Throughout history many leadership styles and theories have emerged and evolved with the times to meet the ever-changing needs of effective leadership and management in organizations (Finkelman, 2012). Among some of the more contemporary theories are the Quantum Theory, Transformational Theory, and Servant Leadership. These theories are unique and have different strengths and weaknesses that make them suitable for success in several different environments, such as microsystems and macrosystems. The principles of these theories illustrate excellent guidelines to follow in order to be an effective and inspiring leader. Leadership does not necessarily mean holding a formal position, but can be exhibited by RN’s and other team members working in the hospital or on the unit. This principle makes these three theories applicable to my present and future nursing practice and the healthcare profession as a whole.

Quantum Leadership Theory revolves around the principle of constant change. This innovative theory encourages the abandonment of a linear, orderly, and goal-oriented perspective and the adoption of a “free-flowing, open-space, always-moving, anything-can-happen” philosophy (Grossman & Valiga, 2013). Quantum theory also stresses the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and overall teamwork. All members of the care delivery team need to be recognized for their strengths and potential and need help from other members to grow professionally and personally (Grossman & Valiga, 2013). The quantum leader understands that continual change occurs in reality and that inspiring creativity and innovation is the essence of quality work performance. The leader offers innovative solutions to problems, seeks to unveil new educational opportunities to accommodate new nurses in the workforce, and provides mentoring opportunities and expert preceptorships (Porter-O’Grady & Malloch, 2003). There are several advantages of Quantum Theory in healthcare. First, members of the team recognize how healthcare changes affect them individually and they come up with ways to adjust and grow in times of reform. Also, each person is actively engaged in exchanging ideas and conflict resolution. The care delivery team works together among themselves and with other disciplines to work through any difficulties that may arise during collaboration of patient care (Porter-O’Grady & Malloch, 2003). One disadvantage of Quantum Theory is the reluctance of older nurses to embrace this perspective that is so driven by change as opposed to the linear system that they have grown to know and abide. I would like to apply this theory to my future practice as an RN by encouraging my peers to recognize their potential and constantly using my creativity to come up with innovative ways to solve problems rather than relying on past and current methods.

Transformational Leadership Theory is the leadership style that has been recommended by the Institute of Medicine. It is an effective and beneficial leadership theory that has a high success rate for achieving long-term success and improved performance. Transformational leadership is similar to Quantum leadership in that it is flexible to change initiated by the vastly changing healthcare profession. However, Transformational leadership begins with a vision and a mission statement to encourage team members to look into the future and capitalize on opportunities for continuous improvement (Grossman & Valiga, 2013). A transformational leader is a true leader
who inspires the team constantly to reach their shared vision. These leaders are highly visible and demonstrate effective communication skills. Other qualities of a Transformational leader are self-confidence, self-direction, honesty, energy, loyalty, commitment, and most importantly empowerment. Some errors that occur with Transformational leadership include lack of urgency, lack of guiding coalition, lack of communication about the vision, lack of systematic planning, declaring a victory too soon, and lack of recognition of organization culture (Grossman & Valiga, 2013). I hope that one day I work in a healthcare organization that utilizes the Transformational Leadership theory. I would be honored to work with or become a leader that empowers staff to take risks and improve in the profession while providing safe patient care. During clinical I notice the Transformational Leadership theory implemented on the micro and macrosystem level. Most hospitals and healthcare organizations have a vision and mission statement to provide an overall goal for individual units to work towards, which is a key component of this leadership theory. A strong leader on a unit (microsystem) can set the tone for team members and influences their success at achieving the organization’s overall vision and goals.

Servant Leadership differs from other leadership theories in that leaders focus on meeting the needs of followers and putting others before first. Followers themselves are treated as ends, rather then means to an end. This encourages followers to perform to the best of their abilities through respect, value, and motivation from the leader. In turn, leaders are encouraged to serve others while staying focused on reaching goals associated with the organization’s values (Waterman, 2011). Some characteristics of a servant leader are good listener, empathetic, healing, and persuasive, stewardship, building community, and commitment to the growth of people. Some other advantages of Servant Leadership are that it enables others to flourish, expresses a human face in an often impersonal environment, and improves performance by developing and nurturing follower (Waterman, 2011). Disadvantages of Servant Leadership are that it disturbs the concept of hierarchy, using the term “servant” can be seen as detrimental to nurses, humility may be perceived as weakness, and not all workers respond to this particular approach (Waterman, 2011). This theory would best be implemented in a microsystem where personal interaction with others on a daily basis is possible. The leader is able to serve the members of the unit and demonstrate the principle of treating others as an end rather than a means. I don’t think that this would work in a macrosystem due to the many divisions and disciplines present in a healthcare organization. I have also seen Servant Leadership implemented in certain units during clinical. It is refreshing to see a nurse manager out of her office and offering to help others with anything they might need to lessen their workload and prevent burnout. I like the idea of serving and nurturing others in order to promote the achievement of the goals set by the unit and organization.

