

DISENGAGING THE AUTOPILOT

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There are many entrepreneurial CEO's, executives, innovators and individuals in all walks of life, who have a character -- a way of being -- that lets them see the whole of a system as greater than the sum of its parts. They manage their emotions and opinions such that principles, values, reason and intuition often prevail. These people are predisposed towards inquiry and open to considering things that may be inconsistent with what they already know or believe. They experience themselves as fully connected to the world around them, not separate from it — they and the system are made of one whole cloth, even though this phenomenon is far too complex to explain. What stands out about these leaders, beyond their competence, is a state of mind that minimizes the use of force, and maximizes their intent to consider people more important than money much of the time.

At the same time, people all over the world report a sense of personal injustice and mismanagement by degrees in their lives, governments, and companies. Much of this experience comes from leaders and bureaucracies predisposed by culture history or to the use of force and measurement (while often espousing noble rhetoric), in an attempt to manage complexity through control and direction.

PRECEPTS FOR DISENGAGING THE AUTOPILOT

There is an Auto Pilot in every culture and in people's natural ways of surviving. It is this that has companies, groups, professions, healthcare systems, and individuals to do the same things over and over, no matter what. Much of this is helpful and serves a company, a team, or an economic or personal mission. Often, some of it is useful in parts of the system, yet undermines effectiveness and a sense of common humanity in other parts. The Auto Pilot is a machine with only one purpose: to keep things going the way they are, regardless of goals or intentions to the contrary.

But not always.

In 45 years of advising and coaching leaders in enabling fundamental change, I have seen dramatic examples of enlightened leaders coming to see that the Auto Pilot has absolute power over them and their company (or professional) culture when it is operating, and the heavy price they and the company pay for it. In those instances, enlightened leaders saw for themselves, and for others, that they really did have a choice to 'Disengage the Auto Pilot'.

In every one of these corporate, association and personal cases, the outcomes were spontaneous leadership, innovation, healing, justice and breakthrough results for the company or the project.

Such results were sustainable so long as leaders continued to adhere to certain Precepts or general rules that regulated their behavior or thought.

PRECEPTS

Precept One: Inquiry is a Sacred Imperative.

Inquiry is any process aimed at increasing knowledge, improving communication, resolving doubt, or solving a problem. In any field where Inquiry is Sacred, the greatest sins of all are 'Unnecessary Explanation' and 'Already Knowing'. There is a Force for Betterment in the world. The ancient Greeks called it "Sophia"-- the force of learning, of unknowing, of 'always questioning'. There is also an ever present Dark Side – let's call it "Explainata"-- the man or woman who always already knows.

Many people speak from a presumption that they already know.., and present what they have to say from that starting point. In most corporation, managers act (at least in public), as if whatever the boss says is right, whether they personally think so or not. In the same way, cultural rules or systemic imperatives can be found in any culture. Inquiry, with the aim of increasing knowledge, improving communication, resolving doubt, or solving a problem, in the face of these rules is at some point, illegitimate. Ultimately, people who ask forbidden questions are dismissed or attempts are made to reeducate them. The cost to the system is to be stuck with current problems and opportunities, even those that thwart the possibility of a better future.

The commitment to never-ending Inquiry enables never-ending sets of questions, which lead to more never-ending sets of questions that keep getting closer to solving underlying problems. Such Inquiry is worthy of respect, veneration, even worship. Even without elevating it to the level of a Sacred Imperative, this is critical to resolving many political, corporate, religious, class, environmental, international, and economic problems that are already a matter of life and death for some, and predictably for many in the future.

Precept Two: *"A man (or woman) goes to knowledge as they go to war: wide awake, with fear, with respect, and with absolute assurance. Going to knowledge or going to war in any other manner is a mistake, and whoever makes it might never live to regret it."*

(Carlos Castaneda, The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge)

Precept Three: It's not possible to analyze your way into a moment of transformation.

Unlike 'change' which is an intended shift within an existing framework, transformation is a thorough or dramatic shift in form or appearance -- a metamorphosis, and always a quantum sea change in context, surprising, intuitive, energetic, and in the presence of what attracts. None of this is generated from linear thinking. You don't control what happens. The universe decides.

Precept Four: Business, social, legal, and personal conflicts clear up naturally when people's minds shift from a linear to a quantum logic.

In Peter Sellers' last film before he died, Being There, the great actor and comic ended with, "Life is a State of Mind."

"Linear logic is a process of thought following known cycles or a step-by-step progression where a response to a step must be elicited before another step is taken. Quantum logic is characterized by expansion in multiple directions, rather than in one direction, and based on the concept that there are multiple starting points from which one can apply logic to a problem." (Wikipedia) A quantum reality is sometimes called "Many-Worlds". It implies that all possible alternative histories and futures are real, each representing an actual "world" or "universe". It is a reality of infinite possibilities.

Elliott Maynard, in his recent remarkable book Brave New Mind, writes that *"The expansion of our traditional linear social consciousness into an advanced (form) of nonlinear thinking lets us consciously function within the quantum realm. We have the ability to shift from linear to quantum consciousness., at will. This is accomplished by simply becoming aware of the shift from linear mode to the nonlinear quantum thinking mode. Since this quantum field functions holographically with data existing outside the linear concepts of time, space and order, information can be accessed directly in something that is perfectly relevant in any specific situation or circumstance. Such quantum thinking is perfectly natural in more primitive or childlike mindsets., and then we cultivate awareness of when we are operating nonlinearly."*

Maynard's Breakthrough insight is that, *"Planning to operate in Quantum thinking modalities starts when we switch on the Awareness that this state exists.,"* and we then cultivate awareness of when we are operating non-linearly.

Precept Five: Alignment, the phenomenon of shared commitment, is a competence that comes alive when you see yourself not only as a part of the whole, but also see the whole as greater than the sum of the parts.

The following note from a corporate executive describes her experience of this transformation: *"Our chat helped me a lot, to focus on me as simply a part of the whole. I had always thought of myself as the conductor of the symphony, but never realized that I might actually be in the pit playing bad notes and setting everyone off key. I*

really thought of myself as separate, but I'm not, nor do I want to be, because the "whole" is my life and I shouldn't be trying to "manage" it like some kind of spectator."

(Elizabeth Downes, PMO Realty)

Precept Six: Leadership for Transformation requires Creative Indifference as one aspect of a leader's Character.

People make boundaries all the time. When these come from a boss or an unspoken culture, most people keep their mouths shut or dilute the intensity of their speaking. Creativity is not unleashed and collective intelligence often gives way to collective stupidity. The beauty of "Creative Indifference" is that it takes you to a zero point in a conversation where you can see every dimension of the continuum between possible points of view. It allows for the freedom of choice, movement and thought that can bring the best out of yourself and other people.

In the simplest terms, Fritz Perls (founder of Gestalt Therapy), said that *".., by remaining alert in the center, we can acquire a creative ability of seeing both sides of an occurrence and of completing an incomplete half. By avoiding a one-sided outlook, we gain a much deeper insight to the structure and function of the situation. For example, the present is the ever-moving zero-point of the opposites; past and future, where creative indifference informs and balances the polar differentiation while not becoming it."*

(Gestalt Therapy. Perls, Hefferline, and Goodman,1994.)

Precept Seven: Personal Energy Expansion is the Bottom Line.

People's personal energy and vitality is the wind in the sails of business activity. There are more and more examples of successful companies recognizing this. Many inspired examples are apparent in those actively pursuing Conscious Capitalism, Business Social Responsibility, and Sustainable Development in broad social, environmental and economic terms, and bold technological innovation.

These companies are entering a quantum and energetic reality in which there are countless very small increments or parcels of energy. This means that opportunities for energy expansion are limitless, but only when you embrace the nature of the underlying reality, which is energetic rather than linear. Every unsuccessful project, group or personal relationship I've seen in 45 years of Organizational Development and Leadership Consulting has been marked by rapid or gradual decrease in people's vitality or energy.

Zoe Marae, a remarkable counselor and teacher in Concord, Massachusetts says, *"As personal energy expands, the world around you improves."* This is an easily testable hypothesis that works for me and seems to be a reliable predictor of success in others. It also points to the fact that responsibility for energy expansion is the senior leader's job, both personally and for their group(s).

In a sports context, Red Auerbach, legendary coach of the Boston Celtics, said that team spirit was his main job. Having chosen skilled players, his full attention was on maintaining, uplifting, and encouraging individual and team spirit, especially when he saw it diminish, whatever the cause. Victor Sanchez, a brilliant and socially conscious author, trainer, and coach extends this idea to systems as a whole. He says that, “*systems with the most available energy will prevail.*”

From Apple Computers to Google, Whole Foods to championship sports teams, the principle fits. While this energetic logic makes intuitive sense, what I’ve seen going on in most of the organized world is that far more attention is being paid by senior leaders to bottom line and measurement, growth, product quality, and order and control than is being paid to energy expansion and team spirit. This accounts for why engagement scores are so consistently low. Scores don’t go up when real attention continues to be paid to concrete, linear activity. What makes the real difference is people’s vitality and energy.

The curious part is that leaders’ public speaking usually honors the central importance of people’s imagination and innovativeness. Yet, energy follows attention. In most places, the most powerful attention and recognition is paid to money and that which can be measured objectively. What ultimately makes a difference is ignored by comparison. Measurement, of course, is essential to material success and as the organizing force it can drive an increase in short term profit. But it cannot fix a leaky boat. Sadly, it seems that the more you measure, the more personal energy is suppressed.

Precept Eight: Quantum Escape Velocity is Always Available.

Escape Velocity is the propulsion, energy, vitality, and staying power needed to break free of a massive object. To go to space, the massive object is the planet Earth and Escape Velocity is 17,500 miles per hour. In life and work, similar enormous gravitational pulls exist in culture, personal identity, and dominating relationships. In Quantum terms, there are countless ways, powerful and subtle, to mobilize Escape Velocity in different situations. There are techniques, technologies, interventions, tools, liberating structures, (*The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures, McCandless and Lipmanowics 2014*) conversations, rewards, innovations, acts of kindness, shifts in your way of being, and acts of courage or vulnerability. The list is endless, but what is common is that they all call for “uncharacteristic action”-- something not typical for you, your group or your company. The trick in choosing or inventing a way of achieving Escape Velocity is to know that “the therapy is always the opposite”.

Whatever you or others are doing, or however you are being that doesn’t work, try doing some form of the opposite. *The magic is in the act of uncharacteristic strategy or action.* One of many examples is illustrated by a division of a global food manufacturing and sales company that had crippling cost problems. A thrilling new culture and millions of dollars in savings were achieved in the moment when the leadership team achieved Escape Velocity by standing in front of the whole company and sharing their personal vulnerability and that

they truly needed everyone's help, ideas and support in figuring out what to do. The magic is always in baking an upside-down cake.

The Code Breaker in achieving Escape Velocity is in being able to see for yourself what lies beneath and is not obvious, that is holding you and others back from true alignment, from being in the same boat, from all working to win the same game together.

Precept Nine: People are more important than money.

Over the years, it's become increasingly apparent in the organized and bureaucratized world that money is more important than people. When people are considered resources, consumers or producers instead of human beings, it's much easier to treat them as objects to be used and discarded when they are no longer considered useful or necessary. Profit or efficiency as the bottom line are widely accepted and promoted in culture, economic theory, and public behavior of leaders especially in times of difficulty or crisis. The idea that money is more important than people is today a paradigm, even though most people don't think it's right because it's immoral as a policy and cruel as a practice. This seems to have been the common sense, always already way of operating a business often moderated by kindness, fairness and good will from leaders, customers and employees.

The new Precept is that people are more important than money. A CEO whose company is at the top of their industry said to me this week that business and moral success comes from putting people first, process second, and from that comes a lot of money.

My son works for a large corporation that is a joy to behold. They hire people based on their intelligence, ability to cooperate, independence of spirit and imagination and already aligned with the mission and noble, social purpose of the company. There are multiple bottom line including the success and well-being of employees, the company the communities they serve, and especially their customers. Almost all companies say this, but this one means it. The leaders stand for this unequivocally with good humor and convincing action. The leaders embrace the paradox and contradiction it takes to operate in the Quantum "many worlds." Much of their profit goes back to customers based on how much they spend.

I'm re-inspired by leaders and companies like these and in the possibility of them helping create a better country and a better world. I've seen many leaders, companies and politicians say they have such values and behave inconsistently. I've seen many create grand vision, noble purpose, great strategy and a culture that doesn't support it. Embedded in that culture is always the fact that money is more important than people.

In the future, the time has come for this to end.

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I discovered a useful framework for quickly identifying Escape Velocity actions in references to *The Seven Rays of Divine Energy*, first introduced to Western culture in The Secret Doctrine, by H. P. Blavatsky in 1888. The philosophy has appeared in several religions and esoteric philosophies since at least the 6th century B.C., and proposes that, “.., *all things and beings in the world—all forms of mind and matter—arise from combinations of seven fundamental forms of energy. Each form of energy carries particular qualities and tendencies for important cultural and personal requirements.*”

For our purposes, the model offers a relevant basis for interventions that achieve Escape Velocity from dysfunctional company culture and limiting aspects of leadership, circumstances, and personal identity. When all or many of these forms of energy are flowing easily between people and between enabling processes in a system, chances are good that transformation or at least, improvement will happen. When one or more of these forms of energy forms is missing or weak, there is an energy hole in the company or team bucket.

When a leader or team member takes full responsibility for assuring that the weaker forms of energy are generated, Escape Velocity from the grip of culture and identity ignites. A quick summary of these seven energies follows:

1. Will and Power – This energy is the essence of power itself. It is the force of purpose, direction, centralization and oneness, of which the will is the keynote. It has the qualities of intensity, dynamism, quickness and dominance.
2. Caring and Connection – This energy is the source of relationship and the power that comes from connection, magnetism and alignment. It is the energy of wisdom, sensitivity and intuition.
3. Active Intelligence – This energy carries an underlying impulse towards respect for active mental, physical, emotional, spiritual and artistic activity.
4. Harmony through Conflict – This energy stands at the paradoxical point of harmony, bridging and mediating amidst conflict, pain and struggle. It carries the continuous opportunity for transformation.
5. Concrete Knowledge or Science – This is the energy of substance, knowledge and science. It leads to research, analysis, imagination and continuous inquiry.
6. Devotion and Idealism – This is the energy of dedication and service to others. It carries a single mindedness and intensity. It can bring loyalty and long term allegiance.

7. Organization and Ritual – The seeds of devotion and desire pour forth through this energy. It generates form, adherence, intensity and persistence.