Feminist Creative Leadership Approaches   **L**

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INTRODUCTION

Complex issues in the workforce require effective decision-making and problem solving strategies (Ibbotson & Darso, 2008). These thinking processes are developed through creativity. Enhancing creative leadership through various fields requires the investment of time in developing future female leaders. Women numerically dominate specific fields; particularly the arts, education, and helping professions (Blackmore, 2006, 2013). Feminist creative leadership begins with developing autonomous professional identities of future leaders. Nancy Alder in her 2006 article, *The Arts & Leadership: Now That We Can Do Anything, What Will We Do?* inspired the authors to consider the characteristics of artists that affect leadership, specifically the discipline of feminist leadership. The realization of how powerful creativity is in our lives and how artistic characteristics benefit leadership guide the authors throughout this chapter (Alder, 2006; Cranston & Kusanovich, 2013; Rushlow, 2005). The purpose of this chapter is to inspire others to consider how artistic expression is an integral part of creative leadership and to advocate for feminist creative leaders. In this chapter, the authors describe feminist approaches and ideology within the context of creative leadership and explain possibilities when creating an identity as a feminist creative leader.

BACKGROUND

Historical Feminist Ideology

Dr. Savneet Talwar, Board Certified Art Therapist, Associate Professor and previous chairperson of the School for the Art Institute of Chicago's Graduate Art Therapy Program has presented research concerning feminist approaches to art therapy practice examining issues related to culture, identity, diversity, and feminist principles such as race, gender, and class.

At the 2015 American Art Therapy Association Conference held in Minneapolis, MN, Dr. Talwar presented implications of feminism within the field through a panel titled, *Creating Spaces of Resistance: Third Wave Feminism, Social Justice and Art Therapy.* Her session focused on the historical basis of feminist leadership and how values and ideology from each wave of feminism presents implications for the future directions of leadership practice (Talwar, personal communication, July 10, 2015).

The Waves of Feminism

Feminism has been classified into three waves based on the values of particular generations of feminists. The first wave began in the 1920's and focused on the suffragist movement. The second wave emerged in the 60s-80s, and centered on women's empowerment in sexuality, family, workplace equality, and emphasizing social justice (Talwar, personal communication, July 10, 2015). The third wave began in the 1990s and focused on addressing racism, gender equity, marginalized populations, politics, social structures, and class systems. It is more concerned with transnational perspectives and cross-cultural issues that women face (Talwar, personal communication, July 10, 2015). According to Dentith and Peterlin (2011), a feminist ethos emphasizes knowledge about the inequities and injustices in society including other forms of oppression. Current day feminist leaders approach leadership by describing causes and consequences of oppression, suggesting improvements in social reform and seeking to analyze, educate, and advocate for social change. Feminist theories and pedagogies are varied but can be classified into three primary categories: radical, liberal and postmodern (Dentitih & Peterlin, 2011).

Postmodernist Feminism

Postmodern feminism has served as the dominant perspective in the culture of the United States in the past twenty years (Pasque, 2013). Feminist theory from a postmodern lens examines power and privilege in respect to the intersection of racial, gender, ethic, national, identities. Postmodern feminism may also be referred to as third wave feminism. Its interest exists around gender constructs, controversy and disagreements regarding identity. Multiple truths, roles, and realities reflect the ways in which postmodern feminists are open to a multiplicity of identities, lived experiences, and definitions of gender roles (Pasque, 2013).

Liberal Feminism

In higher education, liberal feminism has been the predominant feminist approach carried out in discussions by women dating back to the early 1900s. This includes dialogues regarding the complexities of life women face on campus during their higher education experience. Additional issues include mental health concerns, academic mentorship, and equity. Conversations are around maintaining the social and political system with the inclusion of women (Pasque, 2013).

Liberal feminism is most widely recognized in higher education conversations. It is concerned with female subordination as a core component of social injustice (Pasque, 2013). It asserts the notion that women do not contribute to society as is possible for their ultimate potential due to this gender oppression, particularly in being restricted to specific professional fields (Young & Skrl, 2012).

DISCUSSION

Defining Feminist Creative Leadership

Leadership is defined differently among various disciplines, institutions, and organizations. In making sense of feminist creative leadership practices, one must recognize that female leaders face a complexity of issues, expectations and perceptions of roles and behaviors (Pasque, 2013). Issues such as gender

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