

The Camelot Phenomenon

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I've always been drawn to certain kinds of leaders, and on reflection recognize that:

- They had already become strong characters and results producers by the time we met.
- They've all shown willingness for a kind of vulnerability in their personal relationships, teams, and large groups.
- They've been kindred spirits who care about making things better for themselves, their teams, their companies, and in the world.
- They've all had social concerns, social awareness, and zeal for great performance whether measured in money, music, talent, design or discovery.

The majority of men and women I've met one-to-one at all levels of company, government, and community organizations have been open, genuine, and personally vulnerable in their conversations. But in team meetings, large groups, and with bosses this openness often disappears. They talk with a business, process, or results focus in which nothing is said that might threaten their self-image or position. They avoid saying, doing, or implying anything that might have them look bad or show vulnerability in public.

If your personal truth will set you free, create new possibilities, and induce transformation, it will first ask you to be vulnerable. Meaningful progress always stops when people avoid the experience of vulnerability, and not much new happens in the culture. And the culture is no more than a tissue of relationships which is as fragile as a gerbil or a guppy. Most people in organizations just won't take personal responsibility for this culture, this tissue of relationships.

When a profound shift in performance or engagement happens, it is counter culture and you can depend on the prior culture reasserting itself. I call this the "Camelot Phenomenon." King Arthur's fabled kingdom rose to wonderful heights for governance, people's well-being, and the good of the nation as a whole. Ultimately however, the tissue of relationships was torn

apart by a prior framework of good and evil and violence. Things became more important than human concerns and the grand accomplishment was lost but for the memory of what could be. Sustainable transformation always requires this cultural phenomenon to be ongoingly reconstituted.

I've been lucky to participate in such grand transformations in numbers of companies. In cases when the leader changed or somehow lost their heart along the way, the tissue of relationships was similarly torn and the moments of transformation in which people participated with all their hearts just stopped happening. Left behind were power point presentations and statements of aspiration that seemed dead words on a page, without the life given by personal vulnerability, courage, and confidence in the speakers.

This issue of Transformation Magazine is about the about the Camelot Phenomenon and the requirement for vulnerability and strength of character that enables innovation and growth. It's about finding and enabling those men and women who have it in themselves to be strong and the leaders the world needs.

Innovation, creativity, and growth come from culture, not from the profit motive or from good ideas. They come from people's willingness to be vulnerable and their strength of character. We don't often see such leaders in politics or business. There are many reasons for this, none of which make a difference.

Can we train people to be this way, or are they made in heaven? I really only know that they do exist. They are people who take what they learn and use it to generate unimaginable new levels of results, high engagement, and a widespread experience of caring. In this issue of Transformation Magazine, we are fortunate to have insightful articles by such extraordinary people.

Marilyn Smith is an attorney, mediator, and extraordinary analyst. She served for six years as Executive Director of the Center for Conflict Resolution in Chicago, Illinois. In her last year they did 1500 mediations and trained large groups of volunteer mediators for the city and its communities.

Gary Clarke is an actor, YouTube video producer, and creative consultant. He starred in *The Virginian* television series and many films, other TV programs, and plays.

Meaghan Smith is a professional photographer in Laguna Beach, California. Her images of children, families, and the natural world are breathtaking and capture the imagination and hopes of everyone who sees them.

Bill Bergquist is an international coach and consultant, professor in the fields of psychology, management and public administration, author of more than 45 books, and president of a graduate school of psychology. Dr. Bergquist consults on and writes about personal, group, organizational and societal transitions and transformations. His graduate school (The Professional School of Psychology: www.psychology.edu) offers Master and Doctoral degrees in both clinical and organizational psychology to mature, accomplished adults.

Barry Oshry is a world-renowned organizational anthropologist and analyst. His programs, assessments, and articles powerfully reveal “what's really going on underneath” in complex systems.

David Norris is one of the most accomplished transformational trainers and students of profound change in the world. He lives in Germany's Black Forest and consults with leaders and companies.

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