) suggests that time be set aside in order to take conscious control of one’s thoughts. This time he refers to as a “mental diet”. Individuals need to eliminate the negative and destructive thinking patterns which have become a habit. “Habit is either the best of servants or the worst of masters” (Emmons in Robbins, 1992:309). Too many people, says Robbins (1992:394), are mentally undisciplined. Nelson-Jones (1989:2) agrees that if individuals think more effectively, they would more likely act in self-enhancing ways. To do this, individuals need to be more self-aware, and self-awareness is a key element of personal leadership (Russell, 1996:238).

If a person continually harbours on the same thoughts and frets about an issue, they will be, according to Dannenmaier (1978:17), unable to work effectively intellectually until they resolve that issue.

Another way in which Robbins (1992:384) believes that one can improve the mental dimension is to create a new feature that’s useful, stretch oneself beyond one’s comfort zones and think of new possibilities. By applying anything one knows in a positive way, one grows and learns (Robbins, 1992:384). Oliver Wendell-Holmes (in Robbins, 1992:394) summed up this sentiment with his statement that “man’s mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimensions”. It is for this reason that it is extremely valuable to train the mind (Covey, 1994:295).

By interrupting one’s pattern of using certain ways of thinking for long enough periods of time, the neural pathways will weaken and eventually change (Robbins, 1992:118). This means that individuals may need to change their thinking. Changing

the way one thinks entails a paradigm shift, and a paradigm shift is a major characteristic of personal leadership (Covey, 1994:30).

The questions individuals ask themselves can help them determine the quality of their lives ( Robbins, 1992 : 311 ). Questions which may be asked are “what does this mean to me?” or “what does this mean about me?” (Butler & Hope, 1995:86). Robbins’ (1992:180) reasoning for asking questions is that questions direct one’s focus, and therefore how people think and feel. Furthermore, Robbins claims that successful people asked better questions and, as a result, got better answers. He thus deduced that quality questions create a quality life. It therefore appears logical that the easiest way to change one’s mental focus is to ask a new question. This will also allow individuals to control their thinking. Moreover, if individuals are to control their thinking, then they need to be aware of how they think (Nelson-Jones, 1989:4). Once again, the personal leadership element of self-awareness is relevant.

#### **2.3.1.1.1. Types of thought**

The passive mind “is potentially all things; but the creative mind is that which converts the potential things into the actual things” (Spearman, 1930:1).

De Bono (1992:10;1986:9) identifies various types of thinking, each of which are linked to different aspects of personal leadership.

- Pro-active thinking which entails looking for alternatives, setting objectives and being creative, as opposed to reactive thinking, which entails the opposite. The implication of this is that individuals should never stop thinking as there are always other alternatives which may be better (De Bono, 1992:14).
- Critical thinking is needed for arguments and analysis (De Bono, 1992:20). In order to evaluate one’s mental processes, critical thinking is undertaken (Halpern, 1997:4). This is a rational process of looking for alternative reasons (Tucker-Ladd, 1999). Critical thinking is thus directed thinking as one focuses on a desired

outcome (Halpern, 1997:4). “Knowing how to get from where you are to where you want to be is the power of critical thinking” (Halpern, 1997:16).

- Constructive thinking, according to Tucker-Ladd (1999), is crucial to coping with personal and interpersonal problems. He believes that the more one makes use of constructive thinking, the more one copes. Constructive thinking is thus rational thinking.
- Destructive thinking, as opposed to constructive thinking, results in an inability to cope with problems. Destructive thinking is based on irrational thinking. One form of destructive thinking is Illogical thinking. Illogical thinking occurs when an individual bases their ideas on false or unfounded conclusions. It is faulty thinking which may create a distorted view of reality (Tucker-Ladd, 1999).
- Creative thinking enables individuals to create and develop an idea, rather than just waiting for inspiration (De Bono, 1992:21).
- Insight thinking is used whenever a solution is sought by trial and error (De Bono, 1986:9).
- Sequential thinking is concerned with finding solutions by following a progressive sequence (De Bono, 1986:9).
- Strategic thinking is followed when an individual makes the most appropriate choice from a variety of options (De Bono, 1986:9).

Nelson-Jones (1989:4) identified many processes which are aspects of thinking, yet are also characteristics of personal leadership. Some of these processes are awareness, believing, choosing, creating, deciding, dreaming, reflecting, and understanding.

Affirmation, or self-talk, is a skill that can promote optimal functioning of the mental dimension. According to Dyer (1992:81), individuals must affirm themselves as no-

limit people. By this he means that there are no limits to the powers that one possesses. Affirmations can influence the thoughts that go through an individual's mind and can therefore result in a change in attitude (Kehoe, 1996:28).

Another mental process mentioned by Nelson-Jones (1989:4) is visualization. This process is crucial as individuals need to think about the future which they want to create for themselves by painting a mental picture in their mind (Russell, 1996:81). "The quality of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts and ideas" (Kehoe, 1996:48).

### **2.3.1.2 Metacognition**

Yzerbuyt, Lories and Dardenne (1998:1) wrote that metacognition is an inherent part of individuals' mental processes. Metacognition, in a nutshell, may be described as thinking about thinking (Forrest-Pressley, MacKinnon, & Hall, 1985:3). Authors have noted that there are limits to what individuals know about themselves (Yzerbuyt et al., 1998:2). Metacognition can help overcome this as it refers to how aware an individual is about their thinking and learning activities, and the control which they exercise over their thinking (Louw, 1992:84). More generally, metacognition may refer to knowledge about any aspect of mental functioning (Forrest-Pressley et al., 1985:181).

Few individuals are aware of how their mental processes function (Halpern, 1998:12). Louw (1992:263) states that metacognition may be improved. This can be done by making individuals aware of what they think, how they think, and how they think about what they think. Therefore the individual is able to influence their own learning (Forrest-Pressley et al., 1985:106). The way that this assists with learning is that if an individual can explain the way in which they are thinking, then their corresponding behaviour will improve. This happens as they will be able to reflect on their thoughts and behaviour. Individuals need to be careful of what they think and how they think (Halpern, 1998:12).

### **2.3.1.2.1. Reflection**

Another form of thinking about thinking is reflection. Reflection entails thinking about that which has happened and gaining perspective from that experience (Covey, 1994:248). By doing this, individuals can learn to see experiences in a positive and constructive way, and look towards the future rather than living in the past (Gilliland & James, 1993:188).

### **2.3.1.2.2. Metamemory**

Metamemory has been identified as a characteristic of metacognition (Gerdes, 1989:177). It pertains to an individual's knowledge and awareness of their own memory and concerns the storage and retrieval of information. Gerdes (1989:177) indicates the use of metamemory with the example that through metamemory an individual will know whether they have a better memory for names or numbers.

It has been well-documented that metacognition and metamemory play an important role in individuals' mental activities (Gerdes, 1989:178). These aspects are linked to the personal leadership characteristic of self-awareness (Russell, 1996:238). If individuals are aware of the way in which they think, then they are able to question the way in which they think. Questions which individuals may thus be asked are "are you cautious with your thoughts?" or "do you allow your mind to be filled with negative thoughts?".

Robbins (1992:178) believes that by answering the question "How do we think?", individuals can determine how they create their reality. Sboros (1999) agrees that thoughts create one's reality. By changing the way one thinks, one can become capable of doing more than one ever thought possible. This ties in with the suggestions from Butler and Hope (1995:85), who said that individuals should always look at what the facts of the situation are and question reality.

The one personal leadership characteristic that has, as yet, not been referred to under the aspect of reasoning powers is attitude. This will now receive attention.

### **2.3.1.3. Mental attitude and metanoia**

Meyer (w.d:1) states that personal leadership is primarily determined by attitudes. Attitudes refer to how individuals perceive things, which in turn impacts on the way in which they respond to things (Covey, 1994:23). Benstead and Constantine (1998:324) have described a phenomenon which they call “metanoia”. Metanoia entails thinking in a way which is different from how one previously thought.

Metanoia is a Greek word meaning change of mind. Benstead and Constantine (1998:355) also define it as a change of a person’s being, not just as a change of one’s decisions or choices. Metanoia implies awareness with understanding. Usually, as one gathers more information regarding something, one changes one’s mind. But, with metanoia, one changes the way one thinks within the structure of one’s society. As a result, one needs to learn to adopt a new mental attitude to the world in which one lives. This transformation requires self-knowledge. Without self-knowledge, one cannot have mental transformation (Benstead & Constantine, 1998:324). Similarly, without thinking differently, one will not acquire new self-knowledge. Thus metanoia is important as it enables people to approach anything as if it was completely new (Benstead & Constantine, 1998:340).

Benstead and Constantine (1998:327) emphasise that individuals need to become consciously aware of their minds, and they need to change the way they receive and register information. Once people can do this, then they will be on their way to altering their entire mental state. In light of this, Guilford’s (1977:9) statement that “knowledge is power” is certainly justified.

Metanoia thus encompasses self-awareness, attitude change, and paradigm shifting – all which are characteristics of personal leadership.



## **2.3.2. DEVELOPING POTENTIAL**

Bringing out the best within oneself is one of the main objectives of personal leadership (Russell, 1996:33). Everyone has the potential to achieve, but individuals need to do things to make their potential materialize. One of these things is education.

### **2.3.2.1. Education and lifelong learning**

#### **2.3.2.1.1. Education**

An individual's education begins as soon as they are able to communicate with others (Benstead and Constantine, 1998:23). People are first taught how to behave and how not to behave. Parents and teachers pass their opinions and emotional morality on to their children who learn, according to Benstead and Constantine (1998:23), in a way which is similar to that of animals : "monkey see, monkey do". Individuals thus learn by example, and unconsciously pick up the beliefs and world views of those around them. By the time a person has finished high school, they have learnt the basic skills to function well in society.

Covey (1994:294) maintained that most of our mental development comes through formal education, and that once people leave school their minds begin to atrophy. Lifelong learning, or continuing education, expands the mind and provides mental renewal (Covey, 1994:295). This lifelong learning may either be formal classroom or study programmes, or other forms of self-education (Covey, 1994:295; Butler & Hope, 1995:343). Russell (1996:171) lists workshops, seminars, videos, audio cassettes and interactive computer programmes as sources of learning. Butler and Hope (1995:343) emphasise that studying is not only for students, but that learning is useful to all individuals. Learning is important as it strengthens habits and develops skills that may be used throughout one's life. All people therefore should be educated (Aristotle in Saunders, 1981:457). Developing one's skills is one of personal leadership's pivotal characteristics. Another personal leadership characteristic which

is pertinent here is renewal (Covey, 1994:295). Mental renewal is brought about by expanding the mind.

But the above is only “outer education” (Benstead & Constantine, 1998:24). Little attention is paid to “inner education”. Inner education refers to learning who we are as people and why we react the way we do to situations and other people. There are therefore two types of education. One is formal education, and the other is learning from experience. Hergenhahn (in Tucker-Ladd, 1999) states that psychologists believe that learning refers to any change in behaviour that results from experience.

The way to measure mental abilities and potential should be in the satisfaction one experiences in life. So many people complain that they are unhappy with their current situation, yet each person has the capacity to create their own happiness (Dyer, 1992:132). Any personal leader will agree that happiness comes from within. So, a happy and effective life whereby each day is lived to the fullest may be indicative of a high intelligence and an excellent mental dimension. Quality begins within (Covey, 1996:42). Therefore, individuals can learn from their and others’ experiences and change their habits, especially by making use of the cognitive ability of reflection. The result is that they can see themselves and others differently (Covey, 1994:66). “Developing the habit, in the course of our more mundane lives, of searching for different and wider perspectives helps you to cope realistically and flexibly with difficulties as they arise. It gives you more options” (Butler & Hope, 1995:73). Due to experiences, individuals change all the time, and therefore learn all the time (Tucker-Ladd, 1999).

The Scottish statesman Henry Brougham said that, “Education makes people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave” (Vitullo-Martin and Maskin in Hatton, 1998). Plato (in Lee, 1987:131) confirmed the importance of education by stating that “we must start to educate the mind before training the body”.

### 2.3.2.1.2. Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning has become more prominent over the last few years, and greater focus is being placed on it. People need to learn more, and, simultaneously, at a higher level (Hatton, 1998). “Strongly embedded is the notion that more learning of different and various types throughout the lifespan will lead to a better and stronger society overall” (Hatton, 1998).

Howard and Patry (1935:2) noted that individuals are realising that most of society’s problems are mainly psychological and this realisation has led to greater emphasis on learning as a means to attack the problems of daily living. Furthermore, many workers do not have sufficient skills in aspects such as decision-making and they need to learn new information quickly enough in order to stay proficient in their professions (Russell, 1996:9). Russell (1996:8) estimates that eighteen-year-olds will change careers six to eight times during their working life. Because of these changes, individuals continually have to learn and undergo re-education.

Hatton (1998) has suggested that the difference between education and lifelong learning is mainly that education is generally a process consisting of a set of institutions, and that lifelong learning is a product of the process. “The very nature of learning and its relationship to life implies that we learn as we live” (Hatton, 1998).

Lifelong learning may refer to all learning not directed at children and not conducted within universities or formal learning institutions. As education may refer to any experience, lifelong learning may indicate multiple experiences (Hatton, 1998). People learn from experience – not only from their own, but from the experiences of others as well (Russell, 1996:42).

There are few people today who do not have access to the means to self-improvement. Cities have libraries and museums, and universities run correspondence courses for those in more rural areas (Dannenmaier, 1978:25; Butler & Hope, 1995:343).

Distance education is now becoming commonplace (Russell, 1996:9). Russell (1996:9) agrees that individuals have so much information at their fingertips. Therefore no one has any excuse not to make life-long learning a part of their lives.

According to Dannenmaier (1978:25), there are more adults taking formal classroom courses on a part-time basis in the United States than there are students enrolled full-time in school. The reasons that Dannenmaier provides for this include, firstly, that people have a feeling that they have qualities within themselves that require continual development, and, secondly, a feeling that developing these qualities will make their lives more satisfying. Similarly, Butler and Hope (1995:343) explain how learning can provide great satisfaction as the knowledge that one has learnt accumulates, and one will want to know even more about that which you find interesting. The ultimate problem, it appears, is that many people do not focus on areas of learning which are outside their current field, be it cultural pursuits or hobbies or work related issues.

Lifelong learning is a lifespan process, and to stop learning is to stop living (Hatton, 1998). Therefore the statement by Lai (in Hatton, 1998) is very appropriate : “I shall learn as long as I breathe”. This represents an attitude to life. Reinforcing this sentiment is Seneca (in Covey et al, 1994:188), “as long as you live, keep learning how to live”.

As mentioned previously, Robbins (1992:280) stated that all individuals have the need for constant, never-ending improvement – what he called CANI. In order to improve, individuals would have to decide which skills they would want to master in their lifetime (Robbins, 1992:291). They need to decide what they would like to learn, and constantly endeavour to increase their knowledge.

“Formal education, non-formal education, social and recreational activities and just plain living all play a process role leading to the product of lifelong learning” (Hatton, 1998). This constant striving to live according to the highest potential is a major characteristic of personal leadership (Russell, 1996:33).

### 2.3.2.2. Reading

Covey (1994:296) emphasises the importance of reading to improve the mental dimension: “There is no better way to inform and expand your mind on a regular basis than to get into the habit of reading good literature”. By reading as much as possible, the individual can train the mind (Covey, 1994:295).

However, as far back as 1959, Figurel (1959:11) forecast the challenge of an ever-changing society that lay ahead. These changes he put down to the general population becoming more mobile, to the greater child population, to changes in the family unit, and to the influences of mass media and television. The solution to this problem, for Figurel (1959:45), is reading. Reading enables individuals to become solid citizens who can adjust to the demands of life about them. Furthermore, literature studies enable individuals to attain self-realisation and function optimally (Figurel, 1959:45).

Not forgetting, optimal functioning is one of the aims of personal leadership (Russell, 1996:33). A person would have to be honest with themselves. Do they read because they *want* to read, or because they *have* to read?

Generally, when a person wants to find out something new, they read up on that subject, and add that information to their memory bank. If this is done continuously over the years, an individual would acquire a wealth of knowledge (Benstead & Constantine, 1998:327). Thus serious reading in one’s field of interest keeps one up to date. But, to obtain a balance in life – which is what personal leadership aims at – light reading is also recommended to reduce stress (Russell, 1996:196).

Figurel (1959:57) describes the act of reading as essentially a learning process. Reading can always be improved. The skills which form part of reading, such as memory, perception, and motivation can be focused on and enhanced. These skills are also necessary for other aspects of the mental dimension which have already been discussed. Strangely enough, it has been documented that it is those individuals who do want to learn to read better who in fact read very little (Figurel, 1959:62).

According to Butler and Hope (1995:352), many people have these reading skills, but due to attitudes to reading which they picked up at school, they no longer make use of these skills.

Robbins (1992:318) calls readers leaders. "Reading is something of substance, something of value, something that was nurturing, something that taught you new distinctions every day, was more important than eating" (Robbins, 1992:319). Figuerl (1959:68) stated that "if nothing happens as a result of reading, it has been done for naught". Reading should result in changes in behaviour, feelings and attitude, and this should change an individual's decision-making and other mental actions. Personal leadership aims at a paradigm shift, changing the way one thinks, feels, and thus behaves (Covey, 1994:31). Reading is therefore important to self-empowerment (Russell, 1996:196).

Reading is important as one gets to use one's imagination. It enables one to expand one's mental dimension (Robbins, 1992:402). Albert Einstein (in Robbins, 1992:402) is quoted as saying that imagination is more important than knowledge. Imagination is a critical part of personal leadership. It enables the individual to visualize who and where they want to be in their life (Covey, 1994:70). Reading, according to Robinson (1966:126) opens up the universe to individuals as it encourages individuals to explore the world. Reading thus extends one's knowledge (Butler & Hope, 1995:351).

Many other areas have been identified as to why reading is important (Figuerl, 1959:112). These reasons range from communication, which is an element of personal leadership according to Russell (1996:257), to the individual being able to relate what they have read to their own experiences of the past and to their hopes for the future. Figuerl (1959:119) also envisaged that individuals will rely even more heavily on reading as a tool for learning in the future than they did in 1959. It has become evident that competence in reading skills contributes to an individual's efficient functioning in society. Once again, effective functioning in society is what personal leadership aims at. Personal leadership also aims at gaining balance in life (Covey, 1994:15). Russell (1996:173) states that balance is enhanced by reading and writing.

### **2.3.2.3 Writing**

Another means of improving the mental dimension is to write, as the writing process is a cognitive activity (Forrest-Pressley et al., 1985:14). Writing includes keeping a journal of one's thoughts and experiences, as this promotes mental clarity (Covey, 1994:296). The reason that it promotes mental clarity is because writers set goals and plan and organise that which they are going to write (Forrest-Pressley et al., 1985:15). To do this, the individual needs to be self-aware, which is central to personal leadership (Russell, 1996:238).

According to Covey (1994:296), writing good letters is a means of communicating on the deeper level of thoughts, feelings and ideas. The reasoning for this is that it promotes one's ability to think clearly, to reason accurately, and to be understood effectively.

Centuries ago already, Aristotle (in Saunders, 1981:455) claimed that reading and writing are considered important to be taught to children as they are useful in daily life in a variety of ways. Furthermore, Aristotle (in Saunders, 1981:457) believed that young people must learn to read and write not only because these skills are useful to know, but "also because they are often the means to learning yet further subjects".

### **2.3.3. PERSONAL MANAGEMENT**

Personal leadership is concerned with organising one's life and gaining focus and balance (Covey, 1994:103). In other words, individuals need to manage themselves.

#### **2.3.3.1. Organizing and Planning**

The mental dimension includes organising and planning which encompasses visualising and imagining (Covey, 1994:296). According to Jordaan and Jordaan (1990:663), a plan is that which one has the intention of doing. This aspect of the mental dimension has very close links with all other aspects mentioned in this essay.

Individuals need to take actions to fulfil their intentions. If an individual has an intention to do something i.e. a plan, but does nothing to fulfil the intention, all that they are indulging in, according to Jordaan and Jordaan (1990:663), is wishful thinking.

Organising and planning is what Covey (1994:296) refers to as beginning with the end in mind. An individual needs to visualise in their mind what their goal is, and how they are going to achieve their goal. It is thus mental organising and planning. By doing this, the individual can ensure that everything which they do is that which really matters to them and will contribute to the reaching of their goal. In this sense, visualisation may be regarded as mental preparation (Covey, 1996:148). Visualisation is also a central characteristic of personal leadership (Covey, 1994:132).

Another characteristic of organising and planning one's life is time management. Covey et al. (1994:56) describe how what we actually do to achieve goals and what we expect to achieve are entirely different. It has become apparent that people want to achieve their goals by means of a quick fix, rather than fulfil their goals by following a developmental process. This happens quite often with regard to the mental dimension. For example, instead of studying long in advance for an exam, students rather "cram". There has to be immediate gratification as opposed to long term development and growth. As Covey et al (1994:58) explain, "we're into 'get the degree... so you can get the job.... so you can buy things..... so you'll be successful'".

People must realize that they need to grow through a process of continuous learning and growth. Quality of life cannot grow out of a quick fix (Covey et al. 1994:58).

A repeated theme in time management is "time is life" (Covey, 1994:181). Time has become one of the central preoccupations of today's society (Blyton, Hassard, Hill, & Starkey, 1989:1). Society now focuses on avoiding the loss of time. Due to this, everything people do has to be planned and thought through so as not to waste time



(Blyton et al, 1989:45). Even almost a century ago, Simmel (in Blyton et al. 1989:45) described how the pace of mental life was accelerating. The general pace of life has increased, and so has the pace at which the mental dimension has to function. Blyton et al. (1989:55) state that mental wellbeing is achieved when time is adequately allocated to all events and activities. “Spend your time doing those things you value or those things that help you achieve your goals” (Butler & Hope, 1995:32). Russell (1996:257) regards time management as a core skill of personal leadership.

To change one’s strategies involves decision-making, an aspect which will now receive attention.

### **2.3.3.2. Decision-making**

Butler and Hope (1995:347) identify an important factor in decision-making: “whatever the reason, keep it in mind”. In other words, always refer back to the original reason. Individuals need to decide what information is needed, priorities need to be decided on, and the decision needs to be taken on what to do with the information that has been gathered.

Decisions need to be made regarding every aspect of one’s life, and, as a result, one will often need to make good decisions (Butler & Hope, 1995:386). Good decision-making relies on clear thinking where one needs to weigh up all the options.

“Meaningful mental renewal empowers us to transcend the limited wisdom of our environment in decision-making moments and keeps our minds sharp, clear and well exercised for ready use” (Covey et al. 1994:182). This relates to the personal leadership characteristic of continuous renewal (Covey, 1994:288).

Huge demands are made of individuals to make good decisions. What adds to the stress of this responsibility is that these good decisions need to be made very quickly. The resulting effect on an individual is that they are no longer able to function optimally: first the mental dimension takes strain, and eventually the physical

dimension experiences symptoms of the inability to function (Butler & Hope, 1995:387). Intuition can enable individuals to make better decisions (Kehoe, 1996:41). This is because intuition results in the individual paying attention to the inner voice and coming up with more creative ideas.

Individuals need to remember, though, that they will not always be able to make the perfect decision. According to Butler and Hope (1995:388), every choice and decision will always lead to more decisions, some which may be more difficult to make than others. The process of change never ends with a decision that has been made. The more changes there are, the more decisions individuals need to make (Butler & Hope, 1995:392). A healthy mental dimension will prevent these decisions from becoming too stressful to make. A point to bear in mind is that a thoughtful decision is usually better than an impulsive one (De Bono, 1992:50). Personal leadership is about change, it is about choices that individuals make, and these choices are made by following a rational process.

#### 2.4. SYNOPSIS



As a summary of the components of the mental dimension and the characteristics which may be measured, the following table indicates the aspect of the mental dimension, and the various characteristics of that aspect.

<u>Mental Dimension Aspect</u>	<u>Measurable Elements</u>
Thought	Thinking positive thoughts Thinking negative thoughts Controlling one's thoughts Proactive thinking Reactive thinking Critical thinking Creative thinking Insight thinking Sequential thinking

	<p>Strategic thinking</p> <p>Constructive thinking</p> <p>Destructive thinking</p> <p>Affirmation</p> <p>Visualization</p>
Metacognition	<p>Memory</p> <p>Storage of information</p> <p>Retrieval of information</p> <p>Reflection</p>
Mental attitude	<p>Changing one's mind</p> <p>Challenging society's views</p> <p>Learning something new about oneself</p>
Education	<p>Life-long learning</p> <p>Making use of sources of learning eg, workshops</p> <p>Level of formal education</p> <p>Learning from own experience</p> <p>Learning from others' experience</p>
Reading	<p>Serious reading</p> <p>Light reading</p> <p>Memory</p> <p>Imagination</p> <p>Perception</p> <p>Motivation</p> <p>Attitude to reading</p>
Writing	<p>Set goals</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Organising</p> <p>Writing letters</p>
Organisation and Planning	<p>Imagination</p> <p>Organising</p>

	<b>Planning</b> Fulfilling intentions Immediate gratification
Decision-making	Prioritising Making more thoughtful decisions than impulsive decisions

Table 2.1 Synopsis of the mental dimension

## 2.5. SUMMARY

Chapter two focused on the concept mental dimension. Dictionary definitions were provided to clarify the meaning of the mental dimension, along with varying uses of the word mental in different contexts. This was rounded off with the views of some authors defining the mental dimension. The bulk of this chapter concentrated on exploring the different aspects of the mental dimension, as suggested by various literature sources. Finally, a table summarised the aspects of the mental dimension, and various characteristics of these aspects.

Now that the mental dimension has been deemed to be important, in terms of the necessity of the aspects which have been identified, chapter three can focus on the contribution of the mental dimension in personal leadership.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONTRIBUTION OF THE MENTAL DIMENSION TO PERSONAL LEADERSHIP**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

Thus far, this essay has focused on the mental dimension, and, in particular, on the components of the mental dimension. As has been continually reiterated, the mental dimension is but one part of an individual's life (Covey, 1994:15). Modern life has become more stressful, and individuals are neglecting certain areas of their life in favour of other areas. All individuals need to strive to achieve a balance in life, and function optimally in all four of the life dimensions namely the spiritual, physical, social and mental dimensions (Covey, 1994:15). As this essay concentrates on the mental dimension, the emphasis is on how one needs to function optimally with regard to this dimension. Chapter two identified essential elements of the mental dimension. Only when individuals are aware of what the elements comprising the mental dimension are, can they work towards developing and improving those aspects. This chapter will turn the focus to the contribution of the mental dimension to personal leadership.

Chapter three has the following two aims:

- Firstly, to discuss balance in life as an important principle underpinning personal leadership as well as to discuss balance of the four life dimensions. Included here will be an explanation of the relationship of the mental dimension to the other life dimensions with the assistance of a literature study.
- Secondly, this chapter will explain the mental abilities that were referred to in chapter two, and indicate how the mental dimension elements fit into the personal leadership process. A literature survey will enable this aim.

To begin with, the necessity for balance in life will be examined.

### 3.2 BALANCE IN LIFE

One of the most powerful investments that an individual can ever make in life is investment in themselves. The reason for this is that the individual has to deal with, and contribute to, life, and the individual needs to be effective in doing this (Covey, 1994:289). Attaining this effectiveness entails achieving a balance in all four dimensions (Covey, 1994:301) (refer to 1.3).

“The key to living a quality life is to maintain balance” (Russell, 1996:163). A lack of balance prevents individuals from achieving the type of life they want to lead (Cohen, 1998:49). If individuals neglect one area of their lives, an imbalance begins to emerge (Cohen, 1998:50).

Covey (1994:124) emphasised that each person has only so much time available to them, and therefore individuals try to divide their time amongst their different life dimensions. This may result in an imbalance in life as individuals neglect certain areas of their lives as they invest time and energy into other areas.

Balance helps individuals to reach their true potential as a “whole being”. To become fully human entails functioning optimally with regard to all four of the life dimensions (Cohen, 1998:50). “Reaching our full potential requires all four parts” (Cohen, 1998:50). Louw (1992:92) defines optimal functioning as the highest level of development which human beings can achieve. Optimal functioning with regard to the mental dimension is thus part of functioning as a whole being: an element in the equation of balance. Balance is a dynamic equilibrium with all four dimensions functioning synergistically as an interrelated whole (Covey, 1994:124). “To be whole, we need to keep our lives complete, and in balance” (Cohen, 1998:50).

People need a unity of knowledge about themselves and others. This unity represents a holistic view of human life, which includes all the dimensions. An all-round balanced lifestyle as well as an appreciation of meaningful work situations, is also the mark of an educated person (Helderberg College, 1998).

Howard and Patry (1935:1) describe how almost every normal individual at some time or another, has felt the satisfaction “which comes from accomplishing something when his mental and physical organisation seems to strike a high level of effectiveness”. This balance, according to Howard and Patry (1935:33), refers to the proportion, symmetry and functional interrelations between the mental dimension and the other life dimensions. It is as a result of this balance that one can achieve optimal functioning (Howard & Patry, 1935:1).

It was Aristotle (in Jordaan & Jordaan, 1990:22) who said the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The mental dimension is one part of the whole, yet interacts with the other dimensions. This relationship requires a closer look.

### **3.3. BALANCE OF THE FOUR LIFE DIMENSIONS**

Corbin and Lindsay (1997:224) believe that a good quality of life includes the ability to live and work effectively and to make a significant contribution to society. Furthermore, a good quality of life is the integration of four dimensions: physical, social/emotional, spiritual, and mental dimensions (Covey, 1994:288). Each dimension relates to the other, and a positive perception of one dimension overflows into the other dimensions (Corbin & Lindsay, 1997:223). Thus the individual's perception of their mental dimension has a major impact on their functioning.

### 3.3.1. The Life Wheel

The 4 dimensions may be depicted on a life wheel as follows (Smith, 1998):

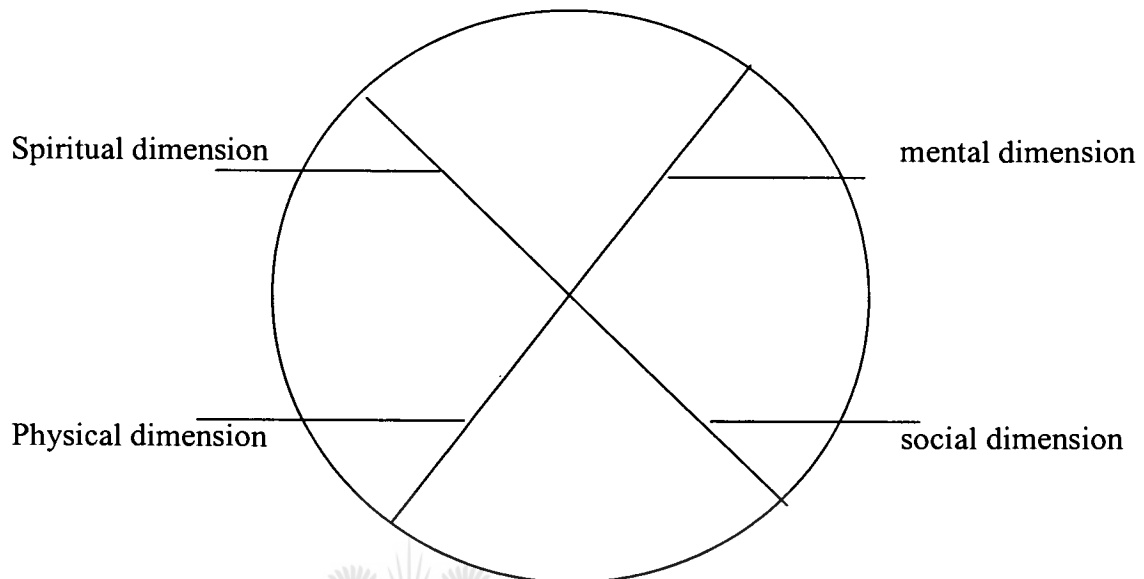


Figure 3.1. The life wheel

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As can be seen from the previous diagram, each dimension is just as important as another, and too much focus on one dimension results in too little or even a neglect of focus on another dimension, which creates an imbalance. The aim of a life wheel is to have each spoke the same length creating a perfect circle (Cohen, 1998:50). Therefore one needs a balance between these 4 dimensions. Then one's life can literally be "on a roll".

Individuals are physical, emotional, social and mental beings: they are not one-dimensional (Dannenmaier, 1978:3). In addition, these parts are highly interrelated. As a result, a healthy mental dimension cannot be achieved by neglecting any of these parts. Each dimension is all of the person, and the person is all of these dimensions (Dannenmaier, 1978:17). It thus follows that anything done to improve the one dimension will have a positive impact on the other dimensions because they are so



highly interrelated. Covey (1994:303) cites as an example that one's physical health can affect one's mental health.

Therefore increasing one's ability in one dimension increases one's ability in other dimensions as well.

### **3.3.2. Life Roles and their Mental Dimension**

Each person plays more than one role in life, for example student, spouse, or work colleague. Each role has a physical, spiritual, social and mental dimension (Covey et al. 1994:131). In terms of these roles, the physical dimension refers to resources, the spiritual dimension refers to one's mission in life, the social dimension refers to relationships with others, and the mental dimension of each role requires learning the tasks and duties required by each role, as well as an understanding of the roles and their requirements. A certain level of skill is also needed in each role, and one needs to master this skill.

An individual's roles are avenues through which they can achieve their goals, and this may be done by improving their social, mental, and spiritual as well as their physical dimensions. People need to create synergy between the dimensions and similarly with their relationships with others (Covey et al. 1994:132).

This is but one of the many important reasons for the need for improving the mental dimension, and may be looked at in even more depth.

## **34. PERSONAL LEADERSHIP**

Russell (1996:13) believes that personal leadership skills are necessary in order to guide individuals through an ever-changing society. Leadership is not management – it precedes it (Covey, 1994:101). Personal leadership consists of many characteristics. Maximizing one's potential, change, personal responsibility and freedom of choice are characteristics which may be viewed as underpinning the personal leadership growth process. The following characteristics namely maximising one's potential, mental

change, personal responsibility, and freedom to choose are therefore applicable to all three phases of personal leadership. These phases are:

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- How am I going to get there?

### **3.4.1. Maximizing one's mental potential**

Even in 1935, individuals were becoming more self-conscious as well as social and world conscious (Howard & Patry, 1935:2). As a result, man now wants to play a greater role in the many possibilities of his own destiny. People need to be empowered to change their lives through advanced thinking tools and techniques. Various types of thought such as critical thinking which were identified in chapter two as elements of the mental dimension promote this. There is awareness within each individual of their own potential which leads them to try to become that which they are capable of becoming. Covey (1994:101) agrees that the individual has to visualise the potential within. That which usually prevents individuals from improving themselves is fear within the person (Dannenmaier, 1978:25). As Russell (1996:xi) stated, personal leadership is not about being number one, it means that the individual has done their best to live up to their own potential. Each individual's potential is unlimited, and individuals need to actualize their capabilities and potential, no matter what the conditions are (Covey, 1996:43). Everyone has to raise their own potential to a higher level (Russell, 1996:55). "The ultimate responsibility for learning, motivating and improving performance rests within the individual" (Russell, 1996:55). Maximising one's mental potential thus increases the effectiveness of one's mental dimension.

Personal leadership entails doing the right things rather than doing things right (Covey, 1994:101). In terms of the mental dimension, this means taking steps and engaging in actions which promote the growth of the mental dimension rather than engaging in actions which others deem correct.

### 3.4.2. Mental change

Butler and Hope (1995:13) postulate that there are two principles which guide the development of “mental fitness”, and these are valuing yourself and recognizing that you can change. Meyer (w.d.) concurs that individuals have to accept change and adapt quickly. This change is imperative for effective personal leadership.

According to Butler & Hope (1995:13), the process of change is, in fact, inevitable. Personal leadership is a journey, and change is therefore part of this journey. Change is also a cumulative process (Kehoe, 1996:77). The individual cannot choose whether or not they want to change (Butler & Hope, 1995:20). The individual therefore must decide whether or not they want the process of change to work for them or against them. “Knowledge will give you the power to change in the ways that are right for you” (Butler & Hope, 1995:21). If an individual wants to make changes in their life, they need to look at the cause, and the cause is the way the individual uses their mind. Change thus involves knowing how to change, and wanting to change (Tucker-Ladd, 1999). Individuals need to be motivated to change, and individuals are motivated by many things simultaneously (Tucker-Ladd, 1999). The bottom line appears to be that you can change, if you want to change. The mental dimension thus plays a key role in this change. Individuals need to use critical thinking to determine if their thinking is constructive or destructive. If their thinking is destructive, they need to change their thought patterns. “When you change your thinking, you change your life” (Staples, 1991:13). Engaging in creative thinking enables individuals to visualize how they want to change.

Every time an individual gathers new information and meets new people, they change (Butler & Hope, 1995:21). This ties in with the personal leadership characteristic of learning from the experience of others. Therefore people are changing (and learning) all the time. Russell (1996:237) states that it is very difficult for individuals to change. In order to change, individuals must know their strengths and weaknesses. Thus individuals need to be self-aware. “You can’t change something you don’t understand” (Russell, 1996:237). By thinking critically, individuals can objectively

look at their lives, and, by making thoughtful decisions instead of making impulsive ones, decide if they need to change. Reflection is also useful for mental change, as one can look back on one's own experiences and on the experiences of others and move on with a positive perspective on one's life.

As it is written in the Koran (in Tucker-Ladd, 1999), "if you don't have the capacity to change yourself and your attitudes, then nothing around you can be changed". The responsibility to change lies within each individual.

### **3.4.3. Personal Responsibility**

Kehoe (1996:12) described the mind as a garden, which can be cultivated or neglected. The individual is described as the gardener. "You can cultivate this garden, or you can ignore it and let it develop whatever way it will". Individuals need to take responsibility for themselves, for what they are, who they are, and where they are going in their lives. "No one can motivate you but yourself" (Russell, 1996:109). In addition, if individuals see themselves as being in control of their own lives, then they are more likely to take responsibility for their lives (Tucker-Ladd, 1999). Personal responsibility is a core element of personal leadership. It is up to the individual to take charge of their life, to assess their life, and to introduce change if they need to change. Once again, the concept of proactivity is reiterated: individuals are responsible for their own lives. It appears to be a matter of mental attitude, positive thinking, and learning about oneself.

A part of personal responsibility is taking control of one's thinking (Wegner & Pennebaker, 1993:9). Individuals need to be empowered to do this. "Empowerment is about taking charge of your life, making commitments, life-long learning and overcoming obstacles" (Russell, 1996:149).

The choice to change, and the choice to take responsibility for one's life lies within each individual.

#### 3.4.4. Freedom to choose

Russell (1996:15) wrote that whatever one accomplishes in life is a matter of choice. It is through choice that individuals can achieve whatever they wish. Each individual has to make their own decisions, and these decisions are based on the individual's principles and values (Covey, 1996:42).

Bunsee (1997) cleverly referred to the need for mental liberation of the oppressed. By keeping individuals ignorant of knowledge of their mental capabilities, they can easily be exploited and controlled. This mental "freedom" may be indicative of the individual's ability to make choices regarding their mental dimension. Individuals can choose to observe their mental functioning, and, if it does not work for them, they can choose to change their mental functioning (Nelson-Jones, 1989:4).

Individuals have the freedom to choose because they possess the human endowment of independent will. Covey (1994:148) defines independent will as "the ability to make decisions and choices and to act in accordance with them. It is the ability to act rather than be acted upon". In other words, this personal leadership characteristic, like self-awareness, implies proactivity. Proactivity cultivates one's freedom of choice (Covey, 1996:42).

In the concentration camp, Victor Frankl described the "last of the human freedoms" – "the ability to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances" (Butler & Hope, 1995:73). Every person's freedom to choose their own thoughts helps them to create their own reality (Kehoe, 1996:11).

Frankl's view of an individual's freedom of choice is what Ellis (in Joubert, 1995:68) postulates with his Rational Emotive Therapy. Each individual can choose how to react to his environmental events. If individuals can maximise their rational thoughts and minimise their irrational thoughts, then they can achieve their goals. This is because changing one's irrational thoughts and false beliefs about oneself and reality results in an increase in one's self-esteem.

### **3.5. THE ROLE OF THE MENTAL DIMENSION IN PERSONAL LEADERSHIP**

As had been said many a time before, personal leadership begins with the knowledge of where one stands now and leads to the discovery of where you are going (Smith, 1998). Personal leadership is a process which starts with the self, and is a continual process of renewal (Covey, 1994:43). Personal leadership is a continuous journey (Meyer, w.d.), whereby the individual realizes their inherent potential.

According to Meyer (w.d.), as personal leadership begins with the knowledge of where one stands now and leads to the discovery of where one wants to go, it stands to reason that one needs to know how one is going to get there. Once one finds out who one is, one may discover that one needs to change the way in which one views the world. Furthermore, if individuals understand how they got to be the way they are, then they will know more about how to become what they would like to be (Tucker-Ladd, 1999).

In terms of the mental dimension, the growth of the mental dimension is also a personal leadership process. The individual needs to determine how their mental dimension currently functions, whether they are striving to achieve optimal functioning in terms of their mental dimension, and deciding how they are going to change certain elements of their mental dimension in order to achieve that optimal functioning. Robbins (1992:309) confirms this view of personal leadership as a process. For him, personal leadership entails taking control of one's life.

As stated previously, the personal leadership characteristics discussed in 3.5. underpin the entire personal leadership process, and therefore span the growth process of one's mental dimension. However, certain mental dimension elements identified in chapter two are crucial to specific aspects of the personal leadership process.

### 3.5.1. WHO AM I?

#### 3.5.1.1. Self-awareness

An important part of personal leadership and self-management is self-awareness (Smith, 1998), and self-awareness implies self-knowledge (Tucker-Ladd, 1999; Covey, 1996:40). Through self-knowledge and greater self-awareness, individuals can do something about their lifestyle. This may be because some of the major hurdles to clear thinking are within the individual (Tucker-Ladd, 1999). Dyer (1992:139) believes that to achieve personal leadership, one needs self-knowledge with regard to the different areas of one's life, namely the mental, spiritual, social and physical dimensions.

Proactivity, which suggests that individuals are responsible for their own lives, is based on self-awareness (Covey, 1994:103). Self-awareness helps individuals to examine their own thoughts (Covey, 1994:130), and is the individual's ability to think about their very own thought processes (Covey, 1994:66), which is an element of metacognition (see 2.3.1.2.). Therefore individuals are able to assess if their thoughts are negative or positive in nature. If the thoughts are negative, then they are destructive and may result in a negative attitude. If the thoughts are positive, then the individual will be more optimistic regarding their future. Individuals thus need to have a positive mental attitude. Many mental processes are thus involved in knowing who one is. By using rational thinking, individuals can look at themselves objectively.

Self-awareness also entails looking back on our successes and failures so that one is able to gain a clearer understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses (Smith, 1998). This encompasses the cognitive ability of reflection (see 2.3.1.2.1.). The individual will then be able to assess where they currently stand with regard to their mental dimension, and take measures to grow in their desired direction. Metacognition is consequently useful here, as individuals can think about how they view themselves.

### **3.5.2. WHERE AM I GOING?**

#### **3.5.2.1. Vision**

Covey (1994:103) regards vision to be a primary motivator of human action, as it affects an individual's choices about themselves and their future. Individuals need to look beyond their present reality of who and what they currently are, that which does not yet exist, and that which they not yet are (Covey, 1994:103). This vision is therefore created by deciding what is important and what gives one's life meaning. It is personal leadership which "lifts vision to higher sights" (Russell, 1996:75).

#### **3.5.2.2 Creative thinking**

Kehoe (1996:107) describes creativity as "the ability to regularly and consistently solve day-to-day problems in innovative and unique ways". One person's mental dimension differs from that of another. According to Herrmann (1990:313), these mental differences are not only normal, but also positive and creative. By taking advantage of these differences, change can be easier to deal with, as it makes individuals feel more creative. The more creative individuals feel they are, the more they succeed. How individuals view themselves is thus important.

Individuals need to appreciate and make use of the full spectrum of their mental abilities and of the abilities of others. In this way individuals can make better choices in their lives, especially when they select their educational and career possibilities (Herrmann, 1990:313). This includes thinking of the less conventional possibilities (Kehoe, 1996:107). As mentioned in chapter two (2.3.1.1.1.), pro-active thinking will assist individuals in exploring other alternatives available to them. Thus, as Kehoe (1996:107) claims, creativity is an essential skill for the twenty-first century, but for those individuals who are not naturally creative, they are able to develop this skill. As creativity entails developing an idea, it also plays an important part in the second phase of personal leadership, namely "Where am I going?". One needs to use the creative imagination in order to envisage one's vision or desirable future.



### 3.5.2.3. Visualisation

Personal leadership, according to Russell (1996:57), is “the ability to create a vision, develop a strategy, generate the energy and empowerment necessary to accomplish personal objectives”.

Although certain individuals find it easy to visualize and dream, other individuals have to work at developing this skill (Russell, 1996:59). People need to see the pictures inside their mind. Individuals need to visualize what the finished product will look like. This creates the “constant source of internal drive and motivation” (Russell, 1996:59). The reason for this is that it helps keeps one focused on one’s purpose in life. The explanation that Russell gives of visualization is similar to that of Kehoe (1996:15). Kehoe believes that visualization is when an individual uses their imagination to see themselves in a situation that has not happened yet. Individuals can picture themselves having or doing the things they want, and picture themselves achieving the results they want. Thus vision is what one dreams about and how one sees oneself in the future.

Visualizing can help to expand the mind: one can visualize in rich detail and involve feelings and emotions (Covey, 1994:131). Visualization is thus painting a picture, and Russell (1996:75) considers this to be a principle of personal leadership. People need to spend time pondering and meditating their key objectives (Russell, 1996:77). Individuals need to paint clear pictures in their minds, and these pictures must be based upon one’s life purposes (Russell, 1996:81). With visualization, individuals can see a mental picture, and this mental picture becomes a blueprint for the individuals’ goals (Kehoe, 1996:16). Once individuals can visualize pictures such as these, then individuals can create their vision. “It is the direction you want your life to travel and what you want to become” (Russell, 1996:81). It may therefore be deduced that visualization is the power of thought.

Covey (1994:132) states that the individual must “begin with the end in mind”. People must visualize their goals, and live according to these goals. Thus, closely linked to the principle of visualization is imagination.

#### **3.5.2.4. Imagination**

Einstein (in Robbins, 1992:402) claimed that “imagination is more important than knowledge”. Imagination is also deemed to be important by Kehoe (1996:103) in that understanding the power of one’s imagination can improve their lives. Covey (1994:147) defines imagination as “the ability to envision, to see the potential, to create what we cannot at present see with our eyes”. Imagination thus encompasses visualization. Not only can individuals visualize their future, but they can imagine how they can use the potential that they have within them (Covey, 1994:103).

Imagination thus expands one’s creativity. Naturally, this would involve creative thinking. When one imagines, one transcends the self, and can picture a future where one has a purpose in life (Covey, 1994:135). Individuals create a future in their minds. The imagination is not bound by real-world constraints (Kehoe, 1996:103). Therefore they can see their future, and imagine what it would be like (Covey, 1996:42). Imagination helps individuals to visualize their future instead of only living out of their memory (Covey, 1994:304). As the imagination knows no limits, if the individual can conceive and believe it, they may achieve it (Kehoe, 1996:103).

“The imagination can be used to achieve the fleeting success that comes when a person is focused on material gain or on ‘what’s in it for me’” (Covey, 1994:135). Individuals can use their imagination to picture different avenues and outcomes, just as they use pro-active thinking in assessing alternative options (Kehoe, 1996:103).

### **3.5.3. HOW AM I GOING TO GET THERE?**

#### **3.5.3.1. Planning**

In order for individuals to be personal leaders, they have to have an effective system to keep organized (Russell, 1996:174). Individuals need to have a daily plan in order to keep focused. Focus enables individuals to achieve success and satisfaction in life. Thus, without planning, individuals' lives will become scattered and disorganized (Russell, 1996:175). "If you fail to plan, you are operating by chance instead of by choice" (Russell, 1996:100).

Because people do not plan, they do not achieve as much as they are able to. Russell (1996:62) documented that a lack of planning is one of the biggest reasons for failure. Many people never reach their potential because they never "take the time to develop a written strategy which has the power to turn dreams into reality " (Russell, 1996:63). Strategic thinking will promote efficient decision-making so that individuals can plan effectively.



#### **3.5.3.2. Setting goals**

Robbins (1992:280) highlighted that all individuals have the need for constant, never-ending improvement. If an individual wants to improve in an area, both short-term and long-term goals are needed. These goals will determine one's direction in life (Tucker-Ladd, 1999). Howard and Patry (1935:1) too, commented how direction of one's mental dimension is a common need amongst individuals.

People need to identify what their goals are for their mental development. Questions which may be asked include "Would you like to learn to speak another language? Become a speed reader?" (Robbins, 1992:290). If individuals do not set goals for themselves, then they will not have anything to work towards (see 2.3.3.1.). Covey's (1994:146) Habit 1 proclaims that the individual is the creator and in control of themselves and their life. One needs a clearly defined list of goals "for the results you

will absolutely produce in your life mentally” (Robbins, 1992:275). Setting goals involves being able to visualize where and who one wants to be. Therefore visualization is an important element of the mental dimension which enhances personal leadership (see 3.5.2.3.).

Personal leadership, according to Russell (1996:57), is “the ability to create a vision, develop a strategy, generate the energy and empowerment necessary to accomplish personal objectives”.

Although certain individuals find it easy to visualize and dream, other individuals have to work at developing this skill (Russell, 1996:59). People need to see the pictures inside their mind. Individuals need to visualize what the finished product will look like. This creates the “constant source of internal drive and motivation” (Russell, 1996:59). The reason for this is that it helps keeps one focused on one’s purpose in life. The explanation that Russell gives of visualization is similar to that of Kehoe (1996:15). Kehoe believes that visualization is when an individual uses their imagination to see themselves in a situation that has not happened yet. Individuals can picture themselves having or doing the things they want, and picture themselves achieving the results they want. Thus vision is what one dreams about and how one sees oneself in the future.

### **3.6. SYNOPSIS**

In chapter two, a table illustrated the identified aspects of the mental dimension, and the characteristics of those aspects. This chapter showed how the mental dimension fits into personal leadership, and the following table summarises how these aspects of the mental dimension are utilised in the personal leadership process:

<b><u>Personal leadership Phase</u></b>	<b><u>Key personal leadership Characteristic</u></b>	<b><u>Mental Dimension Aspect</u></b>
Who am I?	Self-awareness	Metacognition Thought (such as critical thinking, rational thinking and positive thinking) Mental attitude Reflection Learning from experience
Where am I going?	Vision	Thought (such as creative thinking and pro-active thinking) Visualization Metacognition Creativity Imagination
How am I going to get there?	Planning	Organisation and Planning Decision-making Setting goals Writing Reading Education Mental attitude Reflection Thought (such as strategic thinking)

Table 3.1 Synopsis of the mental dimension in personal leadership

### 3.7. SUMMARY

This chapter has expanded on the foundation laid down in the previous two chapters. Chapter three assessed the relationship of the mental dimension in terms of the other life dimensions, and illustrated how one dimension impacts on another, and that all four dimensions are equally important. Thereafter, chapter three integrated aspects of the mental dimension with personal leadership.

The final chapter will provide a summary of this essay, as well as findings and suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER 4

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter one mentioned that there have been gigantic strides in the development of technology, and with these changes, the role of the individual is becoming more emphasized. Technology has advanced in such a way that the individual is challenged with developing new mental abilities to reach higher levels of functioning. Individuals need to become personal leaders and seize control of their lives. This control refers to all dimensions of a person, physical, social, spiritual and mental. Individuals need to strike a balance between these dimensions.

It was outlined in chapter one that not enough individuals are aware of their mental abilities and the potential which these mental abilities hold. As this problem was investigated from a personal leadership perspective, the aims were:

- to define what is meant by the mental dimension;
- to describe the relationship between the mental dimension to the other life dimensions;
- to identify the part that the mental dimension plays in personal leadership.

These aims were addressed in chapters two and three by means of word and concept analysis and literature study.

In chapter two, a definition of the mental dimension was put forward, and the nature of the mental dimension was discussed. Furthermore, components that comprise the mental dimension were identified (see 2.3.). These components are measurable characteristics which future researchers may use to develop a questionnaire to assess the extent to which individuals are making the most of their mental dimension (see table 2.1.).

In chapter three, the various components of the mental dimension were linked to the personal leadership framework. This link showed how the mental dimension contributes to the personal leadership process.

#### 4.1. FINDINGS

It was proposed in chapter two that the mental dimension encompassed anything concerned with the mind and intellectual activities. It was emphasised that the mental dimension can enable individuals to function at the highest level they can.

The word mental was shown to be used in different contexts, and in these contexts mental may have either negative or positive connotations. Mostly, however, mental has a negative connotation such as mental illness or mental handicap. Fortunately, various authors such as Covey (1994), Buzan (1998), Herrmann (1990), and Covey, Merrill and Merrill (1994) focus on the positive connotation of the word mental.

By means of a literature study, the mental dimension may be seen to be consisting of three major aspects. These three aspects are:

- reasoning powers
- the development of potential
- personal management.

These aspects were then broken down further.

- Reasoning powers were sub-divided into thought and types of thought, mental attitude, and metacognition and metacognitive abilities.
- The development of potential was sub-divided into education, reading and writing.
- Personal management was deemed to consist of organising and planning and decision-making.

It was found that these elements of the mental dimension could still be broken down further into a number of measurable elements as summarized in table 2.1. These elements can serve as operationalized indicators of the mental dimension.



It was determined that the mental dimension forms part of a well balanced life. Balance in life is reached when the four life dimensions, namely the mental, physical, spiritual and social dimensions, function synergistically. One cannot hope to function as a whole being if the mental dimension is neglected. This was illustrated in figure 3.1.

The contribution of the mental abilities towards developing personal leadership is summarised in table 3.1. Each of these personal leadership characteristics were explained in relation to how they fit in with the mental dimension. The personal leadership process is deemed to consist of three phases, namely:

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- How am I going to get there?

Each of these three phases have mental dimension elements which facilitate the growth through that particular phase. The “Who am I ?” phase is facilitated by:

- Metacognition
- Various types of thought
- Reflection
- Learning from experience
- Mental attitude

In determining the answer to the question “Where am I going ?”, the following mental activities are employed:

- Various types of thought
- Visualization
- Metacognition
- Creative thinking
- Imagination

The following elements of the mental dimension assist during the “How am I going to get there?” phase:

- Organization and planning
- Decision-making
- Setting goals
- Writing
- Reading
- Education
- Mental attitude
- Reflection
- Various types of thought.

Individuals need the mental capabilities identified in this essay in order to function to their fullest potential with regard to personal leadership. Those who do not possess these characteristics would have to be trained to develop these skills. Individuals need to be trained to focus on the mental processes which enhance personal leadership. Alternatively, personal leadership facilitators may have to adapt the personal leadership process to accommodate these individuals.

#### **4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is not within the scope of this essay to design a mental dimension questionnaire. A mental dimension questionnaire would be useful to determine where an individual stands with regard to their mental dimension. Future researchers may make use of the characteristics of the mental dimension identified in this research and design questionnaires based on these characteristics.

Within the personal leadership framework a further questionnaire, which can help to assess an individual’s mental skills, could be developed. In this way, the development of required mental processes could be enhanced.

The mind surely is a terrible thing to waste.

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