



**Toward A Sustained Presence in Space:**  
**Policy, Action, and Sustainable Transformation**<sup>®</sup>

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper is for senior leaders in business and government, and those who support them to make a meaningful difference. A framework is presented for developing policy and ‘blueprints’ for global challenges in the future of space. A needed paradigm shift is explored as an enterprise approach for managing global security and environment problems among government agencies, across borders, and between institutions. The authors emphasize the importance of seeking alignment before agreement, using ‘Honest Brokers’ to bridge interests in otherwise intractable problems, and identifying normally ‘missing’ conversations that reliably move projects forward.

The authors draw from distinctive backgrounds, one a member of the Science Advisor’s staff to three U.S. White Houses and the other with thirty-eight years in organizational change management. They use a theatre metaphor to demonstrate how ‘Breaking the Fourth Wall’ that separates actors and audience is relevant to a sustained and desirable presence in space. The logic and associated tools for ‘Sustainable Transformation’ are presented, and the ‘Policy Overview Effect’ is introduced as a way to impact and integrate change leaders’ points of view and willingness to collaborate. The methods proposed assimilate policy with Breakthrough Project Training and Execution, to assure that action goes well beyond good intentions and business as usual.

The Apollo Moon Program is used to illustrate the necessity of deliberate Breakthrough Project Training and Execution, in order to fulfill on inspired and committed goals. Further discussion includes the practicality of identifying impossibilities and turning them into possibilities, and the importance of bringing individual purpose and passion to policy frameworks and projects.

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**Michael Mesarovic, author of Mankind at the Turning Point<sup>1</sup>, stood at the door of my office and outpoured dismay and angst about the reaction to his book. He had met literally with every head of state about this book, to virtually no avail. In his mind, the negative reaction to the first Report to the Club of Rome was due to the holistic doom and gloom that readers were attributing to it. His approach was to point out that there were clusters, countries, regions, in various states of reaching the Malthusian limits, and that we would learn from their experience and grow more tolerant of the need for new approaches. (HBL)**

### **The Impossible Possibility**

Policy and blueprints for global challenges in the future of space do not exist. After nearly forty years of watching global problems being discussed by very intelligent people, we assert that denial and ineffective action..., or no action..., serve only to keep positive options off the table, leaving us with very costly negative choices. Solutions are too often narrowly defined, and as such, empower the ‘Law of Unintended Consequences.’

The combination of commercial, military, and civil space operations over the past fifty years has brought us to a very interesting point, which is so asset rich and so interconnected that a whole class of new issues arises. The process and tools presented in this paper are applicable to the challenges raised. A \$220 billion industry is rooted in space, with multiple suppliers, multiple launch services, multiple operators, and owners of numerous nationalities, with proliferation of participants evident in each sector going forward. Thus we have created a true ‘commons’ to be managed in the best interests of each participant and all humans on earth. We are already realizing increasing benefits from space. These include daily improvements in:

- **Bio-medical research**
- **Disaster management**
- **Weather prediction**
- **Global security and defense**
- **Poverty reduction through telecommunications in remote and rural areas.**
- **Biodiversity protection**
- **Fire and emergency response**
- **International and local cooperation through the use of satellites**

Before President Kennedy’s paradigm-altering oratory in 1961<sup>2</sup>, no one could have predicted where we would be today. It is important to preserve the hope created broadly

<sup>1</sup> Mihajlo Mesarovic, Eduard Pestel “Mankind at the Turning Point” (New York, Dutton, 1974)

<sup>2</sup> <http://history.nasa.gov/moondec.html>

across our society from the spirit of the ‘Endless Frontier’<sup>3</sup> and in going to the moon -- the belief that these tools and techniques could solve the problems of life on Earth.

As we look forward to the second fifty years of space activity, we know full well that all is changing. That is not an issue. The support base for the totality of space operations is more diverse than ever. Governments have operational programs with their own budget support bases and constituencies. Commercial satellites are now designed, procured and launched from an almost independent aerospace industry. Extremely successful entrepreneurs are investing large financial resources in independent, private sector initiatives. New concepts of security, in its broad meaning (global, regional, national, local and personal), have been irreversibly imbedded in the psyche of the world.

The question is whether we will command the conditions that define our future or instead be simply reactive to events yet to come. Will our constraints be over-ridden by catastrophes, such as emergent political rapprochements and détentés? Budget priorities? Military operations and stand-offs? Economic interests? Energy challenges? Environmental challenges? Political hubris? Conflicting concepts of security? The list goes on and on.

We believe that it is possible, for the good of each nation and for the common good of mankind, to generate a new form of conversation, allowing for success in the dimensions we can control, and teaching us how to minimize the consequences of those which we cannot control. This form of conversation can keep us on track and focused in our pursuit of the optimal future for Earth. It will include not just space operations, but what might be considered a policy analog of the ‘Overview Effect’<sup>4</sup> -- the world as seen from the perspective of space.

In the same spirit that John Kennedy emboldened, it is now time for a new paradigm. While this may seem an ‘impossible possibility’ at this point, it is in fact a very real potential. It may actually be the only possibility that can assure effectiveness in the programs and projects initiated to solve the major classical problems before us.

The totality of our diverse support mechanisms *must* be engaged if citizens of the world are to perceive the space community as dealing with issues and intentions they deeply care about. Objective and accurate measures of progress must be shared in ways that engender and motivate support for necessary priorities which must be sustained over multiple generations. Yet, cynical responses to many space exploration proposals, as well as conflicts between countries on space matters, at least in part result from society’s general lack of awareness and pervading disappointment that these powerful tools, technologies and expectations have not improved their lives in measurable, apparent ways.

<sup>3</sup> Vannevar Bush, “Science, The Endless Frontier – A Report to the President on a Program for Postwar Scientific Development”, July 1945.

<sup>4</sup> White, Frank. The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution, Second Edition, 1998. American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Reston, Virginia.

## **Seek Alignment Before Agreement**

Seeking alignment before agreement is fundamental to achieving the breakthroughs we all want. Alignment is shared commitment. It is not the same as agreement, and does not require agreement. People can be aligned on the purpose of a policy, but not agree as to how it should be implemented. Agreement calls for a meeting of minds, and may be fact-based or experience-based. Alignment can be focused on higher purposes or outcomes. It is what people mean when they talk about ‘being in the same boat’ or being ‘in it’ together, or ‘headed in the same direction.’ Alignment produces common cause and a new ‘common sense.’ It is the process by which the boundary conditions for rational thought are set. Without alignment, there is no reference point of ‘higher purpose’ within which to resolve inevitable problems and breakdowns.

We assert that for truly extraordinary action to emerge, individual and shared commitment and alignment must precede reason and analysis. Further, we assert that reason and rationality cannot set their own boundaries. Rather, they follow the rules of logic, within pre-established boundary conditions.

This form of discussion can be threatening if participants perceive it to be driven by a hidden agenda other than the common good, or that it will move in directions intuitively adverse to their interests. The natural response in such a circumstance is to kill the initiative or stifle it in implementation. For this reason, the entire process being proposed herein has to be based upon inordinate trust and honesty.

We observe that shared commitment is *prerequisite* to seeing what is actually missing and needed for moving forward. This suggests that one must commit to going to the moon before one can see what is missing and necessary to get there. This logic is counterintuitive and flies in the face of most people’s education and opinion.

It *is* possible to systematically manage the process, and to bring the full potential of space to the service of society, creating a new set of alignments of thought. Such alignments must occur *before* new projects are formulated. This calls for disciplined inquiry into what people deeply care about and what they are committed to, which is not the same as our typical soliciting of thoughts, opinions, or evidence in response to a proposed project. It requires that this inquiry be kept on track in the face of people’s strong need to say what they think and what they are sure is right.

When the inquiry is maintained, it becomes clear to participants that their commitments are often different from what they think and feel. People often say they want to be aligned, but are not in fact, actually committed to it. Paradoxically, when they discover this, people often begin to take the task of alignment based on shared commitments seriously.

Alignment of thought at the moment of commitment to a program *preordains* the success or failure of the program, more than any physical technology or engineering challenge. That moment is more deterministic of success than nearly any challenge or seeming impossibility contained within the program.

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What's also become apparent, after forty years of carefully observing companies and government agencies, is the realization that, what is possible at the most senior levels determines what can be possible in the rest of the system. Every time something isn't possible in the minds at the senior level, it never becomes possible elsewhere. If people who control the most valuable resources in the system will not collaborate, but only want that from others, it will not happen. It plays out much like children mimicking what their parents actually do, not what they say. In any breakthrough project program, success will be determined by unyielding commitment, listening, collaboration, and risk taking at the top. Absent this, when extraordinary action is taken down-the-line, thanks to the independence and entrepreneurship of a few, it is rarely able to persist because there is no context or culture of support.

Global challenges, like company-wide challenges, occur within the mindset and relationships of leaders. This mindset is the *context* within which the future of space will unfold. A 'new context' is code for a new possibility in the minds of leaders, one that does not exist as yet. New possibilities set new limits, new boundaries, and new opportunities..., and establish a new base for what is culturally permitted and forbidden.

Agreement *is* vital for creating an effective process. Less obviously, it does not assure that anything will actually happen. Commitment, not agreement, is the basis of action. There are countless good ideas, broadly agreed upon, about which technologies and public-private partnerships would work, that never get acted upon. No matter how heartfelt or sincere, a good idea is not necessarily *committed*. We all have the experience of participating in seemingly endless discussions that lead nowhere, because of the assumption that if something is a good idea, it will be acted upon. It's just not true. Sincerity and logic do not get anything to happen. Commitment does. It is the lack of recognition that most conversations are not commitment-based which keeps lots of bright people spinning their wheels, and ultimately becoming resigned to the notion that no one cares enough to act. We *must* begin to demand that alignment and shared commitment be in place before agreement and process are attempted.

Unfortunately, we live in an agreement-based world, filled with agreement-based organizations. Almost everyone thinks that people need to agree in order to move forward. Consequently, countless, fruitless hours are spent trying to change each others' minds, which is at best difficult and often impossible. As that repeatedly fails to work, we become more and more desensitized to the typical backup methods commonly employed -- command and control, maneuvering behind the scenes, conning, outwitting, and threatening, whether in subtle or direct ways. Since force causes resistance, of course, things usually get worse. In the absence of alternatives, this process endlessly repeats itself, futilely anticipating a different result.

Even under the best of circumstances, when alignment *is* in place, technical or budget obstacles often occur. Keeping the alignment foreground through such setbacks must remain a senior commitment for persistence.

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### **Honest Brokers**

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The utilization of Honest Brokers is uncommon. A central argument in this paper is that their legitimization and use as a matter of course is necessary for solving intractable problems. While there is a lot of evidence for this, it remains a hard sell. Human nature, avoidance of domination, and needing to appear 'in charge' get in the way of most people embracing Honest Brokers as a way of life.

While legitimization of Honest Brokers is a long-term project, it's one that is fundamental to successfully addressing a sustained presence in space and other intractable global problems. Honest Brokers must represent the same trustworthiness and objectivity to all participants in a discussion, and to the external community who will be affected by the outcomes. This cannot simply be declared. It can only be achieved through performance and transparency.

Successes in the use of Honest Brokers, whether in shuttle diplomacy, commercial negotiation, or policy formulation, *always* begin with moments of genuine listening and Authentic Dialogue, in which leaders recognize the possibility that their strategic and personal purposes will be well-served through the process. In every instance, when the Honest Broker phenomenon subsides, the impetus for leaders to listen and act in uncharacteristic ways subsides as well. The normal rules of the political and social game return in full force.

Over the years, we have worked with some truly extraordinary leaders who cared about the 'family of man' as much or more than they cared about order and control. These leaders have frequently sought alignment before seeking agreement, with employees, colleagues and competitors. In business, they made a lot of money for themselves and their companies. In the public sector, they assured careful service and quality. They both liked abstract thinking and were practical. Their relationships were alive and engaging, and people were loyal to them. They paid attention to their own personal development and were open to 'Honest Brokers,' facilitators, advice, coaching and support. Everyday work did not threaten the possibility of 'breakthrough' projects.

Meeting these people is always a happy surprise, as they seem few and far between. It's as if such leaders are 'in hiding' in some respect, while quietly making an enormous difference. They are recognized as objective, balanced, and not compromised by financial or historical conflicts of interest. They are often considered 'Champions,' demonstrating the moral courage to hold the 'common good' as a guiding basis for their actions. Such leaders' pre-existing credibility could do much to foster acceptance and recognition for the value of this approach to problem-solving. Many could become Honest Brokers themselves, in particular situations.

Perhaps these qualities evolve, by surviving successfully where they seem necessary for survival. Maybe there are many thousands of these Champions in hiding, and by connecting them we can hope that their conversations will help the world solve its intractable problems. It is our experience that, in addition to those available among us with this intuitive ability, these qualities can also be learned. Talented, trustworthy

mediators and facilitators from a number of different application contexts are available for such intervention and training missions.

### **Identify Missing Conversations**

When there is no progress, certain conversations are usually ‘missing.’ Identifying and having missing conversations almost always works to move things forward. Among them, ‘Authentic Dialogue’ is what’s most frequently missing. Authentic Dialogue is a search for shared meaning, *with all parties listening, including the party speaking*. Without shared meaning there can be no alignment. Complex classical problems persist in the absence of leadership dialogue that is genuine and authentic. Persistent, large-scale problems are most often related to derivative public conversations that are stilted, manipulative, or agenda-driven, due to the lack of prior Authentic Dialogue among leaders. Changing context to solve classical world problems requires improving the quality of dialogue among leaders. This is our challenge.

Most often we observe back-and-forth monologues masquerading as dialogue. Like chess matches, the players are impatiently waiting for each other to finish so they can play their part, which has usually been already thought through. Often however, until these conversational ‘set pieces’ have been articulated, meaningful dialogue is actually not possible. The players are unable to listen. A kind of catharsis and permission to say whatever is in one’s mind may be prerequisite to generating Authentic Dialogue.

Skilled Honest Brokers can enable people to reserve judgment until the full set of issues and interests embedded in a problem have been articulated and are on the table. This enables a vast expansion of the usual number of dimensions that can be incorporated into a discussion effectively. Many of today’s seemingly intractable issues are multi-dimensional, often well beyond the average capacity of people to incorporate before concluding on a judgment and mentally moving on.

### **Breaking the Fourth Wall**

‘Breaking the Fourth Wall’ in the theatre generally refers to a character showing awareness of, or addressing and engaging the audience directly. Breaking the Fourth Wall in human affairs occurs through acknowledging and appreciating the interests, feelings, and experiences of other parties.

Jose Stevens<sup>5</sup> research with indigenous peoples found that a common thread in their world view -- the power to act -- the energy, vitality, and will to act -- comes from the extent, depth, resonance, and detail of ‘connection’ between people and groups. This is another way of saying that “relationship is the foundation of accomplishment.” Of the thousands of individual, interpersonal and institutional transformations -- moments of

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<sup>5</sup> Stevens, Jose and Lena Stevens, 2002, The Power Path: The Shaman's Way to Success in Business and Life, New World Library, Novato, California.



profound change -- that we have observed, all have been accompanied by novel and surprising moments of connection and appreciation of the experience feelings and interests of the other parties.

Politicians and members of many leadership elites are often able to move through the Fourth Wall but, as with most of us, only as it pertains to their constituencies. It's easy to connect with those people or ideas we like and are familiar with. It's hard to appreciate what is foreign, threatening, or annoying. The default mechanism for all of us is to stay away from the Fourth Wall in our work and many of our relationships. Most of us stick with people and ideas with which we are comfortable. While comforting, this is enormously limiting.

We assert that the Fourth Wall *is* the fundamental barrier to resolving classical world problems such as security, collaboration while maintaining sovereignty and identity, climate change, poverty, water management, religious conflict, and a sustained presence in space. With Fourth Wall constraints in place, aligned thinking and effective collective action are virtually impossible. Our goal is that world, corporate, and government leaders move through this Wall, thereby seeing their 'audience' as the broader society, opening their focus beyond the limited interests of their friends, colleagues, political or economic bases.

Enabling the movement of leaders through the Fourth Wall is complex and there are too many variables to easily delineate. This makes the prediction of outcomes very difficult, if not impossible. Facing the dilemma of needing to bring forth something unpredictable suggests that such change needs to occur in a quantum, rather than a linear fashion. Achieving this character of discussion often relies directly on the facilitation and conversational guidance of trusted Honest Brokers.

In our own work, the path to success (in producing what seems unpredictable, if not impossible) can be generated through a variety of methods, including searching for adjacent possibilities, speculating, open dialogue, promising the unpredictable, utilizing experts and following their instructions, counterintuitive action, listening to others completely, doing the opposite of what is done normally, doing what scares you, and getting coached.

Of course, like stage actors, leaders must take responsibility for engaging the audience in ways that create sympathetic connection. Abraham Lincoln<sup>6</sup> demonstrated this kind of responsibility during the American Civil War, as he restrained his oratory, sensitively waiting for a convergence of civil, military, and social circumstance that would let people welcome it, before engaging the nation on specific issues, such as slavery. Similar sensitivity can be seen in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's use of 'Lend-Lease' to mobilize US industry in advance of public willingness to declare military involvement, at the onset of WWII.

A revolution by increments in breaking the Fourth Wall *can* be accomplished. In

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<sup>6</sup> Doris Kearns Goodwin, *A Team of Rivals*, Simon & Schuster, 2006.

numbers of corporations, associations, government agencies and community groups, we have participated in events, projects, conversations and disputes in which there have been moments of profound change in leaders' and constituents' points of view about what was possible. In those moments, leaders and others became aware of their own identities in the context of a shared reality that included, but went well beyond their own. In each case the Fourth Wall was broken through, and what happened was both inspired and served everyone's interests.

### **A Logic for Sustainable Transformation**

*Sustainable Transformation* is the ability to reliably induce invention, reinvention, renewal, new possibilities, and shifts in identity, performance aspirations and breakthrough outcomes, beyond what is normal and predictable. Sustainable Transformation is not the same as Sustainable Technology. 'Sustainability' has largely come to mean non-polluting technology, long-life productivity, organic agriculture and green technologies. To some degree, this language has become muddled. In all cases what's intended is *renew-ability* and healthy processes.

Sustainable Transformation is this ability to renew or start afresh. While aimed at having participants generate viable outcomes, its primary commitment is to an ongoing quality of dialogue which engenders periodic moments of new possibility and the new pathways that follow.

Most examples of Sustainable Transformation are neither sufficiently frequent nor long lasting. In one positive experience, the leader reported:

"I didn't know if it would work. Standing in front of 150 people in an engine manufacturing plant, we asked questions, clarified ideas, provoked dilemmas, and encouraged direct conversations between conflicting parties. In the moment, it was hard to imagine the outcome except in the hope it would include enthusiastic people, committed plans and an attractive future they saw for themselves and I saw for my own work.

The result was a happy surprise. In one moment, I recognized that there had been a positive shift in culture and attitude. Ways to improve machine efficiencies and cut costs dramatically emerged, and happened over the coming weeks. This transformation was renewed repeatedly by the senior group and for several years generated spontaneous activity by teams of workers with each other. It even initiated similar efforts in other plants around the country. Over time, as senior people were transferred or left, the plants' ability to transform disappeared."

More typically, people focus on fixed outcomes instead of integrative and

transformative processes to produce desirable results. Unfortunately, *you can't fix it and have it stay fixed*. Transformational experiences rarely persist. They are often like psychological car washes, lasting only so long as it takes to get dirty again. And it will rain, sooner or later. It is very easy to regress to a traditional focus on fixed outcomes, instead of maintaining the integrative and transformative processes essential if we are to follow successes in ongoing efforts with further success.

Many in business, government, education and social science are engaged in managing change. Their methods and style vary between being process-oriented, analytic, psychological, or structural. In common, however, they all are aimed at inducing moments of change -- a kind of 'zero point' where the past remains the past, the future hasn't yet happened, and a moment of choice occurs -- a moment of freedom to act differently. Gaining reliable access to this 'moment of now', moment of freedom, moment of choice, is the key to Sustainable Transformation, and with it the promise of solving intractable problems by producing quantum shifts in leader behavior.

Eckhart Tolle<sup>7</sup> (and others) state that, *"Nothing ever happens except in the present moment. All action takes place in the present. Nothing ever happens in the past or the future. When something happens, it is always now."* This insight opens a logic for Sustainable Transformation in cooperative alliances.

Tolle<sup>8</sup> goes on to say that, *"resistance to the present moment creates most difficulties,"* and that, *"best action arises from deeper awareness rather than from resistance."* If no action ever takes place except in the present moment, it makes sense that the quality of a leader's present consciousness is what determines the future. If present consciousness is full and far reaching, and aware of all parties' present interests, then any action, or non-action, is apt to be based on what's real now, not driven by past concerns or future fantasies and therefore not causing resistance. In these moments of presence, resistance and 'blockages' are removed.

The question that remains is, *"What reliably determines the quality of present consciousness in leaders, such that invention, reinvention, renewal, new possibility, and breakthrough outcomes happen reliably?"*

Our focus moves to the use of tools that enable Sustainable Transformation for leaders dealing with intractable problems. Such tools must offer promise in achieving extraordinary outcomes, and threaten neither identity nor fundamental interests. These tools must also change what leaders actually *see* in that moment, altering behavior and attitude.

## **Focus on Recovery**

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<sup>7</sup> Tolle, Eckhart, 2001, Practicing the Power of Now. Novato California, New World Library.

<sup>8</sup> Op. Cit.

The steps to Recovery are not always obvious. When I was learning to fly a fixed-wing glider (*CES*), I became aware of the fact that I was learning without thinking.

This was unusual for me, and as I got better at managing the airplane, I began to study what it was that was letting me learn without abstractions and apparent thought. I saw that the experience was almost entirely physical. The plane moved too far left and I moved to the right. The plane was going too fast and I pulled the nose up. I began to wonder if there could be a ‘cockpit and dial’ display for life and leadership with the same effectiveness as the one in the plane. My question was, *“What would ‘recovery’ call for, in any given moment?”*

The cockpit simulation presented below is created from this idea, and with Sustainable Transformation as the equivalent of a successful flight. Each element of the tool has many subtexts, which are elaborated below, but all are accessed from being fully present to immediate experience.

Like piloting a plane, if something important demands correction, you need to be able to isolate what’s amiss quickly. The same principle holds true in keeping important conversations on track. Through years of working with leaders and groups across numbers of countries and cultures, ten requirements have emerged, reflected in the cockpit dials, which demonstrably enhance present consciousness in leaders and groups, and thereby induce Sustainable Transformation.

The predictable impact of these nine factors across many circumstances has given them the weight of rules, not good ideas or guidelines. With practice, one can observe these elements in the present moment, as they are occurring.

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### Rules to Follow Faithfully

#### A Trustworthy Honest Broker is the Necessary Bridge

A highly skilled, neutral agent, able to advise and counsel leaders without taking sides is significant. This *must* be someone who has acceptance as an Honest Broker by all parties in the discussion, as well as their larger audiences. An Honest Broker increases present consciousness by assuring a context of Authentic Dialogue and reliable intention to have the process work for everyone. When so enabled, the outcome is usually characterized by safety, resolution, fairness, and protection of individual identity and interests.

It is critical that the Honest Broker be trusted by all parties. They need to come from outside the systems involved, unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances. Their neutrality can not be affected by commercial or other personal interests or connections to the parties, although it is sometimes possible for a trained and ethical Honest Broker to be paid for their services by one or more of the parties and still establish the necessary trust.

The methodology and skill training for Honest Brokers is already being used in mediation, negotiation, and neutral third party facilitation. Finding and developing the best of such people for high level, non self-interested engagements is possible. The bigger challenge is a long-term effort to legitimize their use.

### **Maintain a High Degree of Presence**

By ‘presence’ we mean ‘being in the present moment fully.’ Such presence is uncommon. Most people spend their time thinking about the past and the future, rather than attending to the immediate moment of now. Maintaining a high degree of presence can be learned over time through the practice of focusing one’s attention and listening in the present moment.

### **Assure Authentic Dialogue<sup>9</sup>**

This is a conversation worthy of trust, reliance, or belief. Authentic Dialogue creates trust, and trust induces presence. For Authentic Dialogue to occur it needs to take place within a safe environment of mutually accepted rights and responsibilities. It is rooted in two fundamental values -- respect for the participants, and trust in the process of dialogue.

Authentic Dialogue is more a matter of intent than skill, and while training is available, a person has to believe that authenticity is useful and valuable in order to actually do it.

#### **Manage Conversations.**

To manage a conversation means to control the essential purpose of a particular conversation rather than the content of that conversation. For example, purpose of a conversation include,

- Sharing Information
- Creating Context
- Generating Relationships
- Inventing Possibilities
- Shaping Opportunities
- Taking Action
- Resolving Difference or Conflicts

We have discovered that people usually develop their own material brilliantly when the intended effect of the conversation is controlled. For example:

- *A Conversation for Context* invents the fundamental framework, environment or setting in which the subsequent conversation will occur.

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<sup>9</sup> Bohm David, 1990, On Dialogue, New York, David Bohm Seminars

- *A Conversation to generate Relationship* creates the experience of being connected. Fernando Flores<sup>10</sup>, in numbers of public trainings introduced the idea of managing the intention of conversations deliberately. His four propositions (and ours) include:

- *A Conversation for Possibility* -- generates ideas, new pathways and a sense of possibility. It creates a possibility with or for another so they can participate in the conversation based on their own commitment.

- *A Conversation for Opportunity* -- defines realistic boundaries for moving forward, (i.e., probable projects).

- *A Conversation for Action* -- gets things to happen and is made up of requests & promises.

- *A Conversation for Resolution* -- addresses problems and conflicts based on commitments rather than opinions and emotions

### Have a Noble Purpose

Noble Purpose establishes a context greater than immediate concerns. It benefits society, and well being of the community, employees or the planet. We recognize its presence by qualities of high moral character, such as courage, generosity, or honor. Noble Purpose may exist in parallel to pragmatic business or technological purposes. Noble Purpose creates a sense of safety which can heighten awareness and enable presence.

### Maintain the Attitude of an Initiator Rather than a Victim

In any moment, one is either being an *initiator*, in charge, causal, and on top of what is happening..., or is being a *victim* of circumstance, without the experience of power, being the effect of what's happening rather than the cause of it.

### Pay Attention to Energy and Vitality in the System.

Many succeed and many fail. Some get mission, products, services, finances, marketing, and legal requirements right, but still do poorly. Others get these elements right and do well. Some get technology, process, metrics, organization, resources, and politics right, and still do not have their hands on the steering wheel of success. We have come to see that every time people win, their energy, vitality and agility was high and when they failed, their energy, vitality and agility was low.

At first, it seemed that high energy was caused by success. Then, we came to suspect that collective energy and vitality, when brought into focus, was the very cause of success. Good ideas, and the force of will, were never enough

There are multiple forms of energy that call for attention. The three we have identified as having the most impact are;

- Positive vs Negative Energy
- Caring vs. Self-Interested Energy

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<sup>10</sup> [http://thinkexist.com/quotes/fernando\\_flores/](http://thinkexist.com/quotes/fernando_flores/)

- Ground-Up as well as Top-Down Energy

We contend that, Sustainable Transformation stops happening when the rules stop being followed and ‘business as usual’ takes over. Many reasons are given for this, including changes in leadership, underlying goals having been satisfied, people running out of energy, new people not enlisting in the process, and so on.

The unanswered challenge is to be able to change what leaders “see” and think is real, so that this kind of Sustainable Transformation can be renewed consistently. It’s much easier for a leader to accept that “Authentic Dialogue” as a good idea than to truly see the world in a way that encourages it. For this, we need tools that change what leaders actually see, not merely what they understand.

### The Policy Overview Effect

The Overview Effect is the shift in identity experienced by many astronauts as they look at the earth and the universe from space. Frank White’s riveting account of personal transformations at the level of perspective and concern for the entire planet creates the possibility of Overview Effect as an element in formulating policy and alignment of thought among leaders.

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Frank White recognized the Overview Effect as the experience shared by many Astronauts when looking at Earth and the Universe from space. From this viewpoint, they realize that arbitrary distinctions of political and economic boundaries are invisible, and better to solutions to many issues would come from looking at world problems from that point of view.

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White refers to a statement made by astronaut Rusty Schweickart<sup>11</sup> :

“As you eat breakfast you look out the window...and there’s the Mediterranean area, Greece and Rome and North Africa and the Sinai... You go down across North Africa and out over the Indian Ocean and look up at that great subcontinent of India...out over the Philippines and up across the monstrous Pacific Ocean... “You finally come up across the coast of California, and you look for those friendly things, Los Angeles and Phoenix, and on across to El Paso. And there’s Houston, there’s home...and you look and sure enough, there’s the astrodome, and you identify with that, it’s an attachment. And on across New Orleans and then you look down to the south, and there’s the whole peninsula of Florida laid out. You identify with Houston and then you identify with Los Angeles and Phoenix and New Orleans. The next thing you recognize in yourself is that you’re identifying with North Africa: you look forward to that, you anticipate it, and there it is.”

“And that whole process of what it is you identify with begins to shift. When you go around

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<sup>11</sup> “Earth’s Answer: Explorations of Planetary Culture” at the Lindisfarne Conferences, published by Lindisfarne and Harper & Row in 1977



the Earth in an hour and a half, you begin to recognize that your identity is with that whole thing. That makes a change. You look down there and you can't imagine how many borders and boundaries you cross, again and again and again, and you don't even see them. There you are—hundreds of people in the Mideast killing each other over some imaginary line that you're not even aware of and that you can't see.”

“From where you see it, the thing is a whole, and it's so beautiful. You wish you could take one in each hand, one from each side in the various conflicts, and say, “Look. Look at it from this perspective. Look at that. What's important? “You look down and see the surface of that globe you've lived on all this time, and you know all those people down there and they are like you, they are you—and somehow you represent them. You are up there as the sensing element, that point out on the end, and that's a humbling feeling. It's a feeling that says you have responsibility. It's not for yourself. The eye that doesn't see doesn't do justice to the body. That's why it's there; that's why you are out here. And somehow you recognize that you're a piece of this total life.”

“So that's a change. That's something new. And when you come back there's a difference in the world now. There's a difference in that relationship between you and the planet and you and all those other forms of life on that planet, because you've had that kind of experience.”

The Policy Overview Effect happens when leaders become intensely present to the entire situation, when they break the fourth wall. All of the tools mentioned in this paper, and ways of dramatizing overall and shared realities are aimed at enabling this effect.

#### Integrating Policy with Breakthrough Project Training and Execution

Most leaders will only promise what they can predict, and their teams follow. Regardless of aspiration and policy, realizing performance goals beyond normal depends on people with a fire in their belly to keep going for the goal in the face of adversity. Promising what you can predict keeps you in a past based system, limited by existing thinking, fears and cultures from which deliberate breakthroughs are impossible.

Breakthrough projects are possible.

The Apollo Moon Landing Project is an example of such a breakthrough project. NASA's own analysis of the reasons for Apollo's success are both compelling and limited. In “Seven Key Principles of Program and Project Success – A Best Practices Survey,<sup>12</sup>” it is stated that there were .Seven Key Principles of Apollo Program and Project Success:

1. *Establish a clear and compelling vision.*
2. *Secure sustained support “from the top”.*
3. *Exercise strong leadership and management.*
4. *Facilitate wide open communication.*
5. *Develop a strong organization.*
6. *Manage risk.*
7. *Implement effective systems engineering and integration.*

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<sup>12</sup> <http://pmchallenge.gsfc.nasa.gov/Docs/2006attendee-presentations/2006presentationsCD-attendee/Bilardo.Manuscript.pdf>

While these principles are valid and accurate, their level of abstraction, possibly due to political and organizational considerations, obscure certain elements of what it really takes to make a breakthrough project successful. From our experience, these elements include;

- A currently impossible goal that people take responsibility for making possible.
- A committed result that you stick to no matter what.
- The use of internal or external expert and personal coaching to keep people extending their limits.
- Telling the “awful truth” that gives people give people a chance to keep dealing with underlying problems.
- Constancy of purpose reflected in consistency of meetings between whoever is necessary

Without breakthrough projects, existing structures or interpretation and existing practices almost always take over and the breakthrough goal is modified, suspended, delayed or otherwise weakened. Without breakthrough intentions, even a revolution by increments, will collapse into business as usual. Neither the policy overview effect nor commitment to Sustainable Transformation will produce the unpredictable, but necessary, results without formulating, training, and executing breakthrough projects.

### Create the Organization of the Future: The Merlin Factor

The Merlin Factor<sup>13</sup> refers to the legendary sage who “lived backward in time.” Born in the future, Merlin aged as he lived into the past, influencing events in King Arthur's court by drawing on his foreknowledge of their destined outcomes. Exceptional leaders cultivate the Merlin-like habit of acting in the present moment as ambassadors from a radically different envisioned future. Instead of building a bridge from the present to the future, the Merlin Factor builds a bridge from the future back to the present.

It takes the organization of the future to create the organization of the future. You always end up with the context you start with, in business, government or as a nation. In the 1970's, I (*CES*) was part of an effort to create a U.S. Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution, for the training of neutral third-party mediators, negotiators and facilitators -- ‘Honest Brokers.’ The intent was to establish a non-violent conflict resolution ‘corps’ at the same level of national commitment as the corps being developed at West Point, Annapolis and the Air Force Academy. Congress approved a \$500,000 study, and a solid case was documented. Ultimately, however, the Departments of Defense and State, the Schools of Foreign Service undermined and weakened the legislation, resulting in creation of a research-focused, non-activist institution. If it's true that bureaucracy can only create more bureaucracy, and elitist systems can only create more elitism, and a war machine can only create another war machine, then with many of the world's intractable

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Smith “The Merlin Factor – Keys to the Corporate Kingdom” Kairos Productions, McLean, Va. 1995

problems, we simply can't get there from here.

In order to create a new context, a new possibility, we need to start in the future, creating backwards from that vision to the present, that which we want to bring forth in the future. We imagine a future in which world leaders and many of us can see the Fourth Wall and act as *Champions.*, champions who challenge an impeded dialogue, demanding both a breakthrough in alignment and a focus on what is high purpose and high value.

The moral courage this will take is immense. Leaders must be willing to suffer the unease of discontinuity with 'business as usual' habits. Help and support is available. Honest Brokers exist and can be developed. Organizational trainers and coaches know how to move groups of people in these directions. What is and has been missing, is to embed a commonly-held will to reinvent ourselves, our projects, our communities, and our governments into Sustainably Transformed Organizations of the Future.

### Going Beyond

This conversation goes beyond anything that has been widely done before. Our perspective of the earth as an integrated whole, inherent in the Overview Effect, provides new insights and opportunities that rely upon multiple dimensions. It is conceivable over time that the impact of these Brokers would be in initiatives dealing with issues deeply cared about across many political and economic boundaries. Such projects would include collaborations between multiple nations of the world, as well as individual national and transnational programs.

Alignment of thought before program commitment has not been a common character of management evolution up to the present. We have a situation where no one really knows what is up there, what frequencies different operators use, or who should clear up the debris. The assets up there are physically vulnerable, not only to trash put into orbit, but to asteroids that have a mathematical probability impact. Thus there are new conversations needed, leading to a need for rules of the road amongst all the participants.

This would only be possible from developing the ability to communicate in a compelling way across many communities of interest. The closest model we know comes from the evolution of IEA/OECD, which was asked to initiate studies of the many alternate energy technologies in the emerging 1970's. These studies progressed to the point where they now make a report to the G8 Summit<sup>14</sup> each year. This project has achieved remarkable results and offers a model which can be redressed and utilized for an even greater purpose.

### Conclusion

The final question is, "is this a dream and why should you believe these ideas and tools would work.?" We have evidence that they do, but evidence often does not get people to act.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.iea.org/G8/index.asp>

We leave you, therefore, with four requests.

- The first request is to consider the possibility that if there is a bridge between Technology and Humanity, it is you.
- The second is to speak for the possibility of Sustainable Transformation.
- The third is to sponsor conferences and meetings that create alignment and shared commitment before seeking agreement.
- And, the fourth is to formulate and engage available Breakthrough Project Training and Execution where it really counts.

#### Acknowledgement

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