LEADING TRANSFORMATION #32:  
THE FAMILY AS THE MOST IMPORTANT UNIT OF COMMUNITY

1. THE NATURE OF FAMILY IS THE DNA OF SOCIETY.  
The definition or concept of nucleus family as well as its quality is essentially the DNA of society. This also makes marriage between couples the most important relationship in society. The health and effectiveness of communities are therefore directly linked with the quality of the relationships of families.

A wrong conception on the nucleus family will directly translate to confusion and ultimate ineffectiveness of societies. Most of the problems of societies result from the failure of families.

Quality nucleus families provide good foundation for healthy and effective communities.

2. PARENTS HAVE THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROVIDING MORAL COMPASSES TO GUIDE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN.  
A Moral Compass is a set of moral values that collectively provide guidance in determining right from wrong, and good from bad. It helps one navigate the jungles of life with a clear sense of self-identity, direction and values.

Parents have the primary responsibility to engage their families in living by selected moral values. During a family holiday in Durban, South Africa, in December 1994, Elizabeth and I educated and guided our children in working with us to adopt values that would characterize our family. The ages of the children were 12, 10 and 7. Though we have grown in our technical understanding of the concept of values, our families (including those of the children; now young adults) are still influenced by those recorded values.

3. CHILDREN SHOULD BE RAISED TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.  
Children should be raised to become responsible members of society. They should learn to first provide for themselves, and then for others in society. It is possible for children to be raised to be dependent on parents or others. This can happen from a genuine zeal to provide for the needs of children. As children grow, it is best to educate and empower them to increasingly take responsibility for providing for their own needs. It is also important to teach them to be generous in responding positively to the needs in their communities and broader society.

It is therefore essential to inculcate the value of “interdependence” in the lives of youth in the most practical ways possible.

4. CHILDREN DEVELOPED INTO TRANSFORMING LEADERS IS THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP LEGACY OF PARENTS.  
Most adults see the significance of their lives in the legacies they leave behind. There is not a more important legacy or contribution to society than that of raising children to become agents of positive transformation in their communities and broader society. In other words, training children to live with the highest standards of integrity, and to have the skills to lead positive change in society, is the best legacy adults can give to their societies.

Raising children and youth to become Transforming Leaders should therefore be the priority focus of adults in any society.

5. MEASURE OF HEALTH AND EFFECTIVENESS COMMUNITIES  
The quality of a society can be measured by the divorce rates, the numbers of orphans, the numbers of street children, etc. The higher these numbers the less the health of communities.

The functionality of communities is measured by how effectively they are addressing these challenges. The interventions of educational and other social institutions to improve the health of communities are helpful. However, the foundational solution still lies with parents that are committed to building quality families.

IMPLICATIONS  
A Growing Community of Change Leaders needs to first ensure that the right concept on the nature of family exists and is protected. Secondly, each one of them should be dedicated to building healthy and effective families—both nucleus and extended. This provides individual support and strength to the change leaders. It also lays the foundation for building the healthy and effective Growing Community of Change Leaders for spearheading holistic transformation in institutions and nations.

REFLECTION:  
What does it profit a leader to be successful professionally and yet be a failure in the family?