Curated 2019: The Seasons of Change . . .

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Introducing Curated 2019: The Seasons of Change . . .

Welcome to the fifth edition of Curated. It is being published at the starting of a new decade. Each of the first four editions featured one of the four seasons: Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer. We are now ready to bring together all four seasons and have captured this image of all four seasons on the cover of this edition of Curated—in the name of: *The Seasons of Change*. With this turn to a new decade and with our cycling through four seasons, we thought it appropriate in this edition for us to focus on the theme: *The Role of Professional Coaching in the Engagement of Change*.

It is not hard to justify attending to roles that can be played by professional coaching in the engagement of change processes, for major changes in our personal and collective lives are frequently warranted. There is a term widely used in the literature that captures something of the breadth and depth of change now required in our world—this term is VUCA (which is an acronym for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity). Originally a military term, VUCA once described fraught, chaotic conditions in which businesses and leaders would increasingly find themselves, and there was much discussion regarding how to navigate VUCA environments. Now, however, we as individuals as well as the communities and organizations we live and work within, are harnessing an intentional disruption for the sake of innovation and growth; essentially we now cause and leverage VUCA to stimulate change. This marks a shift from victims of circumstance to personal agency; from being at the effect of VUCA to affecting change through disruption. We no longer simply react to, survive, and navigate VUCA environments, we generate them on purpose.

VUCA Conditions

We begin this edition of Curated with a review of VUCA conditions (and even introduce an essay that adds to VUCA the fourth and fifth challenges of turbulence and contradiction). Essays in this first section of Curated 2019 explore VUCA-related challenges from a variety of perspectives. It ends with a provocative challenge offered by Rey Carr who has proposed that professional coaching might not be up to the challenge of VUCA and the press for change.

Coaching Strategies for VUCA

The second section of Curated 2019 concerns coaching strategies that can be engaged to make professional coaching effective during these challenging VUCA times. These essays include reviews of the widely used GROW model, as well as the engagement of appreciative perspectives and application of findings from the Cognitive Revolution and Behavioral Economics in our coaching practices.

Coaching Tools for VUCA

Our third section includes essays from the Library of Professional Coaching that provide tools to bring about change. Some of these tools build on the appreciative perspective offered in Section Two, while others build on the wisdom of Master coaches such as Marcia Reynolds and Agnes Mura. We conclude this 2019 edition of Curated with a powerful tool called Polarity Management as presented by Margaret Cary (a noted physician and executive coach). While Cary is addressing her essay

primarily to members of the health care community, all professional coaches who are addressing the challenges of a VUCA environment will find this tool to be of great value.

So, welcome to the seasons of change as we prepare for the challenging world of a new decade.

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Section One: The Conditions for Contemporary Coaching for Change

Coaching in VUCA Times

Agnes Mura

The concept of operating in a chaotic environment is not new. Tom Peters has been talking about managing under chaos for years, and "decision-making under uncertainty" is a well-established academic field. What is new is that most economic, business, and political leaders have realized that the VUCA environment is a permanent condition.

VUCA is an acronym for 'volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. "
VUCA was developed by the Army War College a dozen years ago. As the world struggles economically with recession and politically on many other fronts, think of VUCA as a "post-modern SWOT analysis".

DEFINITIONS:

- *Volatility* refers the dynamics of change: its accelerating rate, intensity and speed as well as its unexpected catalysts.
- *Uncertainty* refers to the lack of predictability, the increasing prospects for surprising, "disruptive" changes that often overwhelm our awareness, understanding and ability to cope with events.
- *Complexity* entails the multiplex of forces, the apparently contradictory information flow, the sensitive interdependence of everything we touch, leading to the sense of confusion in which it's hard to make smart decisions, steeped as we are in the moving dance of reality.
- *Ambiguity* is the 'haziness' in which cause-and-effect are hard to attribute, relativity seems to trump established rules, weighing heavily on our ability to hold contradictory data and still function and make choices.

The capacity of individuals and organizations to deal with VUCA has been measured with a number of engagement themes:

- Knowledge Management on Sense-Making
- Planning and Readiness
- Process and Resource Management
- Functional Responsiveness and Impact Models
- Recovery Systems and Forward Practices

Business executives have been preparing for the VUCA environment for years. Although most of the initial work was done by the military and in counterterrorism, VUCA planning has been part of business processes like supply chain and risk management for years. A few firms like GE, Unilever, and McDonald's have even begun changing their leadership development model to fit the VUCA environment. But unfortunately, often those of us in charge of recruiting, retention, skill development, compensation, performance management, onboarding, etc. have paid no more than lip surface attention to this strategic problem.

Animation Questions

1. Some of the disruptive factors that firms deal with might include generational shifts that occur every six years, social media changing the way we communicate, and simultaneous talent surpluses and shortages. What does planning, forecasting, and training mean, if the environment that you are preparing for never appears? What best enables firms to manage against these conditions?

2. If agile models and learning-agile people are part of the answer to VUCA conditions, how does our *own* thinking as coaches and Talent leaders have to evolve in order not to put new wine in old bottles?

3. How do our ideas about organizational coaching serve powerfully in VUCA times, and how, on the other hand, do they need to change? What would new coaching applications look like?

4. Examine the shifting meaning of these terms:
   - Job description
   - Office
   - Career planning
   - Department
   - Supervision
   - Accountability
   - Leadership Competencies
   - Training
   - Work-life balance

   How do these shifts have to transform coaching practices?

5. Here are some things organizations have been advised to STOP doing:
   - Assuming long term retention is possible and desirable
   - Assuming the culture and values are sacred and fixed
   - Benchmarking best practices and solutions to most current problems

   Discuss what a talent environment deprived of these foundations might look like.

6. What approaches are you as a coach using to develop leadership talent that is resilient and able to thrive during VUCA times?

7. How can coaches help leaders manage their energy and resiliency so they stay balanced, centered and engaged during VUCA times - versus just coping?

8. How sustainable is the way in which we and our coachees work and live and what are some of the most powerful decisions and practice choices that coaches are making in answer to these conditions?

Two of the favorite LPC banners . . .

Staying Alive in Complex Challenges of Leadership and Organisations: A Territory Map for Leaders and Their Coaches

Dost Can Deniz, MBA, MCC

In the last couple of years, I had the privilege of providing advanced training on Executive and Leadership Coaching to many coaches from different schools and approaches. The structure of the training gave me the opportunity to observe participants when they were practicing live coaching. What caught my attention is how many of them frequently resorted to some standard and familiar coaching tools and methodologies, even though the situation was not specifically suitable. That got me thinking about the organizations, their leaders, and the value of coaching to them.

ORGANIZATIONS ARE COMPLEX…

Organizations, human systems are complex. Each part impacts others; all parts are in equilibrium with each other, and each and every one is impacted when you intervene in one. If we want to put it in few statements:

- ***Organizations are complex, not simplistic.*** Linear "*impact* → *effect"* thinking usually fails.
- ***Relational positions are dynamic, not static.*** Everything changes. All the time. Especially when you move.
- ***Interactions are interdependent, not linear.*** When you move, your movement impacts all others. And then their move moves you.
- ***Behavior is contextual, not personal.*** 80% of our (and their) behavior is determined by the context we find ourselves in.

VUCA

To understand why organizations are like this, we need to understand "VUCA".

Lately, an acronym from the military field, especially from the special forces has been gaining widespread use and acceptance in the business world to define the economic, political, managerial and social environment we all live in: VUCA.

This acronym stands for the four critical characteristics of the context of critical operations; and when military personnel are exposed to these conditions, their evaluation, decision-making and responding capability is severely diminished. The purpose of the acronym is to make these conditions visible and thus help the soldiers to build enough capacity to deal effectively with these conditions and regain enough footing to respond effectively.

These four conditions are:

- Volatility – things change unexpectedly, quickly, and rigorously.
- Uncertainty – and we don't know when and how and where they will change.
- Complexity – and the change happens in non-linear ways.
- Ambiguity – and it is impossible to name exactly what is happening.

As many professionals from organizational behavior and development have rightly identified, these four conditions that Special Ops personnel find themselves in during critical operations is the everyday reality of the operational, economic, political and social environment organizational leaders operate in. Thus, understanding the reflexive responses of people who find themselves in such volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous conditions, and finding methods and approaches that can support them to deal with them effectively is something that many people in leadership development has turned their attention towards.

PREDICTABLE HUMAN ERRORS

As much as these systems are complex, the human in the organizational systems generally base their thinking on good intentioned yet simplistic and linear "impact → result" approaches that regard the systems they deal with somewhat static. Yet, the systems are not simple, static, or linear. They are complex, dynamic, and adaptive. So the results of such an approach is at best unsatisfactory, usually disappointing, and sometimes disastrous, as documented by Dietrich Dörner[1].

As a result, people fall in predictable errors and traps while living and working in organizational systems without realizing it. They tend to consider each part, each event, each action separate from each other, from the conditions that created it and from the conditions it creates. This has deep roots not only in our psychology, but also in our neuropsychology, in how our brains work and especially how our brains are organized to react to perceived threat[2].

Neurology as support and as hindrance

Recent breakthroughs in brain research and their spill over effects in behavioral sciences shed light on how we human beings operate in such conditions and why. The research shows, in an overly simplistic summary, two regions of our brains are in charge of our actions and reactions. These are:

- **Prefrontal Neocortex**, which is basically in charge of all intentional thinking, logic, choice, attention, decision, understanding, etc. This is the part that we usually call "ourselves" when we are happy with ourselves.
- **Amygdala,** which is the watchtower of the human brain, who is constantly on alert to determine if there are any threats in the environment. If the amygdala perceives any

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[1] Dietrich Dorner. *The Logic Of Failure: Recognizing And Avoiding Error In Complex Situations.* Basic Books, 2009.

[2] This area has recently fascinated many writers and thinkers on leadership and coaching and interested readers are invited to explore into a growing literature.

threat, like a tiger in near vicinity, it holds all resources of the brain and body, practically shutting down prefrontal neocortex temporarily, and coordinates these resources for three strategies that has saved humans and other animals from being extinct by being eaten by others: Fight, run, or freeze.

The problem with this excellent mechanism is that amygdala does not differentiate between actual physical threat and perceived emotional and identity threats, and reacts with the same three strategies whenever how we see ourselves is challenged, or something we don't wish might happen.

David Rock[3] had identified 5 situations that our brains react as if there is a tiger in the room. These are:

- Status
- Certainty
- Autonomy
- Relations
- Fairness.

David Rock states that when we perceive threat in these five areas, our brains react in a similar way as if there is a tiger in the room. I observe in our culture, and in many eastern cultures, one more area is very critical: Shame. This is why it always is a struggle to give and receive feedback in Turkey and other cultures with eastern flavors.

As you can see, a VUCA environment will inevitably trigger many, if not all, of the SCARF + S threat responses.

Triggers

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[3] David Rock. *SCARF: A Brain-Based Model For Collaborating With And Influencing Others. NeuroLeadership Journal Issue 1, 2008.*

These conditions we find ourselves in result in what scientists call "amygdala hijacks". When triggered, our amygdala bypasses all logical thinking and reacts in the fight, run, and freeze responses. I like to think that most of the conflicts in organizations and in the world generally, are not between rational human beings; they are rather fights between scared and as a result triggered amygdalas, who keep on being threats and scary to each other, and further triggering themselves and others.

Five Hindrances of Leadership[4]

Behind these fallacies human beings find themselves as leaders and also in their social/personal lives are some basic misunderstandings and the results of these misunderstandings. These, as summarized as the The Five Hindrances of the Leader and the Leadership are as follows:

1. As leaders (and everyone else), we are usually running after some **unrealistic expectations, desires, and wants**. Some of these expectations are things that we have to learn to let go, stop grasping and grief over to be effective and to make best of the leadership opportunities when we are in leadership positions:
   - Most, if not all, of these in someway are connected to **control**. Even though many leaders cognitively know that the results and processes are dependent on many conditions and factors outside their span of control, they organize themselves and their actions in an attempt to take these conditions under their control. The result is while trying to control uncontrollable conditions, they end up giving away, or loosing their **power**, the ability to influence and mobilize people and systems towards common goals, and the ability to respond effectively to ever-changing conditions, e.g. VUCA.
   - Likewise, the basic and deeply ingrained human need of being able to say "I am **innocent**" (need to be loved and accepted) is a luxury we have to let go the

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[4] Adapted from the Theravadin tradition of insight meditation. These five obstacles are defined as the hindrances to meditation and also enlightened thought and action. As such, I observe them also as main internal obstacles to exercising effective leadership.

moment we assume leadership. To say "I am innocent" is moving away from responsibility and **accountability**, and eventually from power.

- These two trade – offs, namely power instead of control, accountability over innocence, are what makes a leader, what distinguishes effective from ineffective leadership, according to my experience. When we look deeply into the issues our coaching clients present, more often than not, we will find these four archetypical issues of control, power, need for innocence (need to be loved and accepted) and accountability/responsibility.

- Other much sought after things, like guarantees, feeling totally secure, or a feeling of fairness, or certainty, or everlasting happiness and satisfaction, and others as well also fall into this category, as we operate in a VUCA environment and these are simply unrealistic.

- You will also note that to expect to have all of your SCARF (status, certainty, autonomy, relation, fairness) needs to be satisfied all the time is in fact quite unrealistic in a VUCA environment.

- To the extent a leader tries to grasp these unrealistic expectations, he/she gives away his/her power to lead.

2. It is inevitable that these unrealistic expectations will lead to disappointment. We will never have full and lasting control over systems we are in charge of. We will never make everyone fully happy. Our ducks will never be in a row. Even if they did, it will be for a brief second. That is how life, and organizational life is. And others have other expectations and desires, and sometimes these are in conflict. So the leaders, and all of us, tend to **project our inevitable disappointment on to others**, creating an environment conducive to **accusation, blaming, putting people in boxes, and even polarization**. In the subtlest form this can lead to learned pessimism, and in worst, **ill will against others**. Yet as the conditions dictate mostly the results, this is another form of giving away power. The anger coming from the disappointment over unrealistic expectations is like becoming angry at the weather conditions. So, the disappointment, anger and polarization over unexpected results, is the second hindrance of leadership.

3. The third hindrance is born out of the **weariness and the resignation** of actually having a remote sense of knowing that it is impossible to guarantee that things will go your way, as your expectations are unrealistic. This pushes the leader to a certain type of **leadership laziness**, a certain type of sloth and torpor that manifests as not taking necessary yet risky decisions and leadership actions. The uncertainty of desired consequences moves us away from risky yet crucial leadership stances and actions and investing in building a power base. Instead, we stay in the area we feel more comfortable and secure, and mostly technical, and try to achieve business results we couldn't get through leadership by instilling a control culture. Most of the time we will be working extra long hours, maybe classified as workaholic, yet we are mostly avoiding the most important and necessary yet risky and uncertain leadership tasks.

4. Fourth hindrance is a direct result of not being able to see this process and how it manifests. As we don't see, we develop a sense of **regret and self-accusation** for past expectations that did not materialize, and a **chronic stress and anxiety** for our future expectations. As a result, we live our life as leaders in a **defense mode**.

5. The fifth and the last hindrance is maybe the most difficult to work with, yet overcoming this one usually helps with others too: As a result of all of the above, the **loss of belief and trust in either my leadership capabilities, or in the totality of the leadership possibility**. To develop a sense of mistrust of all leadership concepts, theories or even opportunities. And also to look at all others who step up to leadership challenges and opportunities with the same eyes of mistrust.

My experience is such that one or more of these are generally present no matter what the presenting problem of the client is, and building awareness around these is critical to create lasting change and improvement for the client.

These hindrances are not only found in leaders and leadership situations; they are present for everyone. I can even postulate that these are behind all the unhappiness and dissatisfaction in the world at a meta level. The VUCA environment of leadership makes them very alive and makes leaders prone to fall into one or more of these traps. Roots of the

many familiar everyday leadership problems, failures and errors we see in a large or small scale and we as coaches are employed to remedy can be understood this way.

SYSTEM BLINDNESS

A typical error of leaders and anyone in organizations that prove to be costly is a direct result of the five hindrances, as well as our simplistic approach to complex systems. The hierarchical systems in which the power is distributed asymmetrically, in which some are tops, some are bottoms, and some middles, create similar and typical dynamics that are independent of people, personalities, culture, and socioeconomic realities[5]. Everyone who enters the field and context of tops, middles, and bottoms are impacted by these systemic dynamics; and to the extend they are not able to objectively see these impacts on themselves and others, react in predictable ways:

- Tops, as those who are in charge of the whole system and everyone in it, and the results as a whole, will experience pressure of accountability and having to deal with complexity (VUCA).
- Bottoms, as they are at the bottom of the power chain, will experience disregard and vulnerability.
- Middles, as they will be receiving demands from every party that they need to go to others to satisfy, will feel tearing.
- And customers (internal and external) will experience anxiety and neglect as they will expect delivery.

The systemic and contextual inability to see the system we are in and the complexity (VUCA) of it, the impact of the system on us, the conditions it creates, the situation and the experience of ourselves and others in the system, namely "system and context blindness" is both the reason and the result of this. What makes it even more difficult to deal with this is our predictable reflexive reactions to these very normal and predictable systemic realities;

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[5] Barry Oshry. *Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life.* Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007. Discussion in this section is mostly based on Oshry's model.

and these reflexive reactions are fueled by the Five Hindrances of Leadership (you may also see how SCARF factors are also implied in the below statements):

- Tops, in their attempt to deal with the complexity and the burden of accountability, try to control the system even more, and assume more responsibility, and thus end up with more complexity and more accountability.
- Bottoms, in their reflexive attempt to deal with the bottom vulnerability and disregard, and with the luxury of being innocently at the bottom, hold all others responsible for their situation and as a result feel more powerless.
- Middles, in their attempt to deal with the tearing, try to make everyone happy, ends up making no one happy, and experience more tearing.
- Customers, in their attempt to deal with their experience of neglect, move themselves away from the system and to a position of judgment, and making it more likely they will end up dissatisfied.

Most of the issues we coach leaders around have a sense of these vicious cycles in the background. **The thing we do to alleviate our pain makes it even worse** (which is a common human error).

If we are not able to see, as coaches, the systemic complexity, and the influences of the context, we will be making the same error of turning contextual problems into personal ones, and thus be unhelpful to our clients. As Kurt Lewin says "Eighty percent of the behavior is determined by the context".

TECHNICAL AND ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP[6]

When we look at the bigger picture, we can see that leaders are dealing with two kinds of problems: Technical and adaptive. **Technical problems** are the ones than can be solved with the current expertise, and exactly that expertise, coupled with some authority, is what we need to solve them.

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[6] Ronald Heifetz, Martin Linsky. *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading.* HBR Press, 2009

Adaptive problems, on the other hand, generally require adapting attitudes, approaches, values, beliefs, and as a result, behaviors to the needs of the presented challenges of the environment and the new vision we are moving towards. Adaptive change most of the time involves new learning, innovation, and letting of some old, espoused, yet ineffective structures and values.

If we look at the job of the leader today trying to navigate a world of VUCA, we would see most of their job is exercising adaptive leadership. And to be able to do this, leaders should build enough capacity to maintain presence and mindfulness on the face of VUCA challenges, to stay awake against the five hindrances and to overcome system blindness.

LEADERSHIP THROUGH ARIA

So, how do we create adaptive change? This brings us to fundamental tool and the currency of leadership: **Attention**.

The movement of attention, or the figure and ground fluidity (or fixation, for that matter) has always been pointed out by Gestalt practitioners as what defines our subjective reality, how we see the world, and what determines our thinking, attitudes and behaviors. The most simplistic definition of the Gestalt approach can be that we are helping clients become aware of how their behavioral (and invisible) attending process defines their thinking, feeling and action, and thus helping them have more choices around that.

Neuroscientists like Jeffrey Schwartz[7] demonstrate the same phenomenon. Their research show that the powerful and automatic conditioning like the five hindrances and system blindness can be changed, and new approaches and behaviors can be learned. Schwartz demonstrates that even very difficult behavioral challenges like Obsessive Compulsive Behavioral Disorder can be treated by a learning strategy that involves using **Attention** in a strategic way, enabling deep **Reflection**, and facilitating new **Insights** and awareness, and designing new behavioral experiments and **Action**, hence the ARIA learning model.

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[7] David Rock, based on an interview with Jeffrey M. Schwartz, M.D. *A Brain-Based Approach to Coaching* International Journal of Coaching in Organizations, 2006, 4(2), pp. 32-43.

This model, which describes how human brain learns, fits perfectly with the Gestalt approach, and also is the fundamental model of adaptive leadership tasks. *If any leader can attract and sustain the attention of the people that are critical for his or her agenda, there will definitely be change and progress.*

In this respect the one of the first tasks of the leader is to learn how to manage her attention and how to sustain her attention on her agenda and leadership commitment. And with that, how to attract and sustain the attention of the people critical for her success, how to orchestrate and regulate joint reflection, argument, even conflict on the agenda, how to facilitate new joint insights, new collective understanding, and new agreements and commitments, and how to help design new behavioral experiments for the group she is leading.

While doing that, she also has to remember the axiom: "If you are one step ahead, you are a leader. If you are ten step ahead, you are a target". And as Heifetz and Linsky so beautifully puts it: "Leadership is the art of disturbing people that they can tolerate". As such, the first duty of any leader is first to stay alive.

This, defines the beauty, and the challenge of the leadership.

COACHING LEADERS THROUGH COMPLEXITY AND CHANGE

So, our role as leadership coaches is:

- To support our clients to build capacity to stay present, mindful, awake, and alive in VUCA challenges, and navigate them effectively,
- To help them understand and regulate their reactivity and triggers in a complex system,
- To help them become aware and manage their tendencies to fall in the trap of the five hindrances,

- To support them upgrading their lens to see and overcome the common human error of system/context blindness,

- Thus to help them become students of systems and achieve a certain balance of humbleness and boldness when they are dealing with systemic complexity and predictable human responses.

- And using this balance and a certain sense of awake mindfulness, support them use themselves as change agents to design, initiate and lead adaptive change in a strategic way: through managing attention, orchestrating collective reflection and conflict, facilitating joint insights and agreements, and designing and carrying out behavioral experimentation.

All the classical lists of tasks of leadership, such as inspiring, delegating, empowering, feedback, etc., are actually subsets and direct results of these. If we, as coaches do not understand and see the context our clients are operating in, we cannot help them see it for themselves, resulting in a "blinds coaching blinds" situation. Given this environment of leadership, we can easily see why basing our coaching on off-the-shelf tools and techniques that I described in the beginning of this article will be not enough to support our clients to survive, and then thrive in their role as leaders.

Our developmental task as coaches to leaders is not very different from the leaders' task: We need to develop our ability to see many sides of a dilemma, our capacity to stay present with systemic complexity and chaos, and our strength of mind and heart to be with the seemingly unresolvable challenges of the client to such a degree that we will not prematurely trying to take sides, bring structure, or provide solution oriented techniques.

Doing any of these, trying to move to solutions and order prematurely, without staying with the client and their dilemma in a way that creates understanding and awareness is actually an act of abandoning the client, even though we are trying to help. And this is exactly what our clients are also doing to themselves and sometimes others in such situations: Moving too quickly to structure and solutions, and as a result abandoning themselves and/or others.

As such we should assume the role of awareness agents, rather than change or solution agents. By this way we can really live up to the coaching axiom that says "we see our clients whole, resourceful and capable".

To be able to do this, we need to learn to see ourselves in systems. We need to understand our own habitual patterns, such as the five hindrances. We need to manage our own five hindrances as coaches, as they will also drive us the same way they drive our clients. Otherwise, there is no way but we will go back to our familiar and safe tool set from our coach training that is supposedly geared for change and solution. This is much less than what our clients want and need from us.

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References and further reading

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Leadership and Anxiety in a VUCA-Plus Environment

William Bergquist, Ph.D.

The leaders of organizations in the 21st Century often must deal with major challenges associated with the anxiety experienced by specific members of their organization, as well as the diffuse anxiety that pervades specific departments in the leader's organization or the entire organization. This anxiety can be induced in many different ways—and there are many different sources of organizational anxiety. In many ways, we seem to be faced, as leaders, with the "perfect storm" of organizational anxiety. Perhaps the easiest way to sum up the multiple sources of anxiety is to evoke the now commonly used acronym: VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity). The challenges in a VUCA environment involve both determining what is "real" and how one predicts and makes decisions based on an assessment of this elusive reality.

The VUCA-Plus Environment

I will dwell briefly on the meaning to be assigned to each of the VUCA terms and then suggest how we might expand on VUCA. *Complexity* concerns the many elements and dynamic interaction among elements that have to be taken into account, while *Volatility* refers to the rate and shifting rate of change among the elements. The other two terms have to do with epistemology (the way in which knowledge is acquired and reality is defined). *Ambiguity* concerns the assessment of both the evidence available regarding reality and the meaning assigned to this reality. The fourth term, *Uncertainty*, is about the stability of any assessment being made regarding reality. Does reality change over a short period of time? Why do an extensive assessment if our world is constantly shifting?

VUCA is deservedly becoming the coin-of-the-realm among contemporary organizational analysts. These four terms (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) clearly capture much of the dynamics swirling around in the perfect storm of contemporary organizational life. I have offered a similar description of our current environment (Bergquist, 2019a). However, my categories differ a bit and expand upon VUCA. I have identified four challenges: complexity, unpredictability (uncertainty), turbulence and contradiction. Two of these challenges align directly with VUCA, while the other two (turbulence and contradiction) expand on the VUCA environment.

In describing *Turbulence*, I turn to a metaphor offered by Peter Vaill (2008), who suggests that we are living in a "white water" world. I have suggested that this white water world represents a turbulent system (Bergquist, 2019a). Furthermore, I have proposed that this white water system incorporates four subsystems that are exemplified by the properties of a turbulent stream: (1) rapid change (flowing segment of the stream), (2) cyclical change (the stream's whirlpools), (3) stability/non-change (the "stagnant" segment of the stream), and (4) chaos (the segment of a stream existing between the other three subsystems). With regard to *Contradiction*, I have identified the frequent presence of contradictory constructions and interpretations of reality and the differing meaning assigning to the reality that is being constructed (Bergquist, 2019b). I suggest that we are living and leading in a world of Irony and must make decisions that are contingent and subject to frequent review and modification. Obviously, Turbulence and Contradiction are strongly influenced by and tightly interwoven with all four of the VUCA challenges. I will use the term *VUCA-Plus* with this expansion on the description of a VUCA environment.

Having identified the fundamental nature of these four terms, while adding two additional terms, I turn in this first essay to the nature of organizational anxiety that is evoked in this VUCA-Plus environment. In a second and third essay, I consider ways in which 21st Century organizations – and especially the leaders of these organizations—contain this anxiety and transform it (via something called "metabolism") so that the anxiety might be managed

effectively. Finally, in a fourth essay, I identify several tools that can be used by these leaders in creating and maintaining these containers and transformational processes.

The Nature of Anxiety

VUCA-Plus produces anxiety at both the individual and collective level. It seems that anxiety is quite contagious. One anxious person in an organization (or any group) can readily spread this anxiety to everyone else in the organization. In some ways this contagion is quite adaptive. When human beings were living on the African savannah, they were among the weakest and slowest creatures to populate this often threat-filled environment. It seems that we humans survived (and ultimately thrived) by working collaboratively via language and strong family and clan bonding. We all wanted to know if something was threatening one or more members of our group so that we could act together to fight or flee from the source of the threat. Anxiety served this purpose.

Anxiety as a Signal

Many years ago, Sigmund Freud (1936) wrote about the signal function of anxiety. At the time, he was pointing to the way in which anxiety alerts us to an important psychic reality: we are moving into dangerous territory regarding unconscious processes. We can expand on Freud's analysis by considering the collective signaling function served by anxiety in warning us (as families or clans) about sources of danger that are real (such as predators, crop failure or the pending invasion of an adversarial clan)—or are anticipated or imagined.

We can probe for a moment into the neurobiological basis of collective (and contagious) anxiety. In recent years, neurobiologists have recognized the very important role played by a specific neurotransmitter in the lives of human beings. This neurotransmitter is oxytocin. This neurotransmitter is sometimes called the "bonding" and "nurturing" chemical – and we human beings have more of this chemical coursing through our brains and veins that most

other animals. Oxytocin pulls us together and makes us particularly fearful of being alone and isolated from other members of our family and clan. We want to be close to others and feel threatened when others feel threatened.

This secretion of oxytocin could be considered the basis of empathy and might even be mediated by something called "mirror neurons" which are activated in us when we experience the wounding (physical or psychological) of other people. While the role played by mirror neurons is still quite controversial, there is very little dispute regarding the typical (and necessary) bonding of human beings with one another and the high level of sensitivity regarding our discomfort with witnessing the potential or actual suffering of other people with whom we are bonded – hence the contagious nature of anxiety.

Real and Imagined Lions

Clearly, we are attuned to the signal of threat transmitted by other people. This signal can be based on "legitimate" threats: the lion can be stalking us or the tribe living in the next valley can actually be plotting to take over our hunting ground or pastureland. However, as made famous now by Robert Sapolsky (2004), we are also quite adept at imagining lions—and falsely concluding that our neighboring tribe is plotting against us. Thus, there can be "false alarms" that we have to manage with just as much skill as the alarms based in reality. Part of our role as leaders is to discern the difference between valid signals and invalid signals. This can be quite a challenge in the world of VUCA-Plus—and this is an important element in the metabolism and re-introduction of anxiety into an organization. As parents we need to help our children sort out the difference between the "real" bad things in life and the "unreal" monsters lurking under their bed at night (equivalent in 21st Century life to the imaginary lions of the African savannah). As leaders, we similarly have to assist with addressing the imagined VUCA-Plus monsters lingering under our organizational beds.

A World of Problems and Mysteries

The concept of VUCA has become quite commonly introduced into the identification and description of 21st Century organizational challenges. I would suggest that we can move beyond the VUCA and VUCA-Plus environment by considering not just the content contained in these analyses, but also the nature of the issues embedded in this environment. Specially, I want to suggest that VUCA and VUCA-Plus usually create organizational problems and mysteries, rather than organizational puzzles. I propose that there are four kinds of issues being addressed in this environment: *puzzles, problems, dilemmas* and *mysteries.* Furthermore, the most prevalent of these issues are not puzzles—but are instead problems, dilemmas and mysteries. I will briefly describe each of these issue types.

Puzzles

Puzzles are the everyday issues that anyone working in an organization must face. Puzzles have answers. They are uni-dimensional, in that they can be clearly defined and can readily be quantified or at least measured. Puzzles concern such things as changing a production schedule to accommodate a major new order or determining the appropriate fee for a new, longer training program. Puzzles also concern changes in organizational policies to accommodate new federal laws or re-arranging an office floor plan or a parking space distribution.

With a puzzle, the parameters are clear. The desired outcome of a puzzle-solution process can readily be identified and is often important to (and can be decided by) a relatively small number of organization members. It is the sort of issue rightly passed to the lowest level of responsibility where the necessary information is available. Puzzles were quite common in pre-VUCA-Plus organizations.

Researchers who study complex systems use the metaphor of landscapes to distinguish a complex challenge from other types of simpler challenges being faced in various systems, including organizations, (for example, Miller & Page, 2007). They point to the image of a single, dominant mountain peak when describing one type of landscape. Often volcanic in

origin, these imposing mountains are clearly the highest point within sight. For those living in or visiting the Western United States, we can point to Mt. Rainer (in western Washington) or Mt. Shasta (in northern California). Mt. Fuji in Japan also exemplifies this type of landscape.

You know when you have reached the highest point in the region and there is no doubt regaining the prominence of this peak. Similarly, in the case of puzzles, one knows when a satisfactory solution has been identified and one can stand triumphantly at the top of the mountain/puzzle, knowing that one has succeeded and can look back down to the path followed in reaching the solution/peak. As we shall see shortly, there are other landscapes that are much more challenging—and these represent the dominant environment of VUCA-Plus.

Problems

There is a second type of issue that a 21st Century leader faces with VUCA and VUCA-Plus. I identify these issues as problems. Some other authors have described these as "wicked" issues. Problems can be differentiated from puzzles because there are multiple perspectives that can be applied when analyzing a problem, several possible solutions associated with any one problem and multiple criteria that can be applied to the evaluation of the potential effectiveness of any one solution.

There are many more cognitive demands being placed on us when we confront problems than when we confront puzzles—given that problems do not have simple or single solutions. Problems are multi-dimensional and inter-disciplinary in nature. They are inevitably complicated in that they involve many elements (Miller and Page, 2007). Any one problem can be viewed from many different points of view—thus it is unclear when they have been successfully resolved. For example, we find a technical solution and realize that the problem has financial implications. We address the financial implications and soon find that there are a whole host of managerial concerns associated with the problem.

Problems that exist in contemporary organizations often concern such things as personnel policies (that are not forced by new government regulations), compensation systems (that are not just annual inflation-driven wage increases but incentivize certain behaviors), productivity, morale, creativity, risk-taking, flexibility—and trust. Because the outcome of the problem- solution process itself is of significant interest to multiple stakeholders, often the most important and difficult discussions revolve around agreeing on the criteria for solving a problem or even evaluating when solutions are successful.

Researchers and theorists who are seeking to understand complicated problems often describe the settings in which problems emerge as "rugged landscapes." (Miller and Page, 2007, p. 216) This type of landscape is filled with many mountains of about the same height (think of the majestic mountain range called the Grand Tetons or the front range of the Rocky Mountains that citizens of Denver Colorado see every day), as compared with a landscape in which one mountain peak dominates (think of Mount Rainier). In a rugged landscape that is complicated, one finds many competing viewpoints about which mountain is higher or which vista is more beautiful. A similar case can be made regarding the challenging problems facing the 21st Century leader and the 21st Century coach who is working with this leader.

Dilemmas

When certain issues that managers face appear impervious to a definitive solution, it becomes useful to classify them as dilemmas. While dilemmas like problems are complicated, they are also complex, in that each of the many elements embedded in the dilemmas is connected to each (or most) of the other elements (Miller and Page, 2007). We may view the problem from one perspective and take action to alleviate one part of the problem, and we immediately confront another part of the problem, often represented by an opposing stakeholder group.

Dilemmas are intimately aligned with the challenge of uncertainty in the VUCA model and with the challenge of turbulence in the VUCA-Plus model. We tighten up our policies regarding new product development and find that creativity is dropping off. We increase the price of a service that we deliver in order to increase revenues and find that we are losing customers, thereby losing revenues. Leaders not always recognize a dilemma for what it is. New leaders who have not fully understood or acknowledge the unique nature of VUCA-Plus tend to see problems and dilemmas in a limited or simplistic way and attempt to deal with them as if they are puzzles. When that happens, leaders dig themselves deeper and deeper into the complexity, seriousness, and paradox of the "mess." (Schön, 1983)

At times we find that the issue is a set of nested dilemmas. One set of conflicting priorities exists within another set of conflicting priorities. For instance, we want to pay one employee a bonus, but are concerned that if we do so other employees who find out about it will be resentful and less likely to collaborate with their bonused colleague. This dilemma, in turn, rests inside an even bigger dilemma: we want to increase salary and benefits to all our employees, yet also are trying to keep down costs because the market in which our product is being sold is highly competitive. These are complex dilemmas - not readily solved puzzles.

Living in a VUCA-Plus environment, contemporary leaders are likely to often confront the challenge of working with dilemmas and even nested dilemmas. As in the case of problems, dilemmas can be described as "rugged landscapes." (Miller and Page, 2007) However, because dilemmas involve multiple elements that are intimately interlinked, they are far more than a cluster or range of mountain peaks of similar size.

This type of complex landscape is filled not only with many mountains of about the same height, but also with river valleys, forested plains and many communities (think of the Appalachian Mountains), as compared with a landscape in which one mountain peak dominates or in which a series of mountains dominate. In a complex, rugged landscape,

one finds not only many competing viewpoints but also an intricate and often paradoxical interweaving of these differing viewpoints.

To return to our landscape metaphor, we may find as leaders that we are living not just in a complex rugged landscape but in what Miller and Page (2007) call a "dancing landscape." Priorities are not only interconnected, they are constantly shifting, and new alliances between old competing polarities are being forged. Clearly, when a world of complexity collides with a world of uncertainty and a world of turbulence, the landscape begins to dance, and learners learn how to dance. The dilemma-filled challenges and dancing landscapes that 21st Century leaders face in a VUCA-Plus environment make the process of metabolism and the creation and maintenance of a container in which the metabolism takes place even more important (perhaps even imperative).

Mysteries

As we begin to address the challenges associated with dancing landscapes, we enter a domain in which problems and dilemmas seem to merge into mysteries. *Mysteries* operate at a different level than puzzles, problems and dilemmas. Mysteries are too complex to understand and are ultimately unknowable. A specific mystery is *profound* (desired outcomes are elusive but of great importance to many stakeholders) and *awe-inspiring* or just *awe-ful*. A mystery is in many ways *theological* or teleological in nature. It is inevitably viewed from many different perspectives that are systematic and deeply rooted in culture and tradition. Mysteries have no boundaries, and all aspects are interrelated.

Mysteries are beyond rational comprehension and resolution, and they are viewed with respect. Depending on one's perspective, they are the things "we take to God" or are the unpredictable and profound events that we "take to heart"—and that Taleb (2010) described as "black swans." As Taleb suggests, there are many events that occur in a VUCA-Plus environment that are like black swans—they can be imagined but are not likely to ever be encountered—until they actually occur.

Some mysteries relate to traumatic and devastating events: Why did I get out of the World Trade Center while my desk mate perished? Why is there evil in the world? Why did lightning strike our freighter but not the one next to it? Why did my child die before me? Mysteries also encompass many positive events and moments of reflection: How did I deserve all these talents? What is my destiny? Why have I been so blessed in my professional life? Why did I fall in love with this person? Why did this remarkable person fall in love with me? How did I ever raise such an exceptional child? How did I earn so much affection from these people at my retirement party? Under a container of safety, such privileged discussions may occur and not lead to an "outcome." They often serve as perspective-raising instants, a way to view life and the world from a vantage point less tethered to the weeds of daily issues—this resides at the heart of organizational metabolism.

Locus of Control

We perceive mysteries as taking place outside our sphere of control or influence. Psychologists call this an *external locus of control* and note that some people are inclined to view most issues as outside their control (that is, as mysteries). By contrast, puzzles are usually perceived as being under our control. Psychologists identify this perspective as an *internal locus of control* and note that some people are likely to view all issues as being under their control (that is, as puzzles).

Problems and dilemmas are usually complex mixtures of controllable and uncontrollable elements. To successfully address a problem or dilemma, one typically needs a balanced perspective regarding internal and external loci of control—an important discernment in which to be engaged. One of the most helpful inquiries when confronting problems, dilemmas and (in particular) nested dilemmas is to identify what is and what is not under one's control, and to do that from a perspective that challenges the leader's immediate perceptions.

This process of discernment resides at the heart of the metabolism process (to be described in my second essayo. A problem or dilemma that is embedded in a rugged landscape is more likely to have components that are under at least the partial control of a client than is a problem or dilemma that is embedded in a dancing landscape. Often, *obscure* or *potential strengths* can come to light when a leader realizes how much broader is her actual span of control, when compared to her self-limiting awareness—in other words, when she expands the scope of her internal locus of control.

Conclusions

There are myriad VUCA-Plus challenges associated with identifying and addressing these four different kinds of issues. First, leaders typically want their issues to be puzzles they can control or perhaps mysteries for which they have no responsibility. Puzzles can be solved—and we know when we have solved them. Mysteries are outside our control, so we don't have to feel responsible for resolving them. But problems and dilemmas—these are much more difficult to address. We must determine which aspects of the problem or dilemma are under our control and which aspects are not. This confusing mixture of internal and external control is inherent in problems and dilemmas, and so is the balancing of competing but valid interests represented by different stakeholders. That's what makes them so difficult to address— and makes them ripe for a container of safety and a process of metabolism.

A second challenge concerns the values inherent in the typical role of a leader. Leaders are often considered much more successful, in terms of both fortunes and fame, if they can "solve problems"—often by approaching them as puzzles. This criterion of success is prevalent even in a VUCA-Plus environment. The novice leader feels a great deal of satisfaction when he successfully helps analyze a situation, looks at optional solutions and successfully implements a chosen set of actions. This is a proficiency that can help many leaders who initially feel stuck or unsure of a course of action. Even very experienced and

highly competent leaders will be tempted if they work in organizations that are highly focused on a return on their investments to "guarantee" certain outcomes in exchange for an attractive fee, as if a "puzzle" just needed to be put together correctly.

In essence, it is important that we fully appreciate the nature of a VUCA-Plus environment in which most contemporary leaders operate. Thus, there is the need for an organizational container and process of metabolism that is both effective and sustained. I turn to these important organizational concepts in the second and third essay.

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It Is Time to Reinvent the Organization As places for People to Express Passion and Purpose

Peter Roche

Is it really in doubt for anyone that we need to rethink the design of organizations?

The current organizing model was designed to solve a problem of manufacturing as the industrial age expanded in the late 19th and early 20th century, an age when reliable replication and efficiency was wanted. At the time the context was clear: the initial challenge was how to get people used to the rhythms of nature in fields and farms, be reliable adjuncts to machines as mills and factories began to be the dominant place of work. In solving that problem, the basic building blocks of our current management thinking and practices were developed: hierarchy command and control mechanisms, standardization, conformance, specialized jobs, predictable outcomes, and so on... all recognizable features of our current organizations.

Over the decades of management thinking and practice we have done little more that add new dimensions to *command and control 1.0.* If we had succeeded in creating organizations fit for self-expressed human beings, we would not have widespread employee disengagement. So clearly something is not working in organizations, something that exposes the flawed design.

Another hint at a flaw in the design is the pay disparities -- the average CEO pay was $24.8 million in 2013, and the CEO-to-worker compensation ratio was 510.7-to-1, hardly a reflection of the relative value of worker/CEO contributions.

Then we have seen in recent years organizational cultures that breed corruption -- beyond just a few bad apples to a culture of criminal wrongdoing. Most recently six banks have

been collectively fined £ 2.6bn by UK and US regulators over their traders' attempted manipulation of foreign exchange rates. And before that it was the LIBOR scandal, and before that... the list of organizational wrongdoing is staggeringly long.

If the purpose of a business is to maximize the power, authority and compensation of a few top members, while maximizing stock value and shareholder payouts, with minimal concern for its other stakeholders then we could argue *the current design does that very well.*

Clearly, we need a model of organization that is fit for the future and fit for human beings. Fit for a future that will be changing at an every increasing pace, and fit for human beings so they will be willing to bring their creativity and passion to work with them for something more than efficient production and making money for shareholders and senior executives.

We cannot build an organization that is fit for the future if it is not fit for human beings. Does anyone seriously think that command and control, top down, bureaucratic hierarchies are the way to a viable and sustainable future in the age of free and unfettered human expression that the internet and social media has unleashed? I think not. We need to wake up to the fact that the future will not conform to the prejudices and preferences of a privileged few who control organizations now.

Max Weber said bureaucracy is, "*...the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability.*"

Is this what we want as the fundamental organizing principle of organization? Especially when we dig into the culture that bureaucracy fosters: subservience to authority, compliance with rules and procedures, high need for predictability, standardization,

respect for the chain of command, get permission first, ...

In the sixteenth century Martin Luther wanted to stop the abuses of the Catholic Church. He saw the *selling of indulgences* as corrupt and wrong -- he had such a clear and compelling context for change that he was ready to risk the disapproval, retribution even, of the Church's hierarchy. He saw what was wrong that needed to be changed and, according to one account, he nailed his 95 Theses [big fixes] to the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg -- for his day this was equal to big time flaming on the internet; his actions sparking the Reformation.

Fast forward 500 years and another Martin Luther, this time Martin Luther King, and we have another champion of much needed society-wide change. Change to redress the oppression and injustices that he saw, and change to realize a possibility, which he eloquently shared at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C. -- in his now famous, *I have a Dream* speech.

Given the circumstances of the time, and the vision, commitment and courage of the two Martins, the reformation and the civil rights movement were, with the benefit of hindsight, an inevitable outcome. It could not have been otherwise. Some day soon, so it will be said about the transformation of our organizational design.

My life's work has been in the world of business, first as an executive and now as a consultant, executive coach and, as one client labeled me, a CEO Whisperer. I acknowledge a bias *for* business. Business organizations touch all of our lives. They employ many of us; we all use their products and services. We cannot function as a human society anymore without what businesses do and provide.

From my perspective viable flourishing organizations are an essential element for a sustainable thriving human society.

The business media focuses on those who have successfully exploited the current business model and their huge executive compensations. However, their moves to create even larger *too big to fail* organizations are attracting little attention -- not the unsustainability of that model nor the cost to society. And, even less attention is being paid to a growing number of great companies working with new organizing models that have values like openness, caring, compassion, meritocracy, flexibility, collaboration, contribution, and dare I say it, even love.

We are seeing more organizations that are thriving by giving their associate more autonomy to make decisions because they know when you expand autonomy you expand people's freedom to invent and create. We are seeing examples of companies that trust people to use their best intelligence to forward the organization's purpose and values. Companies that know leadership is widely distributed. It is a myth that leadership is scarce, as the makers of Gore-Tex have been demonstrating for years.

If we were to start over and create an optimal design for organizations, it would not be the default-operating model of power and authority-based hierarchies. We would not invest so much attention on status; we would focus instead on contribution. We would not have seniority and tenure filter innovation and question competency. We would not subordinate the majority to the authority and control of a manager/supervisor/boss; we would trust people to act intelligently to forward the purpose of the organization. And, we would not maintain the myth that wisdom and decision-making know how, like cream, floats to the top, decision-making would be widely distributed.

There is an emerging body of leaders that are creating new business models that in turn are creating great organizations -- organizations in which people have freedom to pursue their passions, where experimentation is valued, where leadership is an expression of who wants to follow. These organizations are communities of shared purpose and values in which people are engaged in mutual value exchange in the market with *open-source* systems and structures that adapt to change -- they are vibrant, intelligent, adaptive, human social

systems.

All that said, change is unlikely to come willingly, at least from the top of our organizations. Most senior executives are too invested in the current model. We need to make changes, where we are, with the resources we have and the collaborators we can rally to support us. As Jeff Bezos of Amazon puts it, "Never stop experimenting."

Here is a question worth engaging with: if we were to create a new organizing model for business, and we did not know what role we would ultimately have in the model we designed, what would we design?

Here are some of my choices for *design elements.* **The purpose of the new design: unleash people to contribute all they can for a noble purpose; create an organization that is sustainable; one that is adaptive to change; one that flourishes and knows when and how to cause its own transformation.**

If we want to break out of the hierarchical command and control mode, if we want to transform the organizations we work in, we cannot wait for permission, or for someone else to take the lead. We need to lead by example. Here's how you can get started:
1. Remind yourself and others *why* the business exists, say what its *design purpose* is -- if you don't know, find out
2. Express the purpose as a *compelling context* for everything the organization engages in
   – and a context that is <u>*always*</u> beyond delivering on your KPIs or maximizing profit
3. Live the *core values* so they shape your behaviors. Know how you will act when you see colleagues acting inconsistently with the values
4. Express what you do as a clearly defined *role(s)* – with accountabilities, responsibilities, decision-making authorities, and what others expect of you
5. Contribute to creating the future, and the strategies to realize it. Make it an

inclusive process -- by contributing

6. *Focus your day-to-day activities and interactions on* sensing and responding to the real world *vs. trying to* predict, plan and control

7. Know the key metrics and measures of your performance and make them visible to all. The gap between what is happening and the outcomes you want is the context for your innovation and creativity

8. All practices and systems need to be designed to support work, yours and the people in your immediate circle, as work changes change the practices and systems

9. Do your bit to maintain individual and collective energy and vitality, it is just as important as maintaining positive cash flow for the businesses long-term viability.

We are all familiar with the Internet -- few would doubt its power to mobilize large numbers of people in coordinated action. It is the most adaptive intelligent autonomous self-organizing system we have invented to date.

Now imagine you are part of a self-organizing organization with that same power to mobilize and engage all its stakeholders in forwarding the purpose of the business, and all within a set of shared values and organizing principles. That is a possibility that is worth nailing to the front door of each and every organization everywhere -- some organizations, like the Catholic Church of the 1500s, will tear it up and call it heretical, for others it may just be the impetus they need to start a transformation of their own.

So as Gandhi said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

Several other favorite LPC banners . . .

Looking to the Future: Are Your Feet on the Ground or in the Clouds?

Mark McKergow

Over the years, it has been noticed that different kinds of people treat and use the 'future' differently. We operate in a complex and emerging world where the future is uncertain and total knowledge is impossible. In this article, Mark McKergow explores the various ways in which managers and leaders view the future including the dreamer, the realist, the business planner and the host.

First things first, are you going to step forward, or step back?

As a leader or manager, it is likely that you find yourself sometimes stepping forward and being assertive, and sometimes stepping back to allow others to shine. Stepping forward means taking action. Stepping back means being aware, and preparing to step forward again at the right time. This outlook shows a fundamental basic truth: we don't fully know what's going to happen next.

In the financial world, projects are appraised using the system known as net present value. Money you get today is worth its face value, and money you are scheduled to get next month, year, or so on, is worth less, as there is a risk it won't arrive. Accounting folk call this discounted cash flow, and there are frequent discussions about exactly how much less cash will be worth in a year's time.

The same kind of reasoning applies to people's plans, but with a twist. Our ideas about the future also become less reliable, less certain and less valuable as time goes on.

We have noticed over the years that different kinds of people treat and use the future

differently. Let us look for a moment at three tempting but not altogether useful alternatives that you may, like us, recognise from your experience of life at work.

The Dreamer

The Dreamer is the person who sees a wonderful future ahead where things will be better and the possibilities are endless. They give all their attention to expanding (and expounding) on the immense benefits and innate attraction of the better future.

That's great, of course. However, the Dreamer seems unwilling or unable to put actual steps in place to build towards this future. Perhaps the whole task seems so big that any actual step is not worthy of the goal. Perhaps such a big future should seem to be matched by a big plan of action – which never actually gets off the ground. The dream remains just that, and meanwhile the Dreamer continues to fixate on it and get frustrated that nothing is happening and nobody shares the dream.

The Realist

The Realist is rather the opposite of the Dreamer. The Realist is very keen to make sure that things happen and will go out of their way to chase actions, make plans and get stuff done – useful people to have in your organization.

However, the Realist doesn't let themselves be bothered by the long term. Doing today's work as well as possible is their aim. They might think that long-term hopes and dreams are a recipe for disappointment, or that any long-term goal will inevitably be thwarted by others in power. They may (with some justification) agree that whatever will be will be. However, our thoughts today about possible futures can certainly influence what we do.

The Business Planner

The Business Planner orientation is not as prevalent as it once was, but does still appear in some situations. Business plans are (or used to be) concerned with things on a

middlefuture timescale (one to three years). What is the cash flow for year one? How much profit may appear in year two? And given all that, how much might the business be worth at the end of year three?

The phrase "given all that" is the big giveaway here. By looking at a middle timescale, the plan can take our eyes off the most important areas. In a moving, complex and uncertain world, the classical business plan is only as good as its assumptions.

These exercises can easily turn into mere arithmetic and rapidly become detached from reality, with the Business Planner spending much of their time in "ant country" – our phrase for the middle distance where things are too complex to predict in detail.

This leads us nicely onto a fourth, alternative concept which might provide some much-needed relief from the limitations of the three approaches we've discussed so far. It is that of leading as a Host.

The Host

Hosts are always open to changes and uncertainty. When we organise a party we know the big picture – the kind of event we want – and the next steps. We can't, however, predict exactly what we will be doing at 8.37pm. This is why we focus all the time on stepping forward and back, on maneuverability and flexibility. And we don't get bogged down in "ant country." So, the Host will use the future in this fashion:

Focusing on the near future – practical next steps and signs of progress – and the distant future – hopes, intentions and their precursors – is the trademark of a good Host. So next time you are discussing the future, why not think more like a Host?

FUTURE-PRESENT SINGULARITY

Dr. Marc Cooper and Charles E. Smith, Ph.D.

"You Need a Peace Academy to Create a Peace Academy."

The best predictor of the future in a person's life or a company's future is what they are doing now. What they are doing now can come from their past, the future they anticipate, or the inexplicable power of what happens in the present moment.

We propose that the Present and the Future are a Singularity

At any moment, there is only one singular and distinct thing going on -- the "Present-Future". The present moment is the point where the lines of past-present-future meet. The Present-Future Singularity is where things actually happen -- a point in spacetime in which gravitational forces cause matter to have absolute density.

A current example is elaborated in Ray Kurzwell's, *The Singularity is Near,* in which he writes that the "Singularity" will happen in the moment when the processing power of machine intelligence on the planet exceeds the processing power of all human intelligence. Looked at from the outside, a present- future singularity is like a kaleidoscope.

There are times when the future seems not influenced by the past and largely determined by new possibilities. The present moment then appears differently than if the future was determined by the past. As Nicholas Cage said in the film, <u>Next</u>, *"The future changes every time you look at it, just because you looked at it, and then everything else changes too*

> *If you want to change the future, change what you are doing, what you pay attention to, right now, consistent with the future you want.*

As Richard Bach wrote in his grand book and metaphor for mastering life and work, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull,*

"*Perfect speed is being there.*"

Instead of splitting into parts, it's a reality in which the whole is greater than the sum of the parts -- a not quite fathomable Future-Present Singularity.

~ ~ ~

In another example of Present-Future Singularity, Tom Friedman writes in the November 19, 2014 New York Times, about those Mid-East countries which have been successful in contrast to those who have been unsuccessful. He writes, "*When change starts or depends [on our American rather than] their own staying power, it is not self-sustaining — the most important value in international relations.*"

He continues, "*David Kilcullen, the Australian counterinsurgency expert who served with the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan, told me: "Just like there is a spark of life in a physical body, there has to be a spark of legitimacy and coherence in a body politic. And, if it is not there, trying to substitute for it is like putting a cadaver on a slab and harnessing a lightning bolt to it to bring it back to life. You end up with Dr. Frankenstein. You can animate a corpse and make it walk and talk, but sooner or later it's going to go rogue… When you don't have the local leadership, invading does not make things better. It makes them worse.*"

A deeply moving example of Present-Future Singularity comes from Peter Stanford's Guardian article of November 6, 2014. It was the obituary of 90-year old Scottish Jesuit Priest, Gerard Hughes, a writer whose book, God of Surprises, persuaded many to stay within the Church. At last month's Vatican synod on the family, with the eyes of the world on him, Pope Francis more than once reached for the image of a "God of Surprises" as he tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to persuade his fellow bishops towards a modest relaxation in Catholicism's doctrinal rules.

Key to Gerard Hughes' appeal was that he neither preached perfection nor held himself up as anything special. He was, in his own words, one of the many "bewildered, confused or disillusioned Christians who have a love-hate relationship with the church to which they belong, or once belonged. His winning ability to see God in everyday life was complemented by his refusal to be bound by dogma or denomination.

While Catholic chaplain at Glasgow University from 1967-75, his record of being twice dismissed and twice reinstated by the local archbishop made him something of a hero figure for those battling to promote discussion and debate within an authoritarian church.

Hughes' own spiritual hunger was not satisfied, however, by ministering to others and in 1983 he left to embark on the process of introspection, first in Ireland and then on the Isle of Skye. Two years later he published his best-known book, God of Surprises. It was a word-of-mouth success which he described as, "*a guidebook for the inner journey in which we are all engaged*".

He remained, to the end, unafraid of speaking his mind, telling an interviewer in 2014 that too many spiritual books were "destructive" and "an easy way to make money". He went on to say, *"There are lots of beautiful words. God is here and Our Lady is there, so all will be well. 'Just trust,' they [readers] are told. Trust in what? 'Just trust in what I am telling you' is the message. There is very little attempt to encourage people to listen to their own experience, to discover things for themselves."*

Gerard Hughes is a real-life example of the truth of Present-Future Singularity. What a noble life.., what a hero.., what an impact he had in the lives of the people and institutions he touched! He must have felt his actions in the present as real and sacred, with a personal inner reality of a future in the Church that was nonhierarchical and compassionate. He was a living example, even with his own moments of despair, depression, conflict, disagreement and success, of trust in the power of Present-Future Singularity.

Now is the future and the future is now.

TO FLICKER OR SWING:
THE FIRE AND PENDULUM OF LEADERSHIP

William Bergquist and Agnes Mura

Our memory of mechanistic organization of the Twentieth Century is that the organization ran like a pendulum. A pendulum epitomizes elegance and simplicity in motion. We can disrupt the course of the pendulum by giving it an added push or by bumping into it and slowing it down. In either case, the pendulum will adjust its course and continue swinging back and forth at a greater or lesser magnitude. The pendulum, in modern systems theory terms, will always return to a balance, retaining its basic form or pathway. Systems theorists suggest that organizations tend to return to their previous form and function even with disruptions and interference. While today's organizations may seem to be chaotic and in disarray, we may merely be witnessing a long term process of homeostatic readjustment and an ultimate return to a former state or style of pendulum functioning.

Is this mechanistic analogy to the pendulum still accurate for Twenty First Century organizations? Ilya Prigogine, a Nobel Prize winning scientist, suggests that many processes in nature (including perhaps those exhibited by organizations) don't match very well with the mechanistic world of the pendulum. Rather, the world is more likely to resemble a fire. Fire is a perplexing problem in the history of science. Prigogine notes that modern scientists, in an effort to create a coherent mechanistic model of the world, ignore the complex, transformative processes of fire, concentrating only on the capacity to generate heat. Fire became a heat machine for scientists and was treated as a mechanistic process.

Fire is an irreversible process: it consumes something that cannot be reconstructed. Those of us who live in the San Francisco Bay Area were tragically attuned to this phenomenon during the early 1990s, as we watched the irreversible destruction of our neighbor's homes in the Oakland Firestorm. These homes could never be "unburned." There would never be a

readjustment in the community that was destroyed by the fire. There could only be the construction of new homes and a new community. Many other processes of change and transformation are similarly irreversible. Avalanches can never be undone, nor can Pandora's Box ever be closed once the lid is opened. We release organizational truths in moments of frustration or anger and can never return them to the Box. We tentatively consider a change in organizational structure, but the word gets out and we are soon stuck with this change whether we like it or not. We become bound up in complex and paradoxical relationships and can't undo them—except by divorce. The equilibrium has been disturbed, chaos often follows, and there is no returning home as the same person we were when we left. Time moves in one direction and cannot be reversed.

A second remarkable characteristic of fire is its ephemeral nature. It is all process and not much substance. As Prigogine notes, the Newtonian sciences concentrated on substances and the ways in which forces operated on various substances. It became the science of being. Fire, by contrast, is a science of becoming. Science of being, notes Prigogine, focuses on the states of a system, whereas a science of becoming focused on temporal changes— such as the flickering of a flame. Fire demands a focus not on the outcomes of a production process, but on the nature of the process itself. As adults, we often focus on the outcomes of our children's creative work. We admire their drawings of sunsets or battles among alien forces. Yet, our children tend to focus on the process of drawing. Their picture is not a static portrait. Rather it is story that is unweaving as the child places various lines on the page. In a similar manner we must often focus on the ways in which decisions are made in organizations, or the styles being used to manage employees, rather than focusing on the final decisions that are made or the relative success of the employee's performance.

Unfortunately, organizational processes, like fires, are elusive. They are hard to measure or even document short or long term impact. Once a fire has begun, one can't unburn what has already been consumed. One can extinguish the fire, but a certain amount of damage has already been done and a certain amount of warmth has already been generated. Once a leader has changed the way in which she compensates her employees, there is no turning

back. Once a leader has begun to talk with his subordinates in a candid manner about their performance, he can't return to a previous period of indirect feedback and performance reviews. Once the story has been told, there is no returning to the moment before the story was first told. There is no untelling a story.

The implications of organizational irreversibility are profound, for major problems often emerge when organizational fires are mistaken for organizational pendulums. The 1991 Soviet coup, for instance, appears at least from a short-term perspective to exemplify an irreversible, combustible form of change. Whereas the coup leaders thought that the Soviet Union would continue to operate as a pendulum with each new group of leaders restoring the government to its previous state, the people on the streets saw this as an opportunity to bring about a fire—a second order change. There was going to be a change in the very process of change itself. This new order of things was not one of restoration, but rather one of transformation. Even if the new Russian order fails, there will never be a return to the old order. There will never again be a Soviet Union as we knew it during the years of the Cold War. The story cannot be untold. A similar tale can be told about the Arab Spring and about the remarkable events that have occurred in many Mid-Eastern countries.

If, in fact, an organizations territory is made up of countless pendulums and fires, and people keep thinking that the reality is all pendulums, it's no wonder that people are continually upset and keep doing the same things about it unsuccessfully. As someone said, "It's not chaos that drives us crazy. It's the false expectation of order."

Decision Theory in Complex Systems

John Bush

Human beings are continuously making conscious decisions. Life is a stream of decisions made on a continuum from the subconscious to the fully involved conscious state. Many decisions are made "without thinking" as when we have driven our car to a destination and realize that we were not aware of the actions we were taking to maneuver the automobile. Many decisions made during an individual's typical day are made in a distracted state. This process works well until some external event injects itself into the process; for instance, a pedestrian walking out in front of the car. For this reason airplane pilots are constantly admonished to never lapse into a distracted mode while flying their airplane. The consequences of dealing with an injected event can be catastrophic.

A smaller number of decisions made on a daily basis require a higher focus of attention. Should I schedule a dental appointment; what shall I make for dinner; what shall I read; should I call my mother? Decisions such as these require conscious effort, but the consequences of the decision are typically not of great import.

A small number of economic decisions require research, analysis and focused consciousness. The consequences of not deciding well can be severe. Should I buy this house; what stocks and bonds should I purchase; what should be my retirement strategy? The decision process for questions such as these requires rigor. We need to define terms, identify alternatives, devise comparative methods, research and analyze information and data, identify probabilities and risk of consequences, and select a methodology to deal with all these factors. Even after this rigorous analysis we know there is a chance that our decision will prove to have been wrong and we chalk that up to an unknown element of chance.

It is the latter type of decisions that are the subject matter of decisions theory. The modern discipline of decision theory is approximately one hundred years old. Decision theory attempts to provide a model for individuals and groups to be able to make rational decisions. There are two branches of decision theory: normative and descriptive. Normative decision theory describes how rational decisions should be made; and descriptive decision theory describes what actually happens in the process of making decisions.

Classical decision theory is based on several assumptions. (1) the agents making the decision are rational and are seeking a solution on a rational basis; (2) options which can be chosen actually exist; (3) the process of choosing will be nonrandom; (4) the result of the decision will have an expected utility; that is, it will have value to the decision maker; (5) risk in the process of decision-making is quantifiable; and (6) uncertainty in the process exists when probabilities are unknown.

The elements of the decision process are the decision-making agent, the universe of possible options or alternatives, an assignment of the expected value of each possible option, and an estimation of the risk factor associated with each possible option or alternative. Decision theory uses a wide variety of mathematical and statistical methods to evaluate expected value and risk factors.

In an organization, management is the agent that makes decisions. Once the decision has been made and implemented, systems of review and feedback are put into place to ensure the actions of the organization move toward accomplishment of the chosen solution. Ralph Stacey, in his book *Complexity and Creativity in Organizations* describes this feedback loop: "The second time around the loop, discovery consists of monitoring the actual outcome against the intended outcome expressed in the plan and feeding any deviation between them back into the choice procedure to identify corrective action. Choice and action then consists of choosing in carrying out this corrective action. The whole purpose of this technically rational decision-making and this monitoring form of

control is to remove surprises, to damp down change and keep an organization moving stably through time according to the joint, prior intention of its members." Thus the process of decision-making changes from rational to one of power and control in the organization.

Many criticisms are leveled against this approach to decision making. No individual organization can claim to be totally rational and ignore the input of preference and emotion in the decision-making process. Possible options and alternatives considered in the decision making process may not represent all the options actually available, especially if the time horizon is far off. The process of assigning expected values to the available options is not as precise as pictured. If the decision time frame is long, expected values may change radically or vanish. Uncertainty in the decision-making process does not represent lack of knowledge, but reflects those elements that are actually unknowable.

Stacey summarizes the heart of the criticisms, "The immediate conclusion drawn is that ignorance can be overcome by greater investment in gathering information, funneling it to some central point or it can be analyzed, and then feeding it back to the actors. The dominant schema therefore leads people to believe that ignorance can be overcome by research into organizational excellence, incompetence can be overcome by training and developing managers, and systems can be used to prevent bad behavior."

The problem with decision theory, as we have described it, is that it is based on a Newtonian clock-like universe and does not accurately describe the universe as it really exists. The science of Complexity Theory provides us with a much better framework to understand the dynamic process of decision-making in organizations.

Decision Making in Complex Organizations

Organizations are complex systems. A system can be considered complex if its agents meet four qualifications: diversity, connection, interdependence, and adaptation. In an organization the agents are all the people who work within the organization. These agents

are diverse in that they are individuals with their own unique personalities, experiences, intelligence, emotions, preferences, etc. They are connected with each other by affiliation within the organization for the purpose of achieving the goals of the organization. They are interdependent since the work of each depends upon the other members of the organization. They adapt because each member of the organization is learning, changing, and evolving as a result of his interactions with the other members of the organization.

The process of adaptation is highly dynamic in response to local and global environments. The local environment of an organization is the interactions that occur within the organization; global environments refer to the interactions of the organization itself with other organizations. As organizations are connected and interdependent globally, organizations themselves learn and change and evolve locally, and individual agents within those organizations also adapt. It can be seen that adaption is a highly interconnected dynamic system.

Complex systems are often unpredictable and they can produce large events. They are robust and able to recover from serious damage. Complex systems produce bottom-up emergent phenomena where the results on the macro level are not equal to the micro parts of the organization. This phenomenon of emergence means that not only will the results be larger than the parts, but that at times the results will be different in kind. An example often given is the phenomena of self organization seen in flocks of birds or schools of fish. Emergent phenomena arises bottom-up without any top-down planning.

To understand the process of decision-making in complex organizations we must understand the concept of landscapes. Professor Scott Page in The Teaching Company course, *Understanding Complexity,* presents a full description of landscapes in complex systems. The idea of the landscape is both a metaphor and a mathematical object wherein the value of a function at a particular point is mapped as an elevation on a landscape. Landscapes are composed of valleys and two kinds of peaks: local and global. A local peak is a point on the landscape from which a step in any direction is a step down in elevation. A global peak is the highest of all the local peaks of a given landscape. In the metaphor a

peak represents a high point of value and for organizations, the height of the peak represents the economic success of the organization at that point in time.

Professor Page describes three types of landscapes: Mount Fuji, rugged landscapes and dancing landscapes. A Mount Fuji landscape has only one peak which is both the local and global peak. A rugged landscape has many local peaks and one global peak. This is the case when many organizations are represented in the landscape; the economic value of each of the organizations is a local peak while one organization that surpasses all others is represented by the global peak.

The metaphor of dancing landscapes is important to our discussion of decision- making in complex organizations. Recall that all the organizations represented in the landscape are themselves part of a complex system. They are diverse, connected, interdependent, and adapting. Each of the organizations is in competition with the other organizations in the landscape. As one organization makes decisions that increase its economic value, other organizations in the landscape experience a decrease in value. In our metaphor the local peak of the successful organization increases in height while the local peaks of the other organizations decrease in height. The landscape has changed its configuration and has "danced". The ongoing dynamic of decision-making within all the organizations and the resulting increases and decreases in value results in a dancing landscape.

The paradigm of decision-making in complex systems is radically different from the classical model of decision theory. Complexity theory teaches us that the future is truly unknowable, not just unknown. Stacey writes, "Creative futures emerge unpredictably from self organizing interactions between members; therefore, they clearly cannot use some forecast of long-term outcomes to decide between one action and another." As previously mentioned, Stacey discusses the assumption in classical decision theory that the future is merely unknown and that by applying more resources to the effort we can discover it. We cannot assign probabilities, future values and risk estimations since we live in a dancing landscape.

Classical decision theory is based on the assumption of rationality; agents act in rational ways in search of solutions that are rationally measured. Complexity theory recognizes the strong dynamic of the entire psychological milieu within the organization. We cannot represent all the elements of decision-making on strictly rational grounds.

Complexity theory teaches us that the goal of stability and uniformity in the organization may be a self-defeating one. Stacey writes, "Organizations are systems that are part of a larger environmental system and that evolve through a process of creative destruction and spontaneous self organization. Such evolving systems are in states of non-equilibrium, and their futures are unpredictable.
Disorder is an essential part of the progress of the system. Organizational and environmental systems are so complex that agents within them cannot plan their long-term futures. Those futures emerge or evolve from the interactions between agents."

Complexity theory teaches us about the process of learning, changing, adapting and creating within an organization. Organizations exist on a continuum from highly structured to disordered. In a highly structured organization authority flows down from the roles occupied by the powerful. As a result, most members of the organization are left with little individual freedom. The work of the majority of members is to implement actions intended to achieve the outcomes intended by the powerful authorities within the stable organization. However, complexity theory shows us that learning, change, and creativity occur in the disordered state at the edge of chaos. So as authorities create a more stable and structured organization, they create an environment less likely to produce learning and creativity.

The current nature of management is based on the premise that order in an organization is maintained by strong management and clearly defined and enforced structure. However, the science of complexity shows that order is a bottom-up phenomenon, not top-down. Self-organization is an attribute of complex systems and management need not fear anarchy.

Lessons from Complexity Theory

Leaders of an organization cannot know, anymore than anyone else can, where the organization is going.

The future is uncertain and probabilities and risk factors cannot be measured.

As local and global environments become more complex, landscapes will dance to a faster tune. The pace of evolution and change in organizations that learn to adapt more quickly will prosper and survive.

Large breakthroughs and emerging phenomena will arise in the organization that recognizes itself as a complex system and manages itself accordingly.

The role of management in the organization is both complex and paradoxical. On the one hand management has the responsibility to maintain stability and organization, while at the same time, allowing and fostering the presence of disorganization wherein learning, change, and creativity may flourish.

Ralph Stacey summarizes the role of management. "A complexity theory of organizational development therefore ascribes very important and very difficult roles to management in addition to the currently dominant notions that also continue to be important from an ordinary management perspective. Complexity theories of management lead to a very rich, paradoxical theory of leadership in which leaders have to be both the conventional directors of others in the far more subtle containers of their anxiety and provokers of their double-loop learning capacity. These different attributes of leadership do not blend harmoniously with each other. Instead, they conflict with each other; directing and intentionally not directing are diametrically opposed ways of behaving and both are required of an effective leader in a complex adaptive system."

Complexity theory does not give us a new, theory du jour of managing and decision making. Rather, it sheds light and allows us to see more deeply into the not-so- neat world of organizational leadership and action.

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The Art of Organizational Coaching: In Search of Patterns and Variations

William Bergquist, Ph.D.

The art of organizational coaching is based on identification and appreciation of patterns and pattern- variations in the life of a coaching client and her organization. We know from the scientists who study chaotic and complex systems that vibrant and sustainable systems incorporate both redundancy and diversity. Systems sustain certain patterns and replicate basic structures everywhere, while also ensuring that each subsystem is a bit different from other subsystems. Scientists suggest that viable systems are in *dynamic equilibrium*. Each viable system fits into a specific ecological niche and sustains a specific operational pattern that is compatible with (adapted to) this niche. The pattern is sustained and reinforced precisely because of this ongoing adaptive outcome.

The story doesn't end here. Any viable system is not totally successful in adapting to its environmental niche. If it were totally successful, then it would dominate and literally take over the niche—leading eventually (and ironically) to its own demise. We see this poignantly and often tragically illustrated in the ways human beings have learned how to adapt with complete success to certain niches. We have "tamed" nature and in doing so have come to dominate specific environmental niches, which in turn has led to the extinction of certain species and to many environmental disruptions (such as climate instability).

In essence, there exists an inevitable tension between adaptation and mal-adaptation of any system to its environment. Patterns provide stability and the capacity of systems to adapt with some success and in a sustained manner to its environment. The disruptions of and variations in patterns not only enable an organization to adjust to changes in its environment, but also enable other systems to dwell in this environment and enable each system to enter into mutually beneficial relationships with other systems in the environment. Each system is good enough to live in the environment, but not good enough to dominate this environment—this is the beauty of nature when working effectively.

This is all very nice in the abstract—but what does this look like in the real life of organizations and the leaders of organizations and how does all of this relate to the profession of coaching? In this essay, I will specifically identify some of the major benefits and problems associated with organizational patterns and variations and trace out the implications for professional coaches.

Patterns in the World: Fractals and Sonatas

There is a remarkable structure to be found in nature that exemplifies the interplay between patterns and variations. This structure is called a *fractal*. We find natural fractals in the structure of pine trees, in the shape of many sea shells and in river deltas. We also find fractals in domains other than nature. One of the places where fractals are beautifully displayed is in classical music—particularly the music of the so- called classical era. In the sonata form, which was frequently used by Classical era composers including Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven, there are usually two major themes presented initially in the *exposition*. These two themes typically are contrasting. One is loud and the other is soft, one is fast and the other is slow, or one is in a major key and the other is in a minor key. It is in the exposition that we find the major tensions and often the energy in a particularly movement. This is not sufficient, however, to make the movement memorable for most listeners.

It is in the second part of the movement that the piece of music becomes most interesting. This second section of a sonata is typically known as the *development* and it contains several (or many) variations on the two major themes. As listeners we may not even be conscious of the fact that these are the same two themes as in the exposition (providing continuity), but also that these two themes are being presented in a wonderfully varied way, often playing off in new ways against one another. The sonata movement then (as a rule) concludes with a *recapitulation* of the original two themes (allowing us as listeners to return to "the home base") and perhaps a *coda* (usually a new theme) that allows the movement to end with a flourish.

If you want to get a sense of how the sonata form operates listen to a symphony by Mozart or Beethoven (though Beethoven often does a whole lot of new things with the sonata form). You can even listen to a later symphony by Brahms or Dvorak to get a good feel for the sonata form. Beethoven's piano sonatas (as the name implies) are built around this musical model. And to get an even more dramatic sense of a theme that is offered in diverse forms, listen to J.S. Bach's amazing *Goldberg Variations*.

Why do I mention the sonata form? This bit of music theory seems to be a bit distant from the fractal forms to be found in nature and a very long way from the processes of coaching within organizations. I begin with this form because we can so vividly (almost poetically) see the fractal being literally "played out" in a musical sonata. We will emotionally experience the divergence (turning outward) away from the comfortable and expected, and then experience the equally-as-emotional convergence (turning inward) back to the origins and to the expected. I would propose that vital and enduring organizations also contain this balance and sequencing of convergence and divergence. We see two or more fundamental themes (purposes, directions, patterns of behavior, subcultures) playing out against each other in a variety of ways. We see these organizational themes coming together on occasion and then departing from one another. Mostly we see variations on these fundamental themes in the organization. These variations provide both confusion (with associated anxiety) and excitement (with associated energy).

Coaching Through Patterns and Variations

What about coaching in organizations? I propose that the key dynamic within enduring organizations consists of simple themes being elaborated within organizations and of vital organizational functions (and culture) being embedded in redundant structure as well as multiple variations on these structures. I further propose that organizational coaches can be of great benefit to their clients in helping them identify, appreciate and leverage their decisions and actions around these dynamic features of their organization. Furthermore, as Ralph Stacey has noted, it is in this intersect between the redundant structures and variations on these structures that an organization and its leaders find innovation and inspiration.

Identification of Patterns and Variations

The coach assists her client first by helping him look for patterns, repetitions that reside inside the organization (and inside the client himself). These patterns and repetitions are found at all levels. They may be found at the "micro" level in the daily speech of the client and of other members of his organization. They are found in frequently used words and phrases and in the metaphors being used to describe specific events or desired outcomes in the organization—for example, the use of specific sports or technological metaphors. While some sports metaphors, such as "team work" and "winning" are commonly used and are not unique to an organization, other sports metaphors are unique and specific to your client and your client's organization. Similarly, some technological metaphors, such as "interfacing" and "module" are common, but others are unique to a specific organization or to the client himself. Look for the unique words and phrases that keep getting used.

At a second level, we find the more extended personal and organizational stories that are frequently repeated—especially offered to new employees or visitors. These stories might be about the founding of the organization, about triumphs or failures, about specific leaders and villains or enemies of the client or organization. It is not important to know whether or not the story is true, but it is important to determine what message is being conveyed or lesson learned, why this story keeps getting offered, to whom the story is being offered, and why it is being offered repeatedly.

At a third level we are likely to find fractals and sonatas being observed in the personal behavior patterns of the client and in the widely exhibited behavior patterns of those working in and with the organization. Does your client have a routine each day when he comes to the office (or when he works from home)? Is there a certain sequence of informal or formal meetings he has each day with his staff? Why do these routines and sequences occur and what happens when the pattern is broken? Is there a common sequence of interactions that occur between your client and one or more of the other members of his organization?

Gregory Bateson wrote about complimentary interactions in which the behavior of one

person tends to induce the opposite behavior in the other person (for example as one person becomes more assertive, the other person becomes more submissive or passive). Alternatively, the behavior of one person tends to induce the same kind of behavior in the other person (they both get more assertive or more submissive)— leading to an escalation and eventually to a termination of the interaction. Do these interaction patterns exist in the daily life of your client and are they repeated many times with one other person or with many other people in the organization?

At the organizational level, we can readily observe behavioral patterns that often involve the actual movement of people in the organization. For example, we might observe the repeated gathering of people at a specific place in the organization. Those involved with observing social patterns (or those designing buildings and social spaces) describe "socio-petal" (as in centripetal) movement of people toward one another—the pull toward some favored meeting place. Why do they meet there and what transactions occur in these places? I am reminded of the legendary meeting of the Banians (Indian traders) underneath the spreading Banyan Trees. These traders and travelers met to converse, exchange and learn from one another—a bit like those who once met (and in some communities still meet) at the country store (or now at a McDonalds or Starbucks) to converse, exchange and learn. What is the equivalent in your client's organization?

Finally, we find patterns existing at a much subtler, more pervasive and more profound level with regard to norms (implicit rules) of the organization. What is rewarded repeatedly in the organization and what is punished or ignored? About what can members of the organization speak and about what can't they speak? With regard to your client, what is he "allowed" to do in the organization and what can't he do without taking a big risk (with regard to his reputation, power or status)? We often find that the norms of an organization are "self-sealed" – indicating that they are enforced but can't be discussed. The sealing is usually even more pervasive. We can't even mention that we can't talk about these norms. As coaches we can be of great benefit to our client when we seek to uncover the norms and encourage our client to talk about that which can't be discussed with anyone else. This sometime means that we serve as "naïve" questioners: "Why do you do that?" Or "Why don't you do that?" I have a colleague from Argentina who has lived in the United States for many years; however, as a coach he

sometimes will deepen his accent and ask unforgiveable question: "I don't fully understand this culture, but if you will pardon me, I would like to ask you a simple question . . ." At this point, he invites his client to explore some fundamental norm of her organization in great depth.

What about variations in these patterns? We find variations at each of the levels I have just mentioned. It is through variations in the patterns of organizations that we find creativity. Ralph Stacey writes extensively about this creative dynamic in organizations, noting that organizations grow and adapt precisely because they are not orderly. As I noted at the start of this essay, systems survive (and thrive) in a specific niche precisely because they are not fully adaptive and therefore cannot dominate their niche. We see what happens when one organization builds a monopoly in a specific sector of our society and when one leader dominates the decision-making processes of an organization. Some sloppiness and competition are needed to not only keep us honest but also to allow for creativity and change.

What do the variations look like in organizations? When listening to a sonata-form symphony we are often unaware of the subtle variations that are occurring—unless we are trained in musical composition and have a musical score in front of us. Similarly, we are often unaware of variations in organizational patterns unless we have a "trained ear" or have organizational documents to review while observing the operations of the organization. The trained ear (and eye) often requires that we do one (or more) of three things as organizational coaches and consultants.

First, we look for the obvious and seemingly trivial clues regarding variations. These are the *surprises* that occur in the organization: an embarrassing statement made by someone in a meeting (that may be revealing a truth about the organization), a miscommunication that occurs between two leaders (that may indicate two or more contradictory truths in the organization), a set of contradictory decisions or actions taken by two different subsystems (e.g. a commitment made by the marketing department that can't be fulfilled by the production department).

Second, we look for *emotionally charged events*. Disrupted patterns will inevitably

generate emotional responses: anxiety, disappointment, embarrassment, anger, hope. We can begin our investigation of variations by looking for emotional reactions that exceed those or differ from those occurring on a regular basis in the organization (the regular emotional reactions being part of the organization's pattern). Once we identify the unique emotional reactions, then we seek out the events that generated these reactions. A variation of the pattern often underlies and has generated the emotional reaction.

Third, we look for *rogue events*. These are big things that occur in the organization and often serve as the base for the powerful narratives that are to be found in all organizations. These are the narratives about heroic actions, foolish events, a moment of courage or honesty, the critical and unanticipated decision made at the crossroads in the life of the organization, the success of an underdog (person or department) in the organization. An event is rogue if it totally unexpected and often if it is preceded by a set of very predictable events.

Taleb uses the term *Black Swan* when describing those remarkable and powerful events that have caught our world by surprise. We all know that swans are white—but what happens when a black swan is discovered. Similarly, how could we have predicted the Arab Spring, the election of an African-American as president, or the rapid expansion in the global use and influence of the Internet. As Taleb has noted, rouge events are not only unanticipated, they are also often governed by power laws (exponential increases) that move quickly from small to large. Within organizations, small variations in the major pattern of the organization can lead to major changes in certain, unanticipated ways. These are the rogue events and the emergence of a whole flock of Black Swans.

These small- and large-impact variations will generate a host of important questions and often elusive answers. The fundamental question is: why the variation? What causes it and what do we do about it? Do we ignore the variation or seek to eliminate it in the future? Do we instead appreciate and even praise the variation as a sign that our organization is creative and ripe for innovation? As Taleb has noted, the rogue event is often preceded by periods of great stability (strongly entrenched patterns). This is what makes the rogue event so surprising and is often the reason why this event has such a powerful impact.

Does this mean that we look for variations and rogue events at the very point when the pattern in most firmly established and reinforced? As a coach how do we help our client best appreciate the variations—as they might appreciate a sonata-form symphony—and how do we help our client prepare for the variations if they have grown accustom to (and content with) the pattern?

Investigation of Patterns and Variations: Source

The questions I have posed regarding both patterns and variations lead us directly into the second phase in the investigation of personal and organizational patterns and variations. As coaches we help our client identify the sources and motivations producing, sustaining, and driving the pattern. Talcott Parsons wrote many years ago about the latent patterns maintenance in any system. What maintains the patterns that are latent (deeply embedded and often implicit) in the life of our client or in her organization? Why was this particular pattern established initially and why does it continue to operate? What gives it energy as it is sustained in the life of the client or organization? These are the source, maintenance and energy questions associated with pattern investigation. Several hypotheses can be identified that often prove to be valid when a coach and client are exploring the source of a pattern.

Expertise: The first hypothesis is embedded in the daily operations of the client or organization. What is the product or service being rendered by the client or organization and what competencies, perspectives and attitudes are required to produce or serve? For instance, I have often found that members of health care departments replicate a pattern of wounding and healing one another. The wounding can take place through verbal hostility, miscommunication, or the running of rumor mills. The wounding is acknowledged, feelings are expressed and shared, comfort and empathy is offered, apologies are sometimes offered, and business goes on as usual. Great expertise (skill and knowledge) is manifest in both the diagnosis and treatment of the wound (in this case psychological).

One would expect this expertise, given that this is what health care staff members do every day of their life in working with "real" patients. I find that educators get into

similar cycles of ignorance, teaching and relearning, and that production workers establish a deeply rutted routine that expands well beyond their work on the assembly line. I can produce a much longer list. In each case, it is the expertise that is needed to do one's job that is applied in the creation of the need for this expertise beyond the confines of the product or service being generated—and this expanded use of the expertise creates personal and organizational patterns that are resistant to change.

Primacy: A second hypothesis concerns the early career of the client or the early life of the organization. Which patterns were established initially that continue to operate? We know from the long history of psychoanalytic practice that our responses to childhood events continue to impact on our behavior patterns as adults. We also know from systems theory that the initial conditions faced by any system establish persistent patterns in the system. For example, the wave form established in one region of the ocean (produced by an earthquake or storm) will be replicated all the way across the ocean in a far distant sea and on a far distant coastline. We can even carry this analysis a step further by pointing to the so- called entanglement of quantum particles that leads to the replication of specific behaviors in two particles that were once together but now operate at great distances from one another. This powerful phenomenon is often identified as primacy—the sustained impact of an initial condition or event.

Secondary Gain: A third hypothesis crosses over to analysis of the forces that sustain and energize the pattern and point to the third phase of the pattern analysis (benefits of the pattern). Once a pattern is established, there are often unintended benefits associated with replication of the pattern and the benefactors are often not those for whom the pattern was initially established. For example, a pattern that is dysfunctional in terms of the client's formal role in the organization or dysfunctional with regard to the formal operations of the organization may yield benefits for some (or even many) members of the organization who do not want to feel accountable for their own actions or for their own personal failures: "If I am ill (emotionally stressed out) (given too much work to do) (get no assistance) then how in the world can you expect me to do a good job!" "If the organization is messed up, then how can I ever be blamed for what has occurred . . . no one can operate in this crazy environment!" In family therapy that is based on a systems perspective, this dynamic is often labeled "secondary gain" and there often is an

"identified patient" (usually a child) who is the focus of the treatment. Other members of the family gain from the identified patient's illness, emotional stress or acting out. A similar dynamic operates in the lives of the men and women we coach and in the organizations in which we coach and with which we consult.

In the analysis of sources for organizational patterns, we are confronted simultaneously with the question of what creates the variations in these patterns. We can turn to the same three culprits: expertise, primacy, and secondary gain. With regard to expertise, we find that the level of expertise in any organization is not uniform. Some people are good at one part of the operations, while other members of the organization are good at doing other jobs in the organization. This is often labeled "the division of labor" and has been identified by many social analysts (dating back to Durkheim) as the glue that keeps any system together (be it a family, organization or society). With differences in skill levels (and accompanying differences in priorities and perspectives) come the variations in organizational patterns.

When an organization is very small, all members of the organization may be doing the same work and may hold the same perspectives; however, as the organization grows in size and age there is increasingly differentiation of functions (the division of labor)—the most important of these differentiations being between work that is specifically focused on the product or service being generated by the organization (*direct services*) and the work that is being done to hold the organization together *(integrative/indirect services*: administration, communications, finances, etc.). With this differentiation come variations from the uniform patterns that were created when the organization was small and young.

This leads us directly to the second source of variation: primacy. Even when the organization is very small and young there are usually tensions between different competing interests and perspectives. The tensions exist even if the organization is owned and operated by a single person: short-term financial gains versus long-term planning and financial gains, quality versus quantity, stability versus change (to name only three of many common tensions in newly formed organizations). The seeds of variation are to be found at the very start. These variations might be very small at the start, but they are likely to become greater as the organization grows and as functions become increasingly

differentiated and individual members of the organization and departments begin to become advocates for and sponsors of specific perspectives and priorities. For example, the production and finance departments might be inclined to embrace stability, while the marketing and planning departments embrace change.

What about secondary gain (the third source of both patterns and variation)? We find that this is a substantial source of variations primarily because secondary gains often yield a secondary cost that is just as important as the gain. If members of an organization can dismiss their own accountability by pointing to the pattern of chaos and incompetence in the organization, then it is just as likely that they will find this chaos and incompetence to be very stressful and even toxic. In many ways, the secondary gains operate like Faust's compact with the Devil. The downside is considerable, especially after it becomes evident that the patterns are well intrenched and the secondary gains are well-known (if never discussed).

We begin at this point to see some slight variations in the established pattern as members of the organization seek to renegotiate their Faustian compact. They find that life in the organization is a little bit more tolerable if they do take some responsibility for their actions. If nothing else, the variations are likely to become more prevalent when the organization reaches a crisis state and when the secondary gains seem to dwindle away. This crisis state will often be generated by organizational growth, by the need for a major change in the organization, or by the transfer of leadership in the organization. The established patterns don't go away, but there will be more variations in the patterns as members of the organization attempt to deal with the growth, change or shift in leadership.

Given this pull toward variations in a basic pattern, we have to ask about the factors that enable the pattern to remain in place. How does the center hold when there are these powerful sources of variation and even the threat of organizational disintegration (if the variations become too powerful and determine too many of the dynamics operating in the organization)? I turn now to the factors that maintain the pattern in the face of these variations.

Investigation of Patterns and Variations: Maintenance

Many hypotheses can be posed to account for the maintenance of organizational patterns, but these three can provide a starting point for the coach and client. What about the factors that tend to maintain a pattern?

Inertia and the Procedural Brain: I have just mentioned the secondary gains derived from a pattern. I can also mention the shear inertia to be found in the lives of clients and organizations. Change in behavior is never easy, especially if the behavior is strongly established in a repetitive act. We know now that there are two different systems operating in our brains. One system is called *expository* or *declarative*. This is the system that addresses new information and that requires new behaviors in response to this new information. This is the system that leads to learning and experimentation. Our expository brains are operating when we are reading a book, learning how to drive a golf ball or learning how to drive a car.

The other system is called *procedural*. This system operates when we are engaged in some behavior (or thought process) that is routine in nature. When we have been driving a car for many years, we should not focus on our driving but should instead pay attention to the conditions surrounding the car we are driving (other cars, turns in the road, weather conditions). Our procedural brain will take care of the driving (steering, accelerating, minor braking). Similarly, when we have been golfing for many years, there is no need to focus on the way we are holding our club and when we are reading as adults we concentrate on the concepts being conveyed or story being told, not on the meaning of each individual word.

This procedural system has often been equated with habitual behavior. We have long known that habits are hard to break, and we know now that the procedural brain and the habits that this brain maintains are very powerful. In their recent book, *Switch*, Chip and Dan Heath describe this procedural system as an elephant that is being controlled (with minimal effect) by the rider (the expository brain). The rider of an elephant can use all of his or her energy in trying to control the elephant—but will often end up exhausted and minimally influential. The elephant will go where it wants to. It seems that the resistance

to breaking up habitual behavior is based in large part on the requirement that we move our cortical operations from one system (procedural) to another (expository) – and this is very difficult. We will be deskilled for a period of time (often extended period of time) while we learn a new way of behaving and while we establish new habits that can eventually be turned over to our procedural brain. Thus, inertia in human behavior is based not in some superficial resistance to doing something new, but rather in a much more profound requirement that we shift from one operating system in the brain to a different operating system.

Interlocking Subsystems: As suggested in the concept of secondary gain, it is often difficult to assess what the impact of a specific pattern is in any system. This unpredictability exists in large part because the subsystems are interlocking. Scott Page distinguishes between complicated systems and complex systems. Complicated systems are those with many parts (subsystems); complex systems are those with not only many parts, but also with parts that are all connected to one another. With these tightly interlocking subsystems in place, it is easy to see why patterns are sustained and why they are resistant to change: the patterns are reinforced by all of the interlocking subsystems in the organization.

In fact, we often find that there are several different patterns operating in the life of a client or in an organization and find that these patterns reinforce one another. For example, we might discover that one of our clients seems to move regularly through a cycle of emotional crisis and calm in his personal life. This emotional cycle might, in turn, compliment and be amplified by a cycle of economic crisis and calm in his organization, or by a comparable cycle in his family life. His emotional cycle might even be parallel to seasonal cycles operating in the part of the world where he lives. Each of these cycles keeps the other cycles operating and maintains powerful patterns in the life of our client or his organization. As coaches, we need to be aware of this maintenance function and help our client fully appreciate its power.

The Change Curve: Another dynamic operates in the lives of many clients and in the life of many organizations. This dynamic is based on the way in which we react individually and collectively to the changes that do occur in our lives and organizations. For many years, we

have known that a change curve is commonly found when new ideas or practices are introduced. We now know that this change curve is closely related to the two factors I have already identified: inertia and interlocking subsystems. First, let me describe the change curve. Typically, when a new idea or practice is introduced there is an initial increase in productivity, energy, motivation, optimism and other desired outcomes. This initial uplift may be caused by the successful promotion of the change, by the willingness of everyone to try something new (since the old isn't working very well) or by boredom associated with always doing the same old thing. If nothing else, there is curiosity about how the new idea or process will operate—even if this curiosity is nothing more than morbid curiosity (the lure of an impending train wreck).

This initial uplift is usually short-lived. Productivity, energy, motivation and optimism soon drop off and the change curve plummets. There are three fundamental reasons for the typically drop: (1) the change requires the acquisition of new skills, knowledge, attitudes and these come slowly (the movement of cortical functions from the procedural to the expository brain), (2) the change will necessarily impact on other subsystems which are not yet ready to adjust and change themselves, and (3) the change has been sold without sufficient recognition that there will be this drop off (leading to a sense of betrayal, increased cynicism and pervasive pessimism). At some point the change curve hits bottom. The drop off is greater if the skill, knowledge and attitude requirements are great, if many interlocking subsystems are impacted, and if the change has been dramatically oversold (carefree change that improves everything). In many cases, as the change curve plummets, another change is introduced. This change produces yet another downward heading change curve and yet another change. We often find that a crisis-of-crises takes place and the client or organization is in deep trouble.

If the client or organization can plan ahead when introducing the change, can anticipate the length and depth of the downturn, and can provide a buffer for the downturn in the change curve, then there is likely to be an upturn (assuming the idea or process is appropriate and meets an important need). If there is not appropriate planning, then the launch will fail and the old pattern will be re-established – often even more strongly reinforced than it was before. Ironically, by returning to the old pattern, a client or organization is introducing yet another change (the change back to no-change). This will

often lead to increased dysfunction and (ironically) an even greater devotion to the old ways of doing things. When we have tried a new golf-stroke and failed, then the old habits are likely to be engaged once again. Similarly, a new way of managing conflict in an organization will be dropped in favor of the old established pattern following a failure to contain the new openness associated with this innovative conflict-management strategy. The old pattern of conflict-avoidance or conflict-escalation will return "with a vengeance."

What about variations in organizational patterns? How are they maintained, once triggered by the emergence of diverse expertise, slight difference in the initial (primary) conditions of the organization, and ambivalence regarding the gains to be derived in a secondary manner from the patterns? The key factor in understanding the maintenance of the variations is to be found in the complexity created by those factors that initially created the patterns—and the variations. As they mature and grow larger, organizations become not only increasingly a source of specialization, they also become increasingly complex. They are not just complicated (with many specialized parts), they are complex (with each of these parts begin fully dependent on and interwoven with the other parts). There is not just one change curve operating—rather there are multiple change curves and each one influences the size and character of each of the other change curves.

Much of the early work on organizational dynamics treated organizations as machines with specific isolated parts that had to be somehow connected and coordinated through a set of managerial processes. Without the coordination function, the organization would fall apart. That is the primary reason why the integrative services (administration, communication, finances, etc.) that I mentioned above tend to occupy an increasingly large proportion of the resources in an organization—often commanding more than 50% of the resources in large and old organizations (including governmental organizations, corporations, religious institutions and health care systems).

We now know that complex systems tend to be self-organizing and that the interlocking subsystems I mentioned above hold the key to organizational integration. While integrative services are still needed – management will not go away—it has become increasingly clear among those who study complex systems that there is highly-influential glue that holds systems together irrespective of the formal integrative functions being

offered in the system. This glue in many ways operates like the gravity (along with the recently identified dark matter) which holds our planet, our solar system, our galaxy and even our entire universe together.

This is the good news with regard to pattern maintenance. The bad news is that complex self-organizing systems tend to be quite "tippy." A minor shift in one component of the system will flip all or a specific sector of the system into a new phase or pattern. This is what Taleb is writing about in *The Black Swan*: specific elements of a complex system, such as the US Stock Market or the Internet, can readily flip and rapidly produce remarkable variations. For instance, a specific book can suddenly go "viral" in terms of its visibility and sales with a few words and recommendations placed in the right place and at the right time on the Internet. Ironically, The Black Swan itself went viral for Taleb as a result of a few exposures and then extensive word-of-mouth endorsements via the Internet, leading to television and cable appearances by Taleb.

As I noted above, these viral events follow what the complexity analysts call the "power law" –meaning that increases and decreases in size, sales, attention, etc. tend to be exponential rather than linear or curvilinear. A small shift can lead to a big change in one part of a system, thus producing stunning variations in the basic pattern of the system— and stunning changes in organizational subsystems. These power law dynamics, however, usually do not change the basic pattern in the organization. The Stock Market has not changed its basic mode of operation and the Internet still operates in the same dynamic manner (and is still not easily regulated by anyone). The variations do not change the basic pattern – but they are clearly evident and do not easily go away. These variations themselves tend to build their own internal maintenance, though they are usually much less stable than the basic patterns of the organization.

Taleb's Black Swan was a best-seller and remained on the list of high-profile books for many months— but it has been replaced by other viral best-selling books on business and the Internet. Nevertheless, the influence of this book (and other books that have gone viral on the Internet) remains in place. Like other variations, Taleb's Black Swan is now in the vocabulary of business and organizational consultants and coaches. The themes of Black Swan echo through the writings and engagements of succeeding

practitioners (including myself). These echoes represent the maintenance of specific variations in one type of system (business consulting and coaching). Thus, maintenance is to be found in not only the patterns of the organization, but also in its many variations.

Investigation of Patterns and Variations: Energy

I come finally in the investigation of patterns and variations with our coaching and consulting clients to the source of energy. Patterns and variations are not just maintained. They do not just consume energy. They are the source of energy. When patterns are broken up and when variations are created there is often an initial loss of energy in the client or organization (part of the change curve dynamic). When variations are firmly established there is often a new burst of energy (at least among those participating in the variation). To understand the way in which patterns and variations produce and consume energy we have to examine (all too briefly) three factors.

Alignment: First, energy has to do with alignment. Energy is generated and flows when there is alignment among the particles, components or participants in a system. We see this occurring dramatically in the formation of waves (be they oceanic waves or the waves formed by people standing up in a sports arena). We also see energy being generated when there is a shared focus in an organization. Many contemporary organizational theorists describe the power of alignment and indicate that the power inherent in transformational leadership is based in large part on the capacity of the leader to bring members of her organization to a shared focus regarding the mission and purposes of the organization. While this alignment can be a highly productive feature in an organization and in its leaders, it usually is based in, finds energy in and is reinforced by patterns of behavior manifest in the leader and in all subsystems of the organization. This source of energy in the patterns is welcomed if the alignment is positive, growth- producing and humane. It is not welcomed when the alignment is negative, destructive and inhumane— we need only remember the Nazi rallies in Nuremburg to remind us of the horrible energy generated by malicious alignment.

Conversion: Energy often is generated when one energy source is converted to another form of energy. In physics this relates to the second law of thermal dynamics. In the long

history of our earth, this is the ultimate conversion of sunlight (via photosynthesis) into source of nutrition (biological energy) that sustains planetary life. In the life of our clients and the organizations our clients lead, this conversation takes place in a variety of ways which are often quite subtle. At one level, the conversion is from words (written or spoken) to actions. This conversion is truly remarkable, given that words consume little physical energy, whereas actions being taken based on the inspirational or directive nature of words often consume a great amount of energy. Often it doesn't even take words to convert intentions to actions— there need only be the expectations (unexpressed words) of specific actions for the conversion to occur.

Patterns create expectations and expectations create repetitive actions which, in turn, reinforce patterns. We end up with a positive feedback loop through which expectations generate actions which generate even more deeply rooted expectations which lead to even more strongly engaged actions.

Differentiation: there is something more that we know about the source and flow of energy in our physical world. There are energy gradients all over the place. We are all aware of the differing energy gradients associated with the weather system. We have low pressure and high pressure areas and air tends to move (as wind) from high to low pressure regions. More generally, we find the movement of energy from higher to lower, from stronger to weaker, and from more complex to less complex. From one perspective we can state that our universe contains a certain amount of energy that has always been there from the moment of the big bang. From this perspective, all we have is the movement of energy that already exists or (as I noted in the previous section) the transformation of energy from one form (e.g. heat) to another form (e.g. motion).

We can say the same thing about the energizing of patterns in organizations. Much as energy moves from more complex to less complex physical systems and subsystems, so there is a tendency for energy to move from more complex (unpredictable, unique) subsystems to less complex (predictable, repetitive) subsystems. We see this in our own personal lives when there is the reduction of anxiety and "nervousness" at the point when things return to their "normal" way of operating. This same desire for predictability is to be found in any art form—resolution of tension in a play, movement from a dissonant

chord to a consonant (resolved) chord in a musical composition, identification of the murderer in a mystery novel. We want everything to return to a peaceful state and are willing to find and expend a considerable amount of energy in finding this peaceful place.

The dynamic of differentiation and the flow of energy from an unresolved to a resolved state is found in many contemporary theories of human motivation. For many years, psychologists couldn't make sense of human play—a type of activity that seems pervasive in human society (leading Huizinger, in his insightful analysis, to declare that humans are *homo ludens* – the playful ones). Why do we engage in play? This seems to be an autotelec (self-energizing) activity. Some psychologists suggested an "arousal jag" that human beings find to be enjoyable: we get scared or excited and then find relief from this fear or excitement which is reinforcing. More recently, the research conducted by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi suggests that we live for the opportunity to experience "flow" which is to be found at the threshold between anxiety and overwhelm (on the one hand), and boredom and underwhelm (on the other hand).

Stated in terms of energy flow, the Csikszentmihalyi model points to the power inherent in the flow from high levels (anxiety and challenge) to low levels (boredom and predictability). Patterns are repeated, in other words, so that the unique and unresolved moves toward the expected and resolved. It is in this movement between higher and lower states that we find "flow"—thus (ironically) encouraging the establishment of stable patterns of behavior to which we can always return after our adventuresome journey into the new. Energy is generated by and sustained throughout this movement between differentiated states.

What about the relationship between energy and variations in the patterns of organizations? Variations often lead to misalignment and hence reduce energy in an organization. Variations can also disrupt energy conversation processes. However, variations are needed for the flow of energy from more differentiated to less differentiated subsystems. The system remains static (and energy-less) without these variations in levels of complexity. Furthermore, as I noted at the beginning of this essay with regard to the nature of sonatas, the tensions between variations can itself produce considerable energy In musical terms the variations can attract and hold the attention of those listening to the

music. This tension between variations might produce energy that takes the form of competition between the variations. Warfare of any kind always produces energy (and often casualties). The tension can also produce the energy of cooperation and the variations might ultimately complement one another in the organization.

There is yet another energizing feature. Variations often enter the picture and provide energy when we are being creative and innovative (playing) within an organizational system. Csikszentmihalyi's flow experience is often based in an attempt to do something that is not only challenging, but also different from what is usually done. Without the variations, work becomes boring. As Taleb notes, if systems tend to always operate in the same way for many years, then when the unanticipated event (Black Swan) does occur, the system is overwhelmed and unable to cope with the change. Csikszentmihalyi (and at an earlier time, Nevitt Sanford) proposes that when there is pervasive boredom or debilitating anxiety, learning does not occur, and motivation is lacking to take any action (let alone try something new). It is in the act of exploring variations in a basic pattern that members of organizations find the threshold between boredom and anxiety (the threshold of "flow"). They are trying something new, but not something that is so new and different that it shatters the pattern and produces panic and overwhelm. Thus, we see that variations can both create and disrupt the flow of energy in any system—and certainly within organizations.

Benefits of the Patterns and Variations

What then are the benefits associated with patterns in the life of our client or in the life of the organization in which our coaching client works? What about the benefits associated with variations in the life of our client and in the life of their organization? Obviously, the answers to both questions reside, in part, in the analysis I have already offered regarding the sources of energy to be found in patterns and variations, as well as the analyses I have offered regarding the source(s) and maintenance of patterns and variations.

Patterns are established to engage existing expertise in the life of a client or organization. We like being competent and successful, hence re-enacted patterns of behavior that work for us and establish habits that have been finely honed. We make some decisions and take

some actions early on in our life that made sense at that early point and that we hope still make sense. We take comfort in seeing our world in the same old way and want to live in a world that is consistent and conforms to our deeply seated assumptions and expectations. Our daily rituals and even the formal rituals that are performed in our religious institutions provide reassurance and renewed commitment. Life and life purposes are reaffirmed through our informal and formal patterned rituals. As Heath and Heath note in *Switch*, we (the rider on the elephant—our procedural brain) finds a shift in routine to be very stressful. We are threatened by analysis-paralysis when we are faced with many options and adjusting to changing conditions—we would much rather stay with simple patterns and with the tried-and-true.

Furthermore, we gain indirectly from the patterns, using these patterns to explain (and excuse) our actions—with the repetition of behaviors forming the backbone of the culture that is created in our organization and the personality that is exhibited in ourselves. Patterns also enable us to use (and rely heavily on) our procedural brain without taxing our much more easily overwhelmed expository brain (the work of Jonah Lehrer provides ample evidence of this benefit). Patterns make life easier to live, given the interlocking nature of the systems in which we operate, and the challenges associated with living through a series of change curves.

Conclusions: Coaching and Anchors

I would suggest there is something more fundamental operating in the life of our coaching clients and the life of the organizations in which our clients work. There is a fundamental benefit derived from organizational patterns—and this benefit is associated with the need for personal and collective anchors in our postmodern world of complexity, unpredictability and turbulence. Anchors provide stability and orientation. We find that there are two kinds of anchors that operate in the nautical world —and in the world of personal and organizational patterns.

The first type of anchor is the so-called *bottom anchor*. This is the large and very heavy anchor that most of us non-nautical folks envision. The bottom anchor consists of a shaft with two arms and flukes at one end and a stoke mounted at the other end. This type of

anchor digs into the floor of the sea once the boat begins to move and provides tension on the chains connecting the anchor to the boat. The second kind of anchor is called a *sea anchor* (also called a drift anchor or drogue). It typically is not as heavy as the bottom anchor and is often shaped like a parachute or cone with the larger end pointing in the direction of the boat's movement. The sea anchor helps to orient the boat into the wind and slows down (but doesn't prevent) the boat's drift. The sea anchor is used when the boat is far away from the shoreline and the sea floor is located many fathoms below.

I propose that both bottom and sea anchors operate in the maintenance of patterns in our personal lives and in the lives of our organizations. The diverse ways in which patterns are established, reinforced and provide energy in our lives and organizations tend to organize around several anchors. Some of these anchors are unyielding. They operate as bottom anchors and are firmly implanted in some personal, organizational (or even societal) sea floor. These bottom anchors may be based in a set of values, beliefs, hopes, fears, or even personal or collective myths. Any disruption of this bottom anchor can be profoundly disturbing and can be a source of sheer panic (not the balance to be found in the "flow" experience). Other anchors operate like sea anchors. They can be moved in direction or orientation, and they may shift gradually with the tide or the wind. These are the organizational variations. We are challenged, but not profoundly threatened when invited to reflect on and consider changing the direction or orientation of these organizational sea anchors.

One of the critical roles to be played by a professional coach is that of discernment on behalf of the client: in this case, discerning the difference between bottom and sea anchors. It is rarely advisable to encourage one's coaching client to shift personal or organizational patterns that operate as bottom anchors without first identifying and working with those patterns that operate as sea anchors. I find that many coaches do not fully appreciate the difficulties inherent in the shift of patterns in the life of their client or their client's organization. For the coach, these patterns may seem to be arbitrary, outdated or even contradictory. The world is changing—and the patterns must change along with this world.

Patterns for the coach may all seem to be modifiable sea anchors. However, at the heart of the matter—and at the heart of this essay—is a full appreciation of the bottom anchors that play such an important role in the personal and organizational lives of our coaching clients (and ourselves). Without bottom anchors, our ships (personal lives and organizational lives) are adrift and always in danger of crashing on the rocks or being pulled out to sea without any hope of returning to a safe port. The art of coaching is all about assisting our clients to be successful captains of their own vessels in the midst of a stormy sea.

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Achieving Escape Velocity

Jim Goldstein

I was asked by my good friend and colleague, Charlie Smith, to write an article on Escape Velocity, the energy required to break free of the gravitational pull not only of the earth but of "the way things are." As he puts it, "the possibility that each of us can break free of our own gravity pull about 'the way it is' and create moments of transcendence, individually and collectively, and at any point in time." I have a few personal experiences to draw on that inform my thinking on this topic.

Those Amazing Molecules

When I was about 10, we had just learned about atoms and molecules, the basic building blocks of matter, we were told. A few days later, I was in my basement walking toward the door that led to our back yard. Just as I reached for the knob, I heard someone upstairs open the front door of our house. At that precise second, I saw the downstairs door, which was ajar, jerk about an inch as if it had been pushed. I was fascinated! Air molecules must have done this, I thought.

The one thing I couldn't figure out was this, "How did the air molecules travel all the way from the upstairs door to push the downstairs door so quickly?" The two door events seemed to happen almost at once. At the time, this didn't make any sense to me .

I later realized that all the air molecules in our house were already connected and the air was saturated with them, so no real distance had to be traveled from one door to the other. A change in one affected all of them and the pressure on the upstairs air molecules affected the downstairs air molecules almost simultaneously. That was one of my first experiences of how, on some unseen level, things are connected to each other. That realization changed my view of myself in relation to my environment.

Life After Death?

In another example, I have read many accounts of people who were pronounced clinically

dead but who were later revived. It's called a near-death experience. One woman claimed that unlike our experience while on earth where we have to physically travel to get from one place to another. After she "died" she found she was able to travel to her sister's house in Texas just by thinking about her sister. Instantly, she was in her sister's kitchen watching the sister answer the phone to receive the news of this woman's death. Later, the woman was able to recall the exact wording of the conversation that the sister used after hearing the news. I can't prove whether any of this happened, but it does present an interesting paradigm for the manifestation of one's intentions.

Functioning as a Separate Entity

Today, I still function, as do most of us, as if we are all separate entities operating in empty space. I perform my actions to accomplish what I intend. My energy and individual effort generally make it all happen. Even though I interact with people and am grateful for their assistance, I don't often experience myself as part of a great web of interconnected cooperative energy unless I think about it.

Left to my own devices and based partly on my brain's tendency toward ADD and ADHD, my progress in accomplishing my goals through my own efforts is erratic and uneven. My patterns of fits and starts are pretty familiar to me and I find myself at the effect of my long-held beliefs about myself, life and others. So how am I supposed to generate the escape velocity to break through these predictable patterns and beliefs that limit me?

Self-Motivation

Here's what doesn't work for me (despite what Tony Robbins recommends in his courses)—massive effort towards my goal. In my experience, using my will to generate my own head of steam to accomplish something leads inevitably to overwhelming resistance. As they say, "Will power creates *won't* power." After a lot of effort and excitement toward accomplishing a new goal and some initial progress, I tend to conclude that "I deserve a break today." I go from, "I'm definitely doing this" to "I don't think I want to do this anymore." Usually, it isn't even a conscious decision. I just find myself drifting to other more interesting projects with often similar end results.

The Importance of Relationship

Even though I and many others feel the gravitational pull of our own internal resistance and tend to procrastinate after setting an intention, I find that I am much more likely to do what I have said I will do when I have given my word to someone else. Curiously, the strength of that relationship is often stronger than my relationship with myself. I may let myself down, but I won't let my friends down. I like the idea of being someone my friends and loved ones can count on, so I tend to keep my promises to them. I wonder if I would have finished this article on time had I not promised Charlie that I would.

Invoking the Power of the Unified Field

Getting back to the woman who presumably died and came back to talk about it, what if, on this physical plane, we didn't need to make any extra effort to bring about our goals? What if, like that woman, all we had to do was think about something for it to manifest for us. On some level, doesn't that happen to us already? Have you ever been thinking about someone and they called you a few seconds later? Have you ever envisioned something that later manifested in front of you without your making direct effort to make this happen? Is that just a coincidence? Maybe not. Quantum physicists would point to this as evidence of what they call the unified field, the matrix of all matter, the everywhere-present context or energy from which all creation springs. According to them, our very focus on something, giving it our attention, changes the unified field and brings the unmanifest into physical form.

Feeling is the prayer

In Gregg Braden's, *Secrets of the Lost Mode of Prayer,* he states that, according to the Tibetans, the native Americans and even ancient Christian and Jewish traditions, *feeling IS the prayer.* Using this method, the Native Americans don't pray *for* rain. They don't pray *for* anything. They simply and silently *pray rain.* In meditation, they allow themselves to experience what it would feel like if they were in the presence of rain, as if their prayer had already been answered. According to Braden and many quantum physicists, the universe responds to our feelings and reflects back to us through manifestation our present level of consciousness.

That's Too Easy

The hardest thing to overcome might be our whole notion of velocity not to mention our unwillingness to allow wonderful things to come to us easily and gracefully. We have all been taught the value of hard work, the sin of laziness, that money doesn't grow on trees and if you want something done right, you need to do it yourself. Expressions like "No pain, no gain", "The harder I work, the luckier I get," "When the going gets tough, the tough get going" abound in our culture. These ideas reinforce the necessity of overcoming obstacles and achieving velocity through perseverance and hard work. What if all you had to do was envision what you wanted, get turned on and excited by the idea, allow yourself to feel the way you would feel if your vision was already realized, and then do what you felt inspired to do? Most people would say, "Nah! Not possible."

To See Things Differently

If you read the many quotes from the astronauts after they have been in space, it becomes obvious that the impact that space travel had on these brave men and women was not from reaching the moon or being able to live weightlessly in orbit, as magnificent as those accomplishments were. Rather, the life altering experience came from a change in *perspective.* Staring at the earth from 200,000 miles away changed everything for them. As Alfred Worden said, "Now I know why I'm here. Not for a closer look at the moon, but to look back at our home, the Earth." "When you're finally up at the moon looking back on

earth, all those differences and nationalistic traits are pretty well going to blend, and you're going to get a concept that maybe this really is one world and why the hell can't we learn to live together like decent people."— *Frank Borman, Apollo 8.*

By the same token, the near-death experience mentioned earlier draws its impact from a dramatic change in perspective. If we believe her near death account, not only was that woman able to travel at the speed of thought but she had to rethink who she was when she found herself fully conscious and staring down at her lifeless body in the hospital bed as doctors pronounced her dead. Needless to say, after a dramatic change in perspective, life just isn't the same.

We're ready to kill our son

Years ago, when I used to do family therapy, I remember a couple coming to me complaining bitterly about their 18 year old son who wasn't filling any of their expectations during the summer of his senior year. "He told us he was going to find work this summer but never applied for a job. Instead, he stays out until 4 AM partying every night with his friends, sleeps until 2 PM and then lays on the couch watching MTV until it's time to go out again with his friends. He never eats with us anymore. He's supposed to start college in 3 weeks but we aren't sure we can last that long without killing him!" His father bemoaned, "He was such a good kid and all we ever do now is fight. It's horrible. We were hoping for one last good summer with our son and now, when he finally leaves I'm afraid I'm going to shout, "And *stay out!*"

As a therapist, it was my job to enroll them in a different perspective, one that would take these same circumstances and, by seeing them differently, have them evoke a completely different emotional and behavioral response. I asked, "Did you say that this is all going on in the summer before he leaves for college?" They both nodded. "Oh good. I'm so glad this is happening. This is really great!"

"Great?" "Did you say 'great'?" they cried. "This isn't great. It's a disaster!"

I said, "This scenario is quite common and sometimes necessary for a good adjustment to

college life." They were bewildered. I further explained that this type of behavior and the antipathy between them would help him make a clean break from high school and not suffer any home sickness or separation anxiety when he left for college. The fact that they couldn't wait for him to leave was a good thing as well. It would make them less inclined to miss him and worry about him once he was gone.

I said, "Suppose you and he had had a wonderful summer and a close relationship right up until the day he left. He'd probably miss you terribly and want to come home on the weekends rather than face the adjustments necessary for acclimating to college life e.g., roommates, hazing, making friends, managing his time, etc. You see, Its really all for the best."

They left my office slightly dazed by my point of view but later told me that after that session, they saw him differently and had more compassion for what he might be going through. They didn't argue with him as much. He did fine his first semester and their relationship improved after he had been gone a short while.

Nikola Tesla

Nikola Tesla (1856 -1943) is one of my heroes. He's been called, the inventor of everything else. While most people know of Thomas Edison's many inventions, few remember that Tesla (once Edison's employee) is now credited not only with the invention of alternating current but also the radio (years before Marconi), x-rays (before Roentgen), fluorescent bulbs, remote control, wireless communication, robotics and a host of others.

I heard that before he died, he expressed regret that he had introduced alternating current to the world because of the limiting paradigm it created about energy. The use of AC current power plants left people with the impression that energy had to be produced in one place and then distributed from that source to outlying areas. Tesla believed and demonstrated that this wasn't true. Electrical energy, which he called Radiant Energy, was universally present and free and with the right tools could be tapped into and utilized by all.

Imagine the implications for our planet if people believed this idea. Would we need fossil

fuels, fracking, power lines, man-made grids? Would Greenland be melting? Would we be setting the stage for a global game of "Who Moved My Cheese?" (or coastline). The gravitational pull of our existing beliefs about the scarcity of energy and how we create it may seriously affect our survival yet, thus far, very few are escaping its grip. What would it take, short of a natural catastrophe for us to change our perspective in this area?

Nothing to Escape From

The notion of an escape velocity presupposes a kind of effort needed to overcome the pull of the laws that currently govern us. That assumption may be incorrect. Maybe no effort is needed at all. Rather, the only thing required to transcend our current boundaries is perhaps a clear vision of what we want and an experience of how we would feel having accomplished our goal. We'd still take actions, but they would be inspired actions rather than ones borne of fear, a belief in hard work, or some moral imperative.

We'd also need to believe that this could be possible while letting go of what we think we need to do to make it happen (the "how"). What if the only thing we needed to escape from is our own narrow understanding of how manifestation occurs and our belief in how separate we all are from each other (remember the molecules?) I often wonder how our lives would be different if our collective perspective aligned with the quantum physicists and the spiritualists and we functioned as if we were living in an intelligent, conscious and participatory universe.

The Future of Coaching: Trends that Illustrate the End is Near

Rey Carr

I don't believe the well-meaning, innovative and highly skilled pioneers of the coaching industry could have predicted the trends that are now occurring in coaching. Some of these trends will likely boost attraction to coaching, but others, and the ones I want to focus on in this article, are more likely to repel people from gaining value from coaching services. Since these trends will have a dramatic impact on the future of coaching, I will explore them in detail in this article with the hope that the actions I propose near the end of the article can eradicate these trends and keep coaching in the mainstream as a way for people to grow and develop.

I'm not the only, nor am I the first person to identify negative trends in coaching. In P*eer Bulletin No. 194* ([November 2, 2010](#)), author and coach Jan Newcomb identified five trends in coaching that she characterized as 'disturbing.' They included: unsavory marketing practices, claims of ultimate authority, lack of relevance for certification and accreditation, coaches with too little experience, and the inappropriate use of certain practice standards from professionals trained in disciplines other than coaching.

The five trends identified by Jan Newcomb as well as the six that I have identified for this special issue of *The Future of Coaching* magazine—the glut of coaches; the creation of niche coaching, the proliferation of credentialing schemes, the influx of parasites, the misnamed practices, and the exclusionary practices of coaching organizations—are the result of the work of a relatively small group, but they appear to be having an impact on the general public as more and more cultural observers describe coaching practices in cynical or critical fashion, and the previous esteem and confidence accorded coaching by the public appears to be diminishing.

The Glut of Coaches

Estimate of Coaches in World

US Business coaches	40,000
Coaches outside USA	40,000
Life coaches in world	20,000
Call themselves coaches	5,000
Graduates per year	25,000
Total:	130,000

Coaching is one of the fastest growing industries. But no one really knows how many people are actively involved in coaching as a full- or part-time career. This number is important because it may be the underlying reason why the trends identified by Jan Newcomb and the five additional trends to be detailed later in this article have emerged, and paradoxically may also be the main reason why the public is becoming less accepting of coaching as a credible industry.

In my article, *Coaching Statistics, Facts, Guesses, Conventional Wisdom and the State of the Industry* (Carr, 2008), I quoted sources within the coaching industry that estimated there were approximately 40,000 business coaches working within the USA. Another 40,000 coaches were considered operating in other countries around the world.

The International Coach Federation in response to an August 14, 2015 question asked via Twitter, stated that the number of persons coaching worldwide was significantly less than the 2008 estimate. The ICF figure, based on their 2012 ICF Global Coaching Study, was stated to be 47,500.

Not only does this ICF figure under-estimate the number of coaches worldwide but it also (1) underestimates the number of coaches around the world who work informally, but also offer their services as coaches; (2) does not include all those people who engage in some form of coaching, but either chose not to complete the ICF survey or were not in contact with the survey request; and (3) could reflect the low reliability of their survey method (Carr, 2015).

In essence, a number of organizations have attempted via a survey method to discern the number of coaches worldwide. None have presented a compelling argument about the reliability or validity of their total figure. Consequently, the number of coaches worldwide has mostly been a guess. And there are many reasons why an organization like the ICF would underestimate the number of coaches worldwide.

But there are two additional calculations—that even though estimates—can yield some useful data. According to the latest figures available, there are approximately 665 coach training schools now in operation ([Coach Directory](#)). If, by conservative estimate we guess that each coaching school graduates 50 participants a year, that adds another 33,250 graduates each year to the existing to the worldwide total of coaches. Fast forward to 2015 the total, given attrition plus additional persons calling themselves coaches, the number of coaches worldwide is more likely to be closer to **250,000**.

The second additional calculation—and one that is more difficult to determine—is the number of persons who currently call themselves coaches yet have no coach-specific training. Many of these practitioners come from management consulting, motivational speaking, or marketing. In most cases they have added "coaching" to their repertoire. Note that this is not a criticism of the legitimacy or credibility of the coaching they provide; it is mentioned to illustrate an additional source of persons to add to our "number of coaches" estimate.

Many coaching experts have stated that anyone can benefit from having a coach, yet the

number of actual clients willing to hire a coach is finite. If we add up the numbers mentioned so far, as well as other sources of help that are not coaches, including self-help and self- coaching, and all the psychology and social work practitioners, then the ratio of potential helpers per client gets much larger.

What this means is that there is an exceptionally large pool of coaches competing against each other for the same client base. An August 2015 search of the Internet using Google reveals that there are more than 84 million websites listed when the term 'coaches' is used (while at the same eliminating other terms such as 'sports, bus, clothing' and other terms not associated with life and business coaches).

Increasing the number of coaches available or including the increased number of persons who call themselves coaches in the worldwide pool of coaches is not necessarily a bad thing. The problem arises when individuals expect to easily find clients. Instead, they learn that the number of coaches already in practice has been significantly and consistently under- estimated, thus making it much more difficult to generate the revenue necessary for a satisfactory career.

In addition, many coaching schools and marketing specialists have stepped in to make the coaches think it is their own fault for not having proper or sufficient business and marketing skills to gain clients. Literally, dozens of these services are now generating considerable revenue off disappointed coaches. These practices can easily lead to charges of deception and misrepresentation.

The Rise of the Nouveau Niche.

Marketing specialists have made significant inroads into the coaching industry, seeking to convince coaches that if they want to make a living with paying clients they need to, among other tricks and techniques, distinguish themselves from their coaching colleagues. The primary way this differentiation has been implemented is through 'niche coaching.'

More than 60 distinct niche areas have been identified by one study, and many coaches

have added multiple niche areas to their statement of practice.

[A website devoted to a satirical review of the coaching world has identified more than 60 niche areas currently being promoted by "coaches."]

Boundless Scope.

There is hardly a challenge faced by a human being that a coach will decline to coach. There are birthing coaches, death and grief coaches, coaches for kids and teens, coaches for retirees and the elderly, and coaches for hospice and recovery. There are even coaches for our animal companions such as feline, equine and doggy coaches.

While the pioneers of coaching often would make a point of distinguishing themselves from sports coaches, that distinction is no longer appropriate as more and more life and business coaches now claim the niche of working with athletes.

What's more, the previously taboo land usually populated by clinical psychologists and psychiatrists now has coaches dealing with the wide variety of disorders, crises, syndromes and addictions mentioned in the DSM IV. Some coaches attempt to cover multiple niches. Their websites or biographies read as if they were worried about leaving out a niche that might result in a potential client searching elsewhere for a coach. Instead of narrowing their scope of practice to a particular niche, they have expanded their practice to include multiple areas of practice.

It is not unusual to find a coach listing several traditional niche areas such as "coach, consultant, trainer, mentor, and clinical counselor" as part of their practice; or a coach listing where a coach provides "business coaching, executive coaching, life coaching, career coaching, health coaching." One coaching commentator speculated that coaches are doing 'keyword' searches on Google, finding the problems people experience that have the most frequent hits, and then adding those key words into their scope of practice descriptions.

Do you have a problem in your life? ⟶ No.

THE SCHOOL OF SELF-COACHING FLOW CHART

Then don't worry.

Yes.

No.

Can you do something about it? ⟶ Yes.
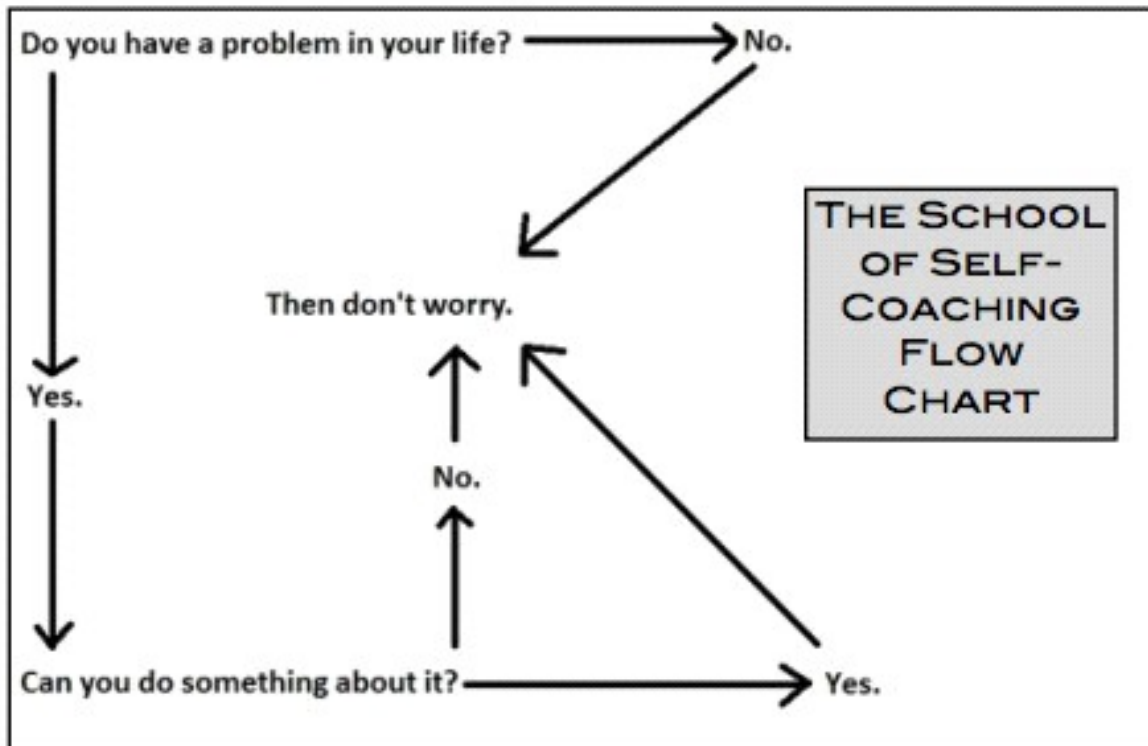
The use of multiple or unique niche areas, rather than acting as a catalyst for helping people, has more likely resulted in a type of skepticism or cynicism about coaching. Rather than attracting clients, these two niche approaches may be seen by consumers as a form of desperation or lack of professional stature.

The Never Quiet Whiz Kids.

Another trend that has a paradoxical impact on the future of coaching is the willingness of coaches to speak 'authoritatively' about virtually any topic having to do with human behaviour.

While some of these individuals receive continual national exposure on TV-talk shows such as Oprah, Dr. Phil, Dr. Drew, Dr. Oz, the View, and other talk shows, thousands publish their advice in their own books, blogs, websites, newsletters, magazines, article clearinghouses, social media outlets and listservs. "There's a free-for-all regarding what anyone calling themselves a coach can or will do;" a coach critic told me, "one of these days, I hope to find one instance of a coach saying, 'Sorry, I really don't know anything

about that'."

While individual coaches in their actual coaching interactions may be more reluctant to provide 'advice' to clients in order to facilitate the quality of the coaching interaction, they typically do not show the same reluctance to comment in public about almost every aspect of the human condition. As Grey Owl has noted, "Wisdom is divided into two parts: a) have a great deal to say, and b) not saying it."

These public commentaries, typically based on life experience, are legitimate and well-meaning. However, their frequency, constancy, and expression in a variety of media venues has likely saturated the public with too much information. In other words, the appearance of such widespread "expertise," rather than acting as a catalyst to garner respect, has led many people to likely be skeptical of coaching. "So many people have taken the title 'coach'," according to one Peer Resources Network member, "that even fewer coaches really know what true coaching is, and they seem to have lost any connection with professional boundaries."

Nomenclature Confusion.

Another way that some members of the coaching industry are demonstrating a blurring of boundaries is through the increasing use by coaches of the terms that come from other helping disciplines; for example, the use of the term "mentor" as in "mentor-coach" and "supervision" of coaches. Whereas in the past, coaches made an effort to distinguish themselves from mentors (often writing short articles on the differences between the roles), now many coaches have added that role to their repertoire of practice.

For the most part, the addition of the 'mentor - coach' accolade to their resumes seems to be a way to elevate their skill status and promote and market their services to other coaches.

The irony here is that acting as a mentor has been historically and is currently a free or completely volunteer service. Mentor-coaches have ignored or rejected this key element of mentoring and charge a fee to work with other coaches. In so doing they have again

expanded the scope of their practice, added to the confusion about the difference in roles, and, rather than referring to their work with other coaches as supervision or consultation, have added the status, but not the accuracy of mentoring to their own scope of practice (Carr, 2015b).

The International Coach Federation, representing approximately 24,000 members around the world, defines mentor coaching as "coaching on coaching competency development of the applicant-coach as opposed to coaching for personal development or coaching for business development, although those aspects may happen very incidentally in the coaching for competency development." (Marum, 2011). In other words, the ICF uses the term 'mentor coach' as a substitute for what almost all other helping professions such as medicine, psychology and social work call 'supervision' or 'consultation.'

European coaching associations offer virtually identical 'mentor coach' services to help other coaches. However, the European groups refer to these as supervision, not mentor coaching. The EMCC, because their membership includes both mentors and coaches, uses a slash between the words mentor and coach as in "mentor/coach" when addressing members to indicate these are two distinct roles. The ICF, in contrast, uses the word 'mentor' before the word coach as a modifying adjective as in 'mentor coach'. (The ICF also insists on displaying the role term with uppercase first letters as in "Mentor Coach.")

Members of the ICF, supported by the ICF requirement for members to engage a mentor coach, have added this role to the services they offer. For example, a recent promotional flier we received from two ICF-certified coaches titled their offering "Exclusive Mentoring in Advanced Coaching Techniques," and another ICF member sent a promotional flier requesting coaches to sign up for a "6-Figure Practice Mentoring Program." Both of these offerings required paying a fee to receive the 'mentoring.

In addition to confusion about and mis-use of the term 'mentor-coach,' there is considerable controversy now brewing in North American regarding the term "coach supervision." Such confusion is rare in Europe where experienced coaches, particularly those in the United Kingdom and those who are members of the two

largest European coaching organizations, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and The British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP), emphasize services they call "supervision." Partly, there is little trouble with this term in Europe because of the large number of coaches who have come to coaching having first trained as psychologists, where supervision is common practice.

But the historical tradition of supervision in the clinical practice of psychology does not mean that it is appropriate for the practice of coaching. Supervision, in the traditional sense of one professional having responsibility for the quality of practice, ethics, and activities of another practitioner has no place in coaching. In her article on the dangers associated with the ICF initiating a coaching supervision model, Vikki Brock (2015) states, "...adopting clinical forms of supervision, using the language that applies to regulated areas of clinical practice in the USA holds significant risks for the coaching profession, as represented by the ICF."

In contrast to psychology, coaching practice has a long tradition of coaches consulting, conferring or collaborating with each other to improve, enhance, and strengthen each other's practice. Therefore, it makes more sense to use terms such as peer consultation or peer coaching rather than coach supervision. Ironically, one of the biggest advocates from the ICF for coaching supervision, has stated that supervision is important "because it is a way that all coaches will get an opportunity to reflect on our practice; a way to reflect, to see, to think; and many times when you hear the word 'supervision' experienced coaches are worried that supervision comes from psychology or supervision means control; that is when you hear the word 'supervision' we're talking about controlling instead of really reflecting; and instead of seeing supervision as a partnership where we are all learning" (Coaching Trends, 2015).

With the International Coach Federation leading the charge to create a coach supervision system where member coaches will be required to participate in order to renew their credentials one can easily conclude that like the paid mentor-coach, this coach supervision model is just another attempt to control coaches while at the same time increasing revenue

to the organization. Critics of the ICF's initiative have suggested that a former ICF president is "touting the area of coaching supervision as the next extremely lucrative revenue stream for coaches" (Email Thread, 2015), and the same person has described coaching supervision as "an opportunity for MCC coaches to develop their businesses" (Coaching Trends, 2015).

Surprisingly few coaches in North America are attending to this issue except for a small battalion of experienced coaches attempting to convince the ICF to change its approach. A July 2015 well-publicized forum on coaching supervision sponsored by a chapter of the ICF (Coaching Trends, 2015) was significantly under-attended, indicating that for most North American coaches this coaching supervision initiative on the part of the ICF is a non-issue.

Regardless of the size of the group of concerned coaches, one cannot help but be struck by the ICF interpretations of the terms "mentor coach" and "coaching supervision." While the intention of both these practices may be to ensure the integrity of coaching practice, the outstanding features of both of these poorly named practices is that they lead to greater control, or as Bob Garvey (2014) calls it, "neofeudalistic surveillance," as well as greater revenue for coaching associations.

The Influx of the Parasites.

I've been involved in the helping profession for close to 50 years. I've worked closely with psychologists, social workers, physicians, psychiatrists, childcare workers, psychotherapists, and other practitioners. In all that time and from my connections with the varied helping professionals I've never witnessed the influx of external sources offering these practitioners the types of services and products in the amount or to the extent that coaches typically receive. Not a day goes by without multiple email messages heralding six-figure income, multiple streams of revenue, marketing secrets, blog, article and web writing tips, skill enhancement, assessment tools, client attraction methods, and a variety of other practice improvement schemes.

Many of these offers come from people who describe themselves as coaches. They typically

provide testimonials and persuasive 'squeeze' pages to encourage other coaches to sign up for their service or product. No doubt many of these are legitimate practitioners acting to share what they know with colleagues, but seen in a larger perspective they are part of a trend—a trend that preys on the fear of failure, lack of experience, vulnerability, and the promise that 'there must be a pony in here somewhere.'

Some coaches are so disturbed by this trend that they refer to the people who make these offers as vampires, vultures, exploiters and manipulators. This is a sensitive area because I'm sure the people who offer these services would object to this type of characterization. They see themselves as helping others to improve their practice— a goal we all strive towards. The problem, and the reason why this trend may be contributing to the reduction in respect and regard for coaching, is that it's virtually impossible to distinguish between those offering credible, legitimate services and those offering bunk.

The Multiplying Credentials.

In 2005 (and updated in 2015) Peer Resources published a white paper titled *A Guide to Credentials in Coaching: Types, Issues and Sources* that documented the more than 65 distinct coach credentials available in North America and the United Kingdom. That review showed that some certifications are competency-based, some require attaining hours of course work, others require supervision by someone who has already attained the credential, some rely on self-assessment, some can be obtained without ever coaching a client; and some are just based on self-proclamation.

The proliferation of credentials in coaching has not slowed. More than 300 additional coaching schools are now in operation since the original version of the white paper, and most of these schools also offer some variation of one of the types of credentials listed above. And surprisingly there are even organizations that specialized in credentialing in fields other than coaching that have now jumped into offering their own system of certifying coaches.

The irony here is that research on how potential clients find or select a coach has little to do with credentials and more to do with experience. Yet the coaching schools and coaching

associations continue to build more and more complex systems to reinforce the credentialing model. Some critics have even referred to this connection between credentialing, the coaching schools and the coaching associations as a coaching 'ponzi' scheme.

At the same time the promotional claims that so many of these schools make regarding their place in the coaching industry can be confusing, unsubstantiated, and close to deceptive. There are dozens that claim they are the 'first,' 'number one' or 'only' group that does X, Y or Z. These promotional claims often contradict coaching practice since most coaching engagements include a survey of the horizon in order to determine current reality prior to embarking on the rest of the journey. If the school did a Google search on X, Y or Z, they would likely find others also making the same claim.

In addition, the coaching associations appear to act as enablers of these claims in that they do not require any evidence of such claims when approving or accrediting the school's offerings. Our review of the relationship between coaching schools and coaching associations could not identify an instance of a coaching association expressing any warnings, cautions or reservations regarding the practices and policies of any coaching school. Nor does there seem to be any record of a coaching school losing its coaching association accreditation or approval status as a result of the school's policies or practices.

This ever-multiplying system of credentialing does little to protect the public from incompetence, shoddy practice and exploitation. Credentialing in coaching continues to grow with minimal credible oversight and accountability. This not only serves to confuse and exasperate the public, but it has also contributed to considerable skepticism from experienced coaches as well.

We're It and You're Not.

Another trend that will have a negative influence on the future of coaching is what can be called exclusionary policies and practices. These are actions, mostly associated with the 15 current coaching associations, to limit, restrict or control the evolution of coaching. On the surface their restrictions seem like a good idea: they raise standards, improve competence, identify best coaching skills; increase precision of coaching definitions and terms, and encourage on-going practitioner education. However, the associations typically exclude each other when making changes, and seldom, if at all, refer to the existence of each other. In their start-up phase most associations had membership policies that were inclusive—virtually anyone with an interest in coaching could join, but their current or pending membership policies are much more exclusive and require more extensive (and costly) training or other requirements.

An expert on the coaching industry sent Peer Resources an email that said, "Approximately 95 percent of the 500 organizations that provide training for coaches are 'for profit' businesses. They compete against each other to sell their coach training and in doing so they must find numerous niches, specialties and unique issues that can boost their competitive positions."

While most of the coaching associations hold not-for-profit status, they still compete with each other for members. Few individuals can afford to hold memberships in more than one of these associations, and their membership standards are restrictive enough that it would be quite unusual for an individual coach to qualify for membership in more than one. But the myriad of standards, definitions and promotion of membership benefits has created uncertainty among many coaches as to which one to join.

Typically, the coaching associations operate as if the other associations don't exist; and as of this date only one membership-based group actually mentions and fully acknowledges all the other coaching associations on its website. In addition, the coaching associations have increased their efforts to approve and accredit coaching schools, and thus gain allegiance to their model of a coach training curriculum as specified by the association. This system, in the guise of raising standards, contributes to minimizing innovation and experimentation, and homogenizes the offerings available.

Even more troubling is the fact that coaching associations have assigned themselves the authority to 'grant' accredited or approved status to coach training schools. No external authorities review or monitor their accrediting practices, and the associations are not accountable to any expert authority on accreditation or curriculum approval.

As far as I could tell from enquiries to the associations, none have the expertise and experience with accreditation and curriculum approval models that exist outside of coaching; none are members of various organizations that oversee accrediting procedures; few have consulted with or have an on-going relationship with existing agencies that have been engaged in accrediting and curriculum approval; and none have the expertise or staff hours to conduct accreditation or approval that would make them relatively equivalent to the most well-known and reputable accreditation models.

Even the methods and standards used by the coaching associations to accredit or approve coaching schools are quite different from each other. This lack of authority and coordination can and does contribute to public confusion as to what those terms actually mean. (See our latest guide to the use of accreditation in the coaching industry on our website at www.peer.ca/coachingschools.html.)

Where Are Our Heroes?

Very few voices raise concerns and speak out about the coaching industry such as The Coaching Commons and before that the *Coaching Insider,* edited by Ken Winston Caine. These analytical sources are no longer available to provide forums for journalistic level

critique, public commentary and independent editorial opinion.

What Thomas Leonard and other coaching pioneers started as an innovative and unique practice is exemplified by the majority of coaches today who have studied, trained, and continue to educate themselves. These coaches also honour the ideas and principles that Thomas created by recognizing the need to distinguish what they provide in order to attract clients and earn a decent living. Their progress, however, has slowed because the coaching industry is so overloaded with multiple certification schemes (at least 65 now available); is rife with the misuse of accreditation principles and practices; is beset by the unwillingness of coaching associations to cooperate with each other; and is suffering from the proliferation of highly disparate coach training schemes. The unfortunate result is that the general public has become even more confused and baffled by the coaching industry.

The trends identified in this article are all well-meaning, reasonable and make sense for individual practitioners to engage in order to survive in a highly competitive market. But seen in a 'big picture perspective' they appear to form an unintentional whole that is larger than the sum of its parts. Rather than increasing the public's connection and celebration of coaching and coaches as a way to achieve greater life happiness as well as business and career success, the trends identified here may signal a bleak future for coaching.

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Section Two: Coaching Strategies for Addressing the Challenges

Your Ultimate Coaching Tool: The GROW Model Explained and Why it Always Works!

Emma-Louse Elsey

You probably use the GROW model (or T-GROW) without even realizing it:

- **T** – **Topic** (Session Topic)
- **G** – **Goal** (Session Goal)
- **R** – **Reality** (Where they are and what's going on for them)
- **O** – **Options** (Ideas and brainstorming – what they COULD do to move forwards)
- **W** – **Will Do** (Their actions – what they WILL do to move forwards)

In reality it's probably more like ROTGOW or TROWG or TRORGWOW but these 5 key elements ALWAYS work and here's why:

T – Topic:
While establishing the Topic often blends into the Goal and Reality parts of the model, getting a topic up front – even a loose one – is the start point for any coaching session. Sometimes the client will come with a clear topic and other times we may start by discussing their 'Reality' to find out what they want to work on. Questions like, "What would put a smile on your face?", "What's been working for you since the last session?", "What hasn't been working for you?" can help to clarify a session Topic.

G – Goal:
This is the client's goal for the session – and while it doesn't have to be specific or 'SMART' it does need to be enough to give the session a clear purpose understood by both the client and the coach. For example, a session goal might be to establish a bigger goal or to gain some clarity in their lives – it just has to be enough for you to keep the client on track.

One of the things that makes coaching different from many other therapies is our focus on action and change. A session goal helps us keep the client focused and when the session drifts it gives us the ability to say, "We seem to be heading in a different direction here, is this what you want?" Tip: This tactic can be especially helpful if you have a client that likes to tell long stories.

And no, the goal doesn't have to be agreed right up front – although it's helpful if you can. A session goal can be 'evolved' as the session unfolds. And occasionally the 'real' goal of the session may not come out until the end when we ask our clients what their biggest win of the session was. This is when the client realizes their 'goal' for the session was simply to feel heard, to commit to themselves or to feel challenged or supported.

When we ensure the client understands what they want to get out of the session – we ensure the client receives value from coaching – and that they continue to learn and grow.

R – Reality:

Reality is about the client understanding their situation and how they got there. It's where we question, challenge, reframe and reflect back to our client where they are, what they've done so far, what's working and what isn't. It's about really getting into where the client is right now and why. It should include talking about feelings and digging into emotions, gut-feelings and intuition – often new or uncharted frontiers for our clients.

For me, the Reality section is the 'meat' of any coaching session where we raise our client's awareness around their values, priorities and beliefs – so they gain insights and learn about themselves.

O – Options:

If the client could solve their problems alone, they would have done. Often what they need from us is help brainstorming, a push or some support to take an action they have been putting off. It may involve tweaking an existing action, challenging and inspiring them to make an action bigger or it could also mean shrinking an action to make it more achievable. Either way, a good dig around in the 'Options' to find actions and solutions that really work for our clients pays huge dividends in moving our clients forward. Tip: I have often found

that the best and breakthrough actions come out toward the end of the Options discussion, so make sure you allow enough time... Check out our FREE Questions Worksheet "37 Questions to Liberate Your Clients From Themselves" for some great Options (and Action!) question ideas.

W – Will Do:

The essence of coaching is change – some sort of action – even if the action is to change the way they do something, to stop doing something or even do nothing! I always make sure every client leaves their session committed to at least ONE action otherwise our session would simply be a conversation. And while a conversation can be helpful – nothing changes unless something changes. Tip: Check-in with the clients about how they FEEL about their actions. Can they commit to them 100%? Is there time to fit the actions into their busy lives? Would they like to be stretched more, or do they need to simplify their actions to maximise the chances of success?

W can also be – "WHAT do you need from me?": Ask this question to find out what they need from you to support them.

W also stands for – WIN: "What was your biggest win of the session today?" As mentioned under 'Goal', I always ask some variation of this question at the end of my sessions. By asking this, we not only reinforce the value of coaching but over time both you and your client will learn what's really important to them.

In Summary:

So, what's missing from this model? Perhaps a review of actions set at the last session. It's possible this would come up under 'Topic' or 'Reality', but unless we explicitly ask it could get missed. I usually start my sessions by reviewing the actions from the previous session – but at whatever point you do this, an action review is essential for accountability.

I see the GROW model as the coaching session "basics". Without any one of these elements, something would be missing. And, the great thing about the GROW model is that you can apply any other coaching tool or model over the top. But as long as you follow this simple structure, you can't go wrong - the GROW Model is your ultimate coaching tool!

There are many, many different coaching models out there but I still haven't found anything that beats the GROW model for simplicity, effectiveness and results. If you embrace the GROW model – your clients will love you and you'll never lose track in a coaching session again.

The Ten Commandments for Gamechangers

Dr. Thomas D. Zweifel

It is one thing to take the Jews out of Egypt. It is quite another to take Egypt out of the Jews.

—Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgensztern of Kotsk

(the Kotsker Rebbe, 1787-1859)

When we set out to change the game— be it strategic change, innovation, transformation or even revolution—we might be tempted by the latest change theories.

Since the 1950s, change models have come and gone. Unfreezing/refreezing, change agents, garbage in/garbage out, culture, humanware, re-engineering, population ecology, adaptive learning.., and the list goes on.

But the rules have changed. Under globalization, flattening organizations and the Internet, many change methods have proven obsolete in a dynamic world of uncertainty and black swans.

Counter-intuitive as it sounds, we can learn from an age-old story of transformation: the exodus from Egypt, 40 years in the wilderness, and the quest for the Promised Land.

The story goes that God searched for whom to give the Ten Commandments to. One nation asked: "What does it say?" God said, "No adultery." They shrugged, "That's a bit steep." The next asked, "What's written here?" God said, "Do not steal." They said, "Fuhgetaboutit." God finally offered the Commandments to the Jews, who asked, "How much do they cost?" God said, "Nothing." The Jews said, "OK, we'll take ten."

Seriously, my work with clients of all stripes has shown, at least since the 2008 financial crisis: The Ten Commandments, far from dusty and irrelevant today, can serve as a roadmap for changing the game—any game.

How so? Let's take a look.

Commandment One says, "*I am Lord your God who took you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*" Gamechangers start with themselves, freeing themselves from limiting mindsets. The Hebrew word for ancient "Egypt" is *mitzraim*, literally "the narrows" or constraints.

From Nero to Hitler to Kenneth Lay of Enron, leaders lacking self-awareness wrought havoc. First check your own assumptions. Are you enslaved by outdated beliefs or blind-spots? Are you a victim reacting to circumstances, or a proactive author of your destiny?

Commandment Two: "*You shall have no Idols.*" Gamechangers don't follow false gods or external expectations, but their own, authentic vision. Money, power or fame are not ends, only means. 18th-century Rabbi Zusya said famously, "In the world to come, I shall not be asked, 'Why were you not Moses?' I shall be asked, 'Why were you not Zusya?'" It's incumbent on each of us to reveal our unique purpose and create something unprecedented.

As Proverbs says, "Where there is no vision, people perish." Without a future, you and those around you die, if not physically, then at least as stakeholders. Gamechangers need to see the future before others do. But few spend enough time or resources on co-creating the future; they are consumed by running the present—which is based on the past.

One man who had a rude awakening from his idols was Alfred Nobel, who had amassed a fortune with war ammunition, including dynamite. When his brother died, one newspaper confused the two. So, one morning, Nobel got a rare opportunity: to read his own obituary. It was not pretty. The article described him as a man responsible for killing more people than anyone, ever.

Nobel realized: The world would remember him for this death-laden legacy, and he was loath to leave such a legacy. He established the Nobel Prize, which soon became the ultimate honor in the fields of literature, science—and peace. Today Nobel's legacy is not chiefly his contribution to war and death, but to peace and life.

Commandment Three, "*Don't use my name in vain*," shows how to lead through language. We tend to use words carelessly, in blame or slander, excuses or complaints. But the Hebrew word *davar* means both "speak" and "thing," so our language brings about the reality we speak. Our words are either bricks that build, or weapons that destroy. Gamechangers succeed or fail not primarily through technical skills or even strategic thinking, but by communicating effectively, which makes the difference between a vision achieved and a fiasco.

Communication is no one-way street. One CEO, reminded of the importance of two-way communication, snapped: "*Of course* I use two-way communication! I communicate to my people both verbally and in writing." He had no inkling of that crucial dimension: listening.

According to tradition, God dictated the entire Torah to Moses, who listened carefully, then transcribed the dictation word for word. Powerful listening can lead to lasting accomplishments.

Commandment Four, "*Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it*," is about taking time out to reflect on what's essential. In the barrage of e-mails, meetings, decisions we lose our center or go under unless we stop periodically.

Stillness has been the hallmark of the most distinguished gamechangers, from Churchill to Mandela, from Gandhi to Gates (who regularly goes off the grid for "think weeks"). In a 24/7 world, the ancient institution of the Sabbath is one of the most ingenious solutions for the prevention of burnout and the adjustment of your compass.

Commandment Five is, "*Honor your father and mother*." We take so much for granted— our parents, the people with whom we work and live, and the small details pivotal to large accomplishments. But whatever, and whoever you appreciate gives you power.

Appreciation is crucial in a world of highly mobile knowledge workers whose intellectual capital goes home with them every night (if they're not already working from home); they

will jump ship the moment they feel you don't care enough. The more you appreciate people and what they bring to the table, the more they *will* bring to the table.

In **Commandment Six**, "*You shall not kill*," gamechangers regulate their anger and frustration—when you're fed up with the status quo, things can get quite emotional—and channel their emotions into productive energy.

History is filled with dictators who killed to get their way. Many gamechangers today still use force or intimidation. But twelfth-century Maimonides said that if you treat a person out of anger, it's as if you killed them. Unless you channel rage into positive action, you might lose friends and allies.

Commandment Seven is, "*You shall not commit adultery*," which can be anything from sleeping around to selling out on your principles. In complex cyberspace and global markets, the temptation to get away with cheating, lying or corruption is everywhere.

But your greatest power as a gamechanger does not come from your authority, title, popularity or resources; it comes from your integrity. Judaism is an ethical decision-making system for seeing the difference between right and wrong, and even tackling right-vs.-right decisions or ethical dilemmas—by prioritizing your values.

Commandment Eight is, "*You shall not steal*." The prohibition against stealing seems trivial: so what? But true gamechangers break the myth that underlies stealing: "Not Enough." If you stop focusing on what you don't have and don't really need, you can leverage what you *do* have.

Tzedakah (righteous giving) is perhaps the highest commandment that integrates all others. As Churchill put it, "You make a living by what you get; you make a life by what you give." Some cultures define wealth not by how much money you have (or hoard), but by how much flows through you. When you give, you experience that you are, have, and do enough.

Commandment Nine is, "*You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*" But when things don't go as planned, we bear false witness: We hide the breakdown, feel

shame, blame others, or worst of all, reduce the challenge. Instead of facing the facts, we make things (and not least ourselves), look better than they (and we) really are. Such false testimony is an entirely human response -- and entirely counter-productive.

Great leaders like Churchill or Jobs were unafraid of bad news. What makes gamechangers invincible: Instead of being stymied, they harness breakdowns as raw material for breakthroughs (or as the Hasidic saying goes, "for every descent a greater ascent"). Breakthrough innovations—Post-Its, Viagra, the Internet, civil rights—were each a phoenix arising from the ashes of a breakdown.

Finally, in **Commandment Ten**, "*You shall not covet.., anything that is your neighbor's*", is the pinnacle, especially today. Envy is everywhere; we look at other people's lives from the outside, and their grass often looks greener. But instead of being jealous of others' possessions or successes, effective gamechangers understand people and see the world from their vantage point. With outsourcing, offshoring and virtual teams, standing in the shoes of alliance partners, negotiating opponents, even competitors or enemies, has become an indispensable competence.

The Hebrew word for life is *chayim*, a plural term. Life is not individual; it happens only together. We're all interdependent; nothing you've done is your accomplishment alone. Empathy is key to building championship teams. As Gandhi put it, "A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history."

A Rabbi asked a couple, "Are you keeping all Ten Commandments?" The husband snapped: "Of course, I keep four, she the other six!" But the Ten Commandments are a holograph: For sustainable game-change, we must strive to live up to them all. Frankly, our common future depends on it.

Self-Assessment: *Leading with the 10 Commandments*

I invite you to assess yourself. Properly harnessed, each of the Ten Commandments provides tools for 21st-century gamechangers. Rate your competencies (1=non-

existent, 2=weak, 3=fair, 4=competent, 5=masterful). Be honest with yourself: neither negative nor boastful. It is not about looking good.

COMMANDMENT I: *Out of Egypt > Beyond the Limits*

- Responsibility for the whole of your organization and mission; willingness to take charge
- Checking your own assumptions, blind spots, hidden motives, values; staying centered
- Beginner's mind; remaining a student; openness to coaching Teaching ethical dilemmas

COMMANDMENT II: *No Idols > Authentic Vision*

- Creating and articulating a future for people; inspiring others
- Bringing vision back when people have lost it in the day-to-day details
- Sustaining an environment of vision, momentum, breakthrough

COMMANDMENT III: *Don't Speak in Vain > Leading Through Language*

- Listening for distinctions (e.g., in running meetings); listening for openings, solutions
- Making powerful promises, requests (measurable, with deadlines)
- Cultivating and deepening relationships
- Giving and receiving feedback effectively

COMMANDMENT IV: *Keep the Sabbath > The Power of No*

- Being still; ability to step back; letting go of control
- Working from priorities; saying no to low-priority demands

COMMANDMENT V: *Respect Father and Mother > Appreciation is Power*

- Appreciating what others bring
- Team skills (e.g., building consensus, alignment)
- Coaching skills; effective empowerment of people

- Managing the details, not dropping anything out

COMMANDMENT VI: *Don't Kill > Anger Management*

- Regulating your own emotions (e.g., anger, fear)
- Understanding your own emotions

COMMANDMENT VII: *No Adultery > Walking Your Talk*

- Maintaining clarity on your ethical values
- Matching your words and deeds; integrity
- Tackling ethical issues

COMMANDMENT VIII: *Don't Steal > The Business of Giving Back*

- Contributing to others; always giving more than receiving
- Adding value to people and/or organizations

COMMANDMENT IX: *No False Witness: From Breakdown to Breakthrough*

- Thinking strategically; identification of what is missing, of blockages
- Being powerful in the face of breakdowns; turning breakdowns into breakthroughs
- Never ever, ever giving up; being fearless; undaunted by No

COMMANDMENT X: *Don't Covet > In* **Their** *Shoes*

- Enrollment: utilizing and integrating people's existing agenda
- Managing cultural diversity; standing in the shoes of the other person
- Decoding another culture (organizational or national)

Positivity (Happiness) in the Workplace and Organizational Change

Kevin Weitz

Introduction

In 1987 I joined a large banking group in South Africa as the Customer Communications and Training manager of their new electronic banking division. I knew I was in trouble when during the first week on the job I was told of a photo shoot with the then CEO. Apparently as the photographer was about to take the photograph and said "smile", the CEO stood up with a serious face and said, *"Young man, banking is a serious business, we do not smile around here".* Whether this story was true or not is unimportant. What is important that it was told and re-told many times and ultimately became part of the culture of the company. The corporate culture was harsh and militaristic, indeed a number of senior executives were former military officers.

Some months into my new role, I was asked to do a presentation to a group of senior managers. After my presentation, one of the members of the audience approached me and pulled me aside. He said, *"I know you are new here, so I'd like to offer some advice, and that is to remove the emotional words from your vocabulary. Emotional language does not go down well in this organization".* He was certainly correct – the organization was perhaps the most emotionally barren organization I have ever worked with. There were pockets of passion and energy—however these were exceptions and primarily the result of initiatives taken by specific individuals (including my immediate boss, a remarkable individual who was the only reason I continued to work in that environment).

My first exposure to large-scale organizational change came from a brief dialogue with Denzil Busse, [then Managing Director of Standard Bank of South Africa (SBSA), and a personal mentor to me]. Denzil was responsible for the retail bank and had been very concerned with the lack of improvement despite several efforts to improve. Along with the poorest service levels of any major bank, SBSA was also losing market share. But it was no

wonder to me that this organization had the poorest customer satisfaction scores of all the major banking groups – great customer service requires passion and a high degree of positive energy and interest in people. "Smiling" and "emotional language" are basic requirements. Denzil had called me to his office to discuss this dilemma, and I expressed my concerns to him. Instead of the emotionally stunted response I had received from other executives, Denzil listened intently.

What ensued was one of the largest change strategies I have been involved with. Under the leadership of this remarkable individual, Denzil and I jointly, along with the efforts of many others in the Retail Bank, developed and implemented a process that engaged 22,000 employees in improving business processes and work culture. Eventually SBSA went from being the worst performing bank in customer service and losing market share to the best customer service and improving market share over a six year period. This organizational change could not have been achieved without the positive work environment and energy that Denzil Busse created for this immense effort from these many thousands of employees. A remarkable achievement and a big win for positivity in the workplace.

Positivity in the Workplace

Throughout my career, indeed my life, I have been struck by the observation that most work environments tend towards the negative rather than the positive and are sometimes even punitive. From my early years, observing my father being unhappy at work to my thirteen years in the banking industry and more than a decade consulting in companies such as Chevron, Wells Fargo Bank, Levi Strauss and Pacific Gas & Electric, my experience has been consistent – most working environments tend to focus on the negative, and are even punitive and abusive in some extreme cases.

My experience with positive work environments suggests that these were always was due to a specific manager or leader, who despite the milieu, created energy, positivity and happiness in his or her scope of influence. Even my 12 months of military service in the South African Air Force demonstrated this fact - where there is a positive work environment, people are happier and they flourish and excel, and where there is a negative work environment, people are unhappy and they flounder and under perform.

In his book "The Happiness Advantage", Shawn Achor (2010, p. 21) cites meta-research of over 200 scientific studies on nearly 275,000 people. He comments …

(The research) found that happiness leads to success in nearly every domain of our lives, including marriage, health, friendship, community involvement creativity and in particular our jobs, careers and businesses"

Achor goes on to note that happy CEOs (unlike the banking CEO described above), are more likely to lead teams of employees who are both happy and healthy, and who find their work climate conducive to high performance.

Clearly being happy at work is not only important from a "feel good" perspective. It is a driver of personal and work success. If this is so, then why is it that so many are not happy in their work and their companies and why is it that so few companies focus on developing a positive work environment? Indeed, according to The Conference Board, only 45 percent of Americans said they were satisfied with their jobs. This is a huge drop from the more than 61 percent who said they were satisfied in 1987, the first year the survey was conducted

What is Positivity and Happiness?

Archor's definition of happiness (2010, p. 39), for me personally, strikes a balance between the notion of happiness being an emotion of simply feeling good and a more constructive and meaningful version:

… the experience of positive emotions – pleasure combined with deeper feelings of meaning and purpose. Happiness implies a positive mood in the present and a positive outlook for the future… For me, happiness is the joy we feel striving after our potential"

I would imagine that the banking CEO I referred to in the Introduction to this paper would have been more supportive of Archor's definition of happiness than what appeared to be his mental image that required no smiling!

Happiness as a general construct has also been described as Subjective Well Being (SWB), a term coined by Ed Diener (2008). Diener described SWB as having three elements, namely life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. The implication being that an individual with high life satisfaction, high positive affect, and low negative affect has high SWB. The scientific term "Subjective Well Being" or SWB is used to avoid the ambiguous meaning of the term happiness.

Fredrickson (2009, p.6) prefers the use of the term "*positivity*" versus "*happiness*" because she considers happiness too vague and overused for scientific purposes. She describes positivity (2009, p. 6) as *"a range of positive emotions – from appreciation to love, from amusement to joy, from hope to gratitude and then some"*. Fredrickson further comments that the term positivity is purposefully broad, including the long term impact that positive emotions have on ones character, relationships, communities and environment.

She describes ten emotions that make up her definition of positivity, namely joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe and love. These are scientific terms, she says, that can be defined and measured with precision. The importance of measurement in this case is that Fredrickson and her colleagues have identified a key ratio of at least 3-to-1 positive emotions to negative as being the tipping point that predicts whether people spiral into negativity or flourish. While other emotions obviously exist, scientific research suggests that these ten are the major ones that form the foundation of positivity. Fredrickson further describes a range of tools and techniques that can be used in ones daily life to enhance positivity.

Clearly, as implied by these definitions, happiness, positivity or subjective well-being cannot be attained through a permanently easy life, lacking struggle and challenge. The notion of striving towards life and career goals implies that a sense of well being requires some level of striving or struggle. However, success can also not come from punitive and harsh struggle. We need to reframe our notion and description of happiness in the workplace in order to apply the techniques and principles that foster and nurture happiness and use it to enhance the success of the organizations we work with.

The Happiness "Challenge"

I titled this section of the paper "*The Happiness Challenge*" because happiness – or positivity – does not manifest easily, particularly in the workplace – certainly not without effort for most of us and it is particularly challenging in most work environments where deadlines, budgets and performance issues can compromise most people's sense of happiness. Indeed, as Frederickson describes (2009, p. 28), in the United States, despite "*The Pursuit of Happiness*" being guaranteed in the Declaration of Independence, the US was rather forged under the influence of a harsh Protestant work ethic; a philosophy that holds that enjoyment, pleasure and leisure are bad and that people can only show their worth through hard work and toil; Happiness and fun should be shunned in favor of long, hard work hours and deprivation.

Without doubt, this ethic was alive and well in the banking group example I described at the beginning of this paper. The US and many other societies have entrenched harshness in the very essence of who we are as a working nation. It's not surprising that even using the term "happiness" in the workplace, as I have personally experienced, can elicit dismissive eye-rolling and even a degree of contempt. As I describe in more detail later in this paper, the change management consulting methodology known as "*Appreciative Inquiry*", in my experience, faces challenges simply based on its title ("*Appreciative*") and its focus (the positive). It is common, I find, that business leaders focus on "*problems*" as their default lens of attention. Seeking out the positive and appreciating what is good in an organization is dismissed or ignored as irrelevant or even worse, a diversion from what is important and urgent.

The focus on negativity in the workplace can create a culture of anxiety, fear and distrust over time. How often do we experience co-workers arriving at work with full-blown flu or other illnesses because they feel guilty about staying at home, and half-joking comments about co-workers who arrive at work late or leave work early with the implication that they are lazy? Or colleagues who have difficulty taking vacations out of fear that they may fall behind at work. A former boss of mine frequently described how he had never fully completed a planned vacation because he felt compelled to get back to work – this is an

individual who had a minor stroke in the office next to mine at the age of 42, and is a perfect example of what Achor (2010, p. 73) calls the *"Workaholic's curse"*. Despite writing this paper in what is almost 2012, the workplace is still an environment more commonly characterized by harshness and negativity rather than positivity and upliftment. Indeed, as Fredrickson (2009, p. 28) comments, happiness in the workplace may even be considered *"Un-American"*:

"The United States - and much of the capitalist world – was forged under the influence of the Protestant work ethic, a philosophy that holds that enjoyment and leisure are sinful, and that only through austere work activities can people prove their true worth. This worldview produces characters who shun all pleasant impulses and activities that might generate joviality … in favor of long work hours and personal thrift. It produces a culture that celebrates intensity, competitiveness and doggedness."

Positivity and Organizational Change

It has become almost trite to note that *"organizational change is the only constant."* Many of us re-live this experience every working day. Organizations are undergoing disruptive change on a constant basis (Weitz, 2011). Most often these changes are driven through large-scale projects that are time and resource pressured and place great stress on those driving the projects, and more so on those groups undergoing the change. In my twenty years of organizational change consulting I have seldom been exposed to a large-scale change initiative in which employee emotions and positivity are considered a key success factors for the change – the Denzil Busse, Standard Bank example being an exception.

By default, negative emotions of fear and anxiety are far more common in intense, costly and time pressured change initiatives, particularly where there are implications of job redundancies. These are natural emotional outcomes emerging from uncertainty and excessive urgency focused on cost cutting and profits, rather than keeping people energized and positive so that they are able to perform at their best under pressure. What I have personally observed in these situations of intensive change is that people are more likely to fear change, hide from it, sabotage it and generally resist it with negative talk and destructive collaboration. Little or no consideration in these projects is given to emotions

that elicit behaviors of receptivity, open mindedness, appreciation and a positive, high performance work environment.

Hammond (1998, p. 6) comments that "*The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, do a diagnosis and find a solution. The primary focus is on what is wrong or broken; since we look for the problems, we find them. By paying attention to problems, we emphasize and amplify them*". The focus on what is positive or effective is less common.

Klimosky and Kanfer (2002, p. 10) comment:

"*The important point ... is that many work behaviors may have strong and consistent linkages to negative emotions. In such cases, attempts to change behavioral patterns without first changing associated emotions are likely to be unsuccessful. Positive emotions have garnered less attention than negative emotions for several reasons: they are less differentiated, they are not associated with specific problems needing solutions, and they are not associated with specific action tendencies thought to be necessary for survival*"

Klimosky and Kanfer continue in their description that negative emotions have received far greater attention because they have typically been associated with "*problems needing solutions*" which tends to be a dominant focus in many, if not most businesses.

In my experience, the challenges of organizational change in a modern economy require more expansive and innovative thinking from employees than was required a century ago. Change in a modern economy required the support and involvement of all impacted employees versus a few executives at the top of the hierarchy. More recent research demonstrates that positive emotions broaden people's minds and awareness to new opportunities that change brings and thus stimulates a positive response and adaptability to change.

Fredrickson (2009, p. 55), describes the notion of the "*heliotropic*" effect in the plant world (where plants stretch and turn towards the light) similarly happens in humans in the "*light*" of positivity – People turn towards positivity and turn away from the "*darkness*" of negativity. Positivity expands people's interest in new opportunities and change and the

notion of what is possible, whereas negativity narrows a person's outlook. I am experiencing this very phenomenon in my current project in Vancouver Canada. The pressures in this $1 billion project are mounting, and numerous leaders are increasingly feeling this pressure.

One in particular is responding by becoming punitive and harsh, while another maintains an energetic and positive demeanor, providing encouraging support, regularly smiling and providing positive feedback – her common phrase of encouragement is "*we can do this together*". Where performance is low, the former applies harsh words and frustration, the latter provides support and encouragement. Team members avoid the former, while team members have rallied with the latter and are beginning to show progress. The former team has become fearful and resistant and continues to struggle, while the other is flourishing. This is a practical example of how positivity broadens the mind and cultivates a "*can do*" attitude, while negativity fosters angst, fear and resistance, and narrows the mind to collaborating as a team to develop creative solutions.

Organizational change projects are almost always urgent and time constrained. Costs limitations, competiveness (for example, getting new products to market) and the need for positive results for share price purposes all contribute to this pressure. Fredrickson (2009) notes that positivity is especially important when the work environment requires creative solutions fast – indeed, this is precisely what is needed in the real world example I described above. Fredrickson describes studies conducted with students who are taught simple positivity techniques (simply having self generated a positive mental image) prior to taking standardized tests, while a control group is not. The positive students perform better than the control group.

A further remarkable study conducted with medical doctors showed that simply providing the research group of physicians with a small gift (a small bag of candy) prior to making a diagnosis improved their performance beyond a control group that did not receive the gift. Interestingly, my wife as a senior nurse manager in a large county hospital uses this simple technique often – she frequently provides small gifts of chocolate or other small items to people she manages or with whom she collaborates. It is a simple gesture that says "*I am*

aware of you as an individual, and I care". It is remarkable how positively people respond to such seemingly minor positive gestures of kindness and perform better.

Positivity as an Organizational Change Methodology – Appreciative Inquiry

Fredrickson (2009, p. 52) describes positive questioning as the "*launching point*" for Appreciative Inquiry (AI), an approach to organizational change that has "*spread like wildfire through business consulting circles*". She references Cooperrider and Whitney (2008, p. XV), co-founders of the AI methodology, who describe AI as:

"*a philosophy that incorporates an approach, a process (4-D Cycle of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny) for engaging people at any or all levels to produce effective, positive change...Its assumption is simple:*
Every organization has something that works right – things that give life when it is most alive and effective, successful and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities. AI begins by identifying what is positive and connecting to it in ways that heighten energy, vision and action for change."

AI leverages the powerful benefits of positivity – namely that of expanding people's creative capabilities and stimulating energetic collaboration between people in the workplace. Most initiatives are fraught with pressure, anxiety and angst – not only do people going through change feel this, often (as my research in Merit's Engage-to-Change research study shows), managers will bully and intimidate employees during these times of stress and pressure. AI turns this upside down. Cooperrider and Whitney (2008, p. 3) note that the traditional and historical approach to organizational change is based on the principle of problem solving. By its very nature, problem-solving implies there is a problem that inhibits change and once that problem has a solution, effective change can take place. This focus on problems has by implication a negative perspective – something must be broken and must be fixed, versus what is positive and meaningful and can be leveraged for future change and innovation (2008, p. 3-4):

"Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations and the world around them … In its most practical construction, AI is a form of organizational study that selectively seeks to locate, highlight and illuminate what are referred to as the life-giving forces of the organization's existence, its positive core … What makes AI different from other OD methodologies at this phase is that every question is positive."

AI includes techniques of asking positive, powerful and provocative questions that uncover the positive, versus the notion of seeking "THE problem". This approach is similar to that popularized in the book "*Leading with Questions*" by Michael Marquardt (2005).

Is Too Much Positivity Negative?

I must admit to being somewhat skeptical about what I felt to be an excessive focus on happiness and positivity in the Appreciative Inquiry change model – to the point of ignoring the negative. Dealing with problems (for example in the form of managing risk) is essential for navigating a challenging business landscape; furthermore, the need to focus on these problems is enshrined in the fiduciary responsibilities of corporate board members. While being emphatically supportive of the need for positivity as a dominant focus in organizational change, ignoring negatives or problems seems naïve.

For example, while I was impressed with the text "*Strengths-Based Leadership*" (Rath and Conchie, 2008, Gallup Press), I innately felt that ignoring weaknesses is a fundamental mistake – unbalanced in a sense. Zenger and Folkman (2002) in their research of over 22,000 leaders world wide, describe in detail the need to develop the core strengths that form the foundation of extraordinary leadership, and provide unique insights on the multiplying impact of powerful combinations of strengths. But they do not ignore or underemphasize weaknesses and the risks of not overcoming what they refer to as "*Fatal Flaws*". Indeed, Fredrickson (2009, p. 135) describes a "*tipping point*" where too much positivity may be dangerous – ignoring negatives (Zenger and Folkman refer to them as "*Fatal Flaws*") can be damaging.

Fredrickson however describes the need for balance and refers to this balance as "appropriate negativity". Negativity that is appropriate is important to focus on for purposes of identifying real problems and overcoming them to avoid risk and achieve success. In my view, it is important to place some focus on negative issues for purposes of overcoming "Fatal Flaws" and major risks. A key question from my perspective is the manner in which we view these problems or challenges – do leaders become anxious, harsh and punitive and create a negative focus on problem solving, versus an energetic, innovative and collaborative environment to solve these problems? The former approach is destructive. The latter is constructive despite the focus being on a problem or risk issue. The excessive focus on the positive to the exclusion of negatives is risky. Gareth Cook, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, in an article entitled "*The Darker Side of Happiness*" (2011), comments:

Now, though, there is gathering evidence that happiness is not what it may appear. A string of new studies suggests that the modern chase after happiness--and even happiness itself--can hurt us. Happy, it turns out, is not always the way you want to be. To be happy is to be more gullible. Happy people tend to think less concretely and systematically; they are less persuasive. A happy person is less likely to discern looming threats.

"We have put happiness under the microscope just like we do with every other mental state," says June Gruber, an assistant professor of psychology at Yale University, who coauthored a recent review of happiness research, "and we see that there is this dark side."

There is strong argument that a focus on negative aspects of life and work is important for survival – it's the balance between the positive and the negative that is important. As Fredrickson aptly describes *"without negativity you become Pollyanna with a forced clown smile painted on your face. You lose touch with reality. You are not genuine. Unchecked, levity leaves you flighty, ungrounded and unreal. Appropriate negativity grounds you in reality"*.

My initial exposure to Appreciative Inquiry supports this view – AI can be (and in my experience has in some cases been) perceived as "Pollyanna-ish". I have personally received

a degree of dismissive "eye-rolling" responses to what is viewed as an impractically positive approach to my consulting style and approach. In my view, some of the language used in certain of the writings on AI could be construed as simplistic and naïve.

Positivity and the Changing Nature of the Modern Workplace

The workplace of today is very different from the workplace in the first half of the twentieth century. The notion of the work and employment "*contract*" has changed significantly in the last few decades (Marciano, 2010, pg 9). It is a fairly recent phenomenon that people work for more than just a paycheck. The collective body of research and experience in the past half century has shown convincingly that people are more motivated by the intrinsic value from the work itself, as well as the pride realized from working for a company with a positive reputation, than from just a paycheck. It is remarkable however that still in 2011, so many organizations and managers still rely on fiat on the one hand and material rewards on the other, as the primary mechanisms for employees to change, and evidence shows that neither work effectively.

The notion that employees who are happy in their work – or as Archor (2009) describes it are motivated by the fact they are able to pursue their life goals and reach for their potential through their work – is a fairly recent and primarily Western phenomenon. Prior to the mid 20th century, work served primarily as a way of "paying the bills" – not to suggest that this is not an aspect of work today for many people, (indeed becoming more urgent during difficult economic times such as we are living in over the past few years of the "Great Recession").

However, in the past sixty years or so there has been a significant shift in the degree to which people place importance on gaining life meaning and purpose from work versus simply making a living. In Merit's Engage-*to*-Change^{SM} research referenced earlier, a remarkable 34% of respondents indicate that, given the opportunity, they would work for **less** money for another company that cared about and engaged its employees more effectively. A remarkable 66% of respondents either plan to look for opportunities elsewhere in their companies (29.8%) or plan to actively seek employment with other companies (36.5%) as the economy improves. Overall, this is not a good vote of confidence

for employee happiness and motivation for many of the companies represented in this study.

Despite a large body of research, as well as experiential evidence, that reward and recognition programs do not work in the long term to motivate organizational change and performance, companies today still use them (Marciano, 2010). While there are some situations – like motivating short term changes in behavior – that may be suitable for the use of reward and recognition programs, most that I have experienced have failed to achieve their intended results, namely enhanced employee performance, commitment and motivation. The primary reason for this, as described by Marciano, is that *"programs don't fundamentally change employees' beliefs or commitment to their jobs; they just change their behavior during the course of the program"*.

Based on this statement, one could argue: simply don't make it a program that ends. Keep it going forever!! Unfortunately, research and experience suggest that this does not work either. For example, most companies that I have worked for or with have had some form on ongoing, annual performance salary increase and bonus system. In no case have I felt motivated by these programs and my anecdotal experience is that employees have not either. Indeed, incentive and reward programs often create greater negativity. The reason is that employees are disconnected from the program – in other words they do not have the notion that they really impact on the outcome. Secondly, they begin to view the program as simply an annual event that becomes part of the company's compensation system versus being a motivator. Marciano comments that these kinds of programs are de-motivators and negative when employees do not get a big enough increase or bonus. These approaches are barriers to positivity and inhibit change and innovation.

Positivity Techniques – Reversing the Negative Spiral

As I described in the previous section, "*change is the only constant*" in companies during the new millennium. And with change that is driven by the need to be competitive or to reduce costs or be more efficient and productive, organizational change can create a pressurized and stressful work environment. This stressful work environment can create exactly the opposite of what is needed to be adaptable to the change all around us. Leaders

and managers can apply harsh tactics to produce the results they need to meet their obligations. Toxic leaders can abuse and intimidate their team members and co-workers. Employees become fearful, distrustful and negative. An organizational downward spiral occurs.

Fearful employees narrow their outlooks rather than open their thinking to innovative ideas. They are less creative instead of actively seeking greater opportunities to meet company goals. Increasing time is spent discussing negative rumors versus brainstorming new ideas. Time off sick increases, safety in workplace deteriorates and the overall deterioration of company performance accelerates. How do many leaders respond? More pressure, and more harshness and more negativity. The result is exactly the opposite of what is intended. This downturn spiral is predictable. Fredrickson (2009, p. 161) describes this spiral:

> *Negative emotions – like fear and anger – can also spawn negative thinking. This reciprocal dynamic is in fact why downward spirals are so slippery. Negative thoughts and emotions feed on each other. And as they do, they pull you down their abyss.*

It is important to note that the techniques described below, however simple, can apparently have a lasting impact on organizational culture and individual employees. Lyubmirsky, Boehm and Sheldon (2011) comment that "*engaging in happiness-increasing activities (such as committing to important goals, meditating, acting kindly towards others, thinking optimistically or expressing gratitude) has the potential to improve levels of happiness for significant periods of time.*"

"Spiral Up" to Constructive Change

The negative spiral can be stopped and reversed. And for organizational change to be effective and efficient I believe this negative spiral must be reversed. While I firmly believe negative issues must be addressed ("risk" in project parlance) for effective organizational change, our challenge is dealing with risks and problems positively and constructively. Indeed, I apply certain of these techniques on my own consulting practice to good effect. However, they can only be as effective as the broader organization and project will permit

and support; furthermore, positivity needs to become a core competence of the organization if the "spiral up" is to be truly effective. The following techniques describe a sample of the methods to achieve this outcome.

Technique 1: Decrease negativity

Negativity is more powerful than positivity – it has greater impact. Frederickson (2009) describes the scientifically confirmed "negativity bias" as "*bad is stronger than good*" - the effects of positivity are more subtle (and therefore have to be more frequent) in comparison to negativity. When employees are faced with a negative experience alongside something positive, they will tend to focus more attention on the negative – much like the reaction most of us have when danger is present – our "*fright, flight or freeze*" response is activated. Frederickson describes the "*positivity/negativity ratio*" that has been independently demonstrated by numerous scientific research studies – a required minimum of at least three positive experiences to 1 negative. The "*positivity offset*" principle suggests that while most people experience more positive emotions on average than negative, unless the positive outweigh the negative by a 3:1 ratio, there is little or no difference in their levels of happiness or success (or, as Fredrickson calls it, "*flourishing*"). The negative denominator is more powerful, so companies need to focus here to begin.

Technique 2: Eliminate "Toxic" Leadership

In a recent research study that the Merit Resource Group and I launched in the San Francisco Bay area, a staggering 37% of respondents indicated that they were personally bullied or intimidated—or they had witnessed others being exposed to this kind of behavior at least monthly, weekly or daily. It is even more remarkable given that a high percentage of respondents were management and executive level leaders (Merit's Engage-*to*-Change[SM] Research):

In the past two years, to what extent have you perceived that you or others around you have you been bullied, intimidated or harassed by a person of authority in your company?

Monthly: 16%

Less than once a year: 30%

Weekly: 12%

Daily: 9%

Never: 33%
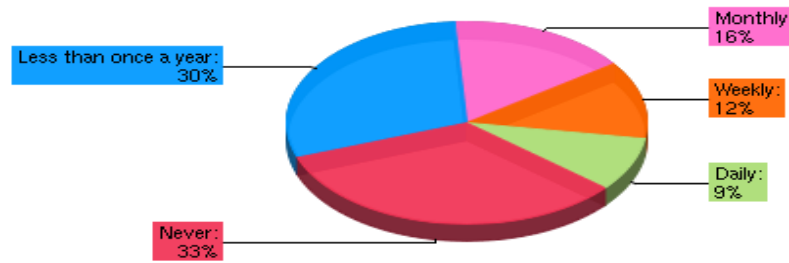
While it would be important to understand how these respondents interpreted *"bullying or intimidation"*, it is apparent from numerous other research studies, as well as anecdotal and personal experience, that management and leadership in many companies do not stimulate positivity in the workplace. It is essential that leaders and managers have a "positivity bias," understand the techniques, and have the necessary skills for reducing negativity and increasingly positivity. At its essence, I believe this is at the core of the ability to lead organizational change. While discussing how to achieve this goal is beyond the scope of this paper, recognizing the existence of this cornerstone is important as a basis for discussing the tools and techniques for improving adaptability for change.

The following are a select number of techniques that various researchers and practitioner propose for reducing negativity in one's life. What I have done with certain of these in this paper is to interpret them in a work setting:

Technique 3: Modify the situation:

Fredrickson (2009) describes a technique of changing interpretations of events that may cause negativity in ones life. An example in the workplace could be an extremely negative work colleague. Hearing constantly negative dialogue is not only exhausting—it also can be contagious to others. A powerful technique is to view these situations as a challenge – appreciate the opportunity to test your capabilities to modify the situation with subtle modification techniques. People often use negative comments to get attention (even adults). In other cases negativity can be a call for help. Being mindful of these drivers, the use of listening and reframing techniques (such as simply paying attention and listening) may be all that is needed. If this does not alter the negativity, asking questions about the logic behind their negative views can begin to alter the context of negative dialogue.

Pointing out alternatives to their negative viewpoints can move the conversation in a positive direction. I personally use this technique with my brother who lives in Malta. He is an accomplished artist and is constantly challenged by the sight of trash, discarded cars, appliances and other garbage as he is painting landscapes on the magnificent coastlines of Malta. His eyes tend to scout out the ugliness rather the beauty. When visiting him I will simply listen and most often he will eventually comment that Malta is generally a beautiful place to live despite the dumping of garbage.

Technique 4: Break the negativity cycle:

For leaders and managers, a valuable technique when faced with a negative employee is to point out positive aspects of what they may be ranting about. For example, when an employee is bemoaning the poorly implemented technology system, break the negative cycle by describing the benefits when it ultimately is implemented. One can even reframe the context of a difficult system: you would not have had the opportunity to learn the system as thoroughly if the implementation had been seamless. The very fact that it was challenging demanded the need to roll-up your sleeves and really learn the system. Again, using the example of my brother, when simply listening does not work, I will gently observe the magnificent cloud formations over the ocean, while he is ranting about the rusted car carcasses lying abandoned at the base of the cliff.

Technique 5: Increase Positivity

While reducing negativity gets the biggest "bang for the buck" in terms of Fredrickson's 3:1 ratio, ultimately it is the positive experiences and emotions that move people to the tipping point (Fredrickson, 2009, p. 179). Reducing negativity negates the potential for a negative spiral, but it's positivity that moves people forward and allows individuals to flourish. In the business world when experiencing large amounts of change, reducing negativity limits resistance and the potential for sabotage. But it is positivity that opens people's minds to the opportunity that change brings and stimulates the creativity that maximizes the opportunities presented by change in the workplace. The five techniques that follow are by no means the only ones available, however they are five that I personally have experienced and observed as powerful, and that the research literature rates as impactful.

Technique 6: The "Big Picture" at work – Find positive meaning

This is more a personal perspective than one based on scientific research and readings – it is primarily based on my own 30 years of working in challenging organizational settings. While Arbor and Fredrickson amongst others describe a variety of tactical tools and techniques for developing positivity in life and the workplace, finding positive meaning in life is for me the most important. It provides the big picture context that makes all of the "*life is difficult*" experiences (a Scott M. Peck quote) meaningful. The tactical tools and techniques are magnified in strength as they take place when a person has purpose in their work.

My personal mission is to help companies and people navigate difficult change in a manner that not only brings business benefits, but enriches people's lives – allowing them to deal with changing life circumstances in a more constructive and positive manner. With this end in mind, I tend to explore every difficult project that I am on with a lens of what I can learn so that I have a richer set of experiences from which to draw in my consulting practice. The more challenging, the more valuable. For people who work simply to earn a living and pay the bills, a "big picture' that provides long term meaning may be lacking. Although a difficult exercise, beyond the scope of this paper, finding purpose and meaning in work is, in my experience, essential as a "multiplier" for the tools and techniques discussed next.

Technique 7: Apply Strengths in the Workplace

I am a strong proponent of the "strengths-based leadership" philosophy of Tom Rath and Barrie Conchie (2008) as well as the work of Zenger and Folkman (2002). People that have the opportunity to do what they do best are far more likely to flourish (Fredrickson, p. 189). While this is part of Technique 1 above (from a career perspective), it can also be a tactical approach day by day. For example, my wife is a nurse manager at a large country hospital, and has almost 100 nurses reporting to her. Although her job requires many rather mundane tasks, she specifically focuses on the opportunity to apply her strengths for coaching and developing certain of her nurse reports and dealing directly with patients. It is

in these areas that she finds her greatest meaning and purpose when the drudgery of many mundane or negative tasks or experiences have the potential to become overwhelming.

Technique 8: Connect with Others

Edward Hallowell (2011, p. 35) describes the notion that doing things with other people, particularly when that work is valuable and contributes to something important, is maximized when performed with others. The ability to share successes and positive experiences is a multiplier versus simply experiencing a positive experience in isolation. As I described above (Technique 1) above, it is multiplied even more when the work effort is done for long term purpose with the "big picture' in mind. In research on Employee Engagement in the workplace conducted by the Gallup organization (Crabtree, 2004), highly engaged employees are much more likely than others to say that their organization "*encourages close friendships at work*":

> *"Eighty-two percent of engaged employees showed agreement by rating the statement "my organization encourages close friendships at work" a 4 or 5 (on a 1-5 scale where 5 is "Strongly Agree"), compared to 53% of those who are not engaged and just 17% in the actively disengaged group."*

Positivity in the workplace is contagious. Hallowell (2011, p. 84) describes the dyadic and hyperdyadic spread of happiness in the workplace whereby positivity is spread exponentially when people in the workplace form social networks. This is a powerful tool for managers who can create opportunities for employees to get together in and outside of work to get to know one another and develop trusted relationships.

Technique 9: Find Ways to Develop New Skills

Managers and leaders have a unique opportunity – particularly in the current economic environment - to remind team members that work is a privilege and learning new skills is an even greater privilege. Achor (2010, p. 6) describes an experience he had in Soweto, South Africa. I lived within 10 miles of Soweto for most of my life, going to high school,

college and eventually working in Johannesburg. Achor describes his sadness while teaching at Harvard Business School witnessing smart students bemoaning the hard work and stress of being at one of the leading universities in the world. On the other side of the world is Soweto, a place he personally had the opportunity to visit, where thousands of previously disadvantaged children now attend decent schools after the Apartheid system was abolished.

When he personally asked a groups of classroom children the question "who likes schoolwork?", the great majority smilingly and enthusiastically put up their hands – they view schoolwork as a privilege, something most of their parents did not have the opportunity to experience. On the other side of the world, in the United States, this question, says Achor, is more often met with few positive reactions. Managers need to create an environment in which employees view work as a wonderful privilege and opportunity, in which learning new skills provides the opportunity to grow and add greater value to the others and the world.

Technique 10: Expectancy Theory Applied in the Workplace

Problems and challenges in the workplace can either be presented as issues of great concern, with seriously negative implications, or positioned as challenges that are exciting and can produce learning and growth – same issue, different lens and a completely different expectation from employees. Achor describes a remarkable study performed in Japan (2010, p. 69). Researchers blindfolded a group of students and told them their right arms were being rubbed with a poison ivy plant. Afterward, all 13 of the students reacted with the typical symptoms of poison ivy despite the fact that they had not actually been rubbed with the plant at all.

Achor suggests that this is explained by "*Expectancy Theory*", in which our expectations create brain patterns that cause reactions as if they were real. I have applied aspects of this in my project work. One example was with a project team that I inherited some years ago. This team's members had done a rather poor job of creating and managing their project documentation. A project audit resulted in a negative rating and could have created a

negativity spiral, given the intense pressure members of the project team were under. I presented the need for an enhanced document management system with a highly positive and fun approach – that of a game or puzzle to try and find and move documents, with a prize at the end. The expectation was that this would be fun, and with this expectation, it was.

Summary and Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that being happy at work is a lot more important than simply coming home from work with a smile on one's face – it is a cornerstone of individual, team and organizational performance. In retrospect over my career, and my years of study, it is remarkable to me that the subject of happiness has been virtually absent. While in recent years, the notion of employee satisfaction and more recently employee engagement have become a more significant focus, less has been discussed on the subjects and benefits of individual happiness or positivity.

Indeed, as previously noted, in my personal experience, these concepts were more often scoffed at than taken seriously in the workplace. More recently, positivity and happiness are becoming better understood. Companies like Google, SAS, Whole Foods Markets, and Cisco Systems (Hallowell, 2011, p.31) are applying techniques that promote happiness, along with the benefits that emerge from happy and engaged employees. But I believe that we are a long way from having positivity as a basic cornerstone of business practice. The methods and tools that many of my contemporaries learned in previous decades do not become "*un-learned*" easily, and organizational cultures do not change rapidly either. Much more progress is needed, and methods such as Appreciative Inquiry being used as a positivity-oriented change management approach provide hope, and as successful companies such as Google lend legitimacy to these methods and approaches, progress undoubtedly will be accelerated.
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Application of Cognitive Revolution Theories in Coaching Practice

Alexandra Krubski

The cognitive revolution of the 1950s led to the application of scientific methods to the field of psychology resulting in a shift in how psychologists understand and apply psychological practices. This move towards a more scientifically minded psychological practice, combined with technological advances in neuroscience gave rise to various subfields, including reality therapy and behavioral economics. Like Plato's timeless allegory of the cave, these subfields seek to reveal how the brain understands and interprets reality. The implications of this understanding, combined with Glasser's practice of reality therapy, Ariely's work in the field of behavioral economics, and Kahneman's understanding of neurological processing in decision making can all be applied to the field of coaching to help better clients understand how and why they make the decisions that they do and why the brain's natural way of functioning can create dissonance between expectations and reality leading to feelings of unhappiness. Understanding that the brain's natural tendency to simulate the future is a flawed process can be the first step in helping a client overcome the dissonance created by unrealistic expectations. This knowledge can help move a client towards deeper reflection and ultimately more productive and positive decision making.

Application of Post Cognitive Revolution Theories in Coaching Practice

The 1950s heralded a significant change in the field of psychology. Behaviorism once thought of as the only genuinely scientific branch of the psychological field (because it focuses on the interpretation of observable and measurable phenomenon) was being challenged by a revolutionary idea that the internal mental states of people could also be observable and measurable. In *Acts of Meaning*, Bruner states, "...an all-out effort to establish meaning as the central concept of psychology [...]. Its aim was to discover and to describe formally the meanings that human beings created out of their encounters with the world, and then to propose hypotheses about what meaning-making processes were implicated." (Bruner, 1990).

Hallmarks of the Cognitive Revolution

Five essential ideas were born out of the Cognitive Revolution.

(1) The mental world is grounded in the physical world through the concepts of information, computation, and feedback.

(2) The mind cannot be a blank slate.

(3) The infinite range of human behaviors manifest from a finite set of programs in the mind

(4) Although human cultures appear highly varied, they are superficial and are explained with a universal set of mental mechanisms

(5) The mind is a system of interdependent parts resulting in the emergent property of thought and human experience. (Pinker, 2003) .

These understandings have shaped the various subfields of psychology yielded from the cognitive revolution including the work of William Glasser on reality therapy and the behavior economic principles developed by Dan Ariely. These two subfields can be applied to the practice of coaching to help clients understand and proactively change their understanding of how they make the decisions that ultimately lead them to a positive or negative experience.

Glasser on Reality Therapy

Developed in the decade following the cognitive revolution, Glasser's reality therapy model seeks to focus on realism, responsibility, and right and wrong. (Glasser, 2010) . This approach is useful as a tool in coaching because reality therapy is grounded in the idea that human suffering is a "socially universal condition" (Glasser, 2010) rather than the manifestation of a mental disorder. By focusing, in coaching or therapy, on here and now actions to help the client choose and create a more desirable future for themselves, this method supports clients in understanding their true desires and helps them to assess how the choices they are making are either leading them towards or away from those desires. If a desirable life results from the summation of choices made, then understanding how the brain makes choices is crucial in guiding a client towards making decisions that better resonate with their values and wants for their coveted reality.

The neurological theory of reality is a summation of electrochemical impulses. Photons enter the eye through a small hole called the pupil and interact with specialized cells in the retina called photoreceptors. As these cells are triggered, they initiate an electrochemical cascade of neurotransmitters that transmit this signal through the optic nerve to the occipital lobe of the brain where other neurons translate it into sight. What is fascinating is that visual processing is a two-fold process.

The neuroanatomy of photoreceptors and neurons must be in good working order to carry a signal to the brain, and then the occipital lobe must have the experience, framework, and context, to create meaning from these signals. Generally, summarized blindness can be the result of either a disruption in the first pathway, i.e., the photoreceptors and neurons are damaged or dysfunctional, or damage to the occipital lobe can result in processing blindness where the brain is unable to process the information and understand it even though the anatomy is intact and fully functional, therefore, vision is the combination of what is being seen by the eye and how the brain is processing that information.

The neurological pathway that results in vision is so efficient in healthy individuals that it

alters reality. At the back of the eye, in a structure called the retina, there is a patch that lacks photoreceptors. This patch is where the optic nerve connects to the eye to carry the light impulse to the brain for processing and is commonly referred to as the blind spot. Every person has this blind spot, but many are unaware of it because they have never experienced a blank in their field of vision. Why? The brain is so efficient during processing that it constructs a piece of virtual reality by filling in the gaps using information from past experiences and contextual clues to provide what feels like a seamless, and accurate representation of the world; this means that experience plays a crucial role in how the brain fabricates reality.

Reality and the Ancients

The understanding of reality has intrigued humanity since its earliest days. The philosopher Plato used the allegory of the cave as a thought exercise to explain the need to examine one's life. The allegory also serves as a metaphor for examining how experience shapes and limits perceived reality. In the allegory, humans chained to the walls of the cave are only able to look forward at shadows projected in front of them. One of these captives escapes and experiences the world outside the cave. Plato theorizes that if this captive were to return to the cave to share his experiences, the other captives would think them insane. The brain uses past experiences to augment reality making it appear seamless when it is not. (Thagard, 2018) A reality based on limited experience can make positive, actionable responses difficult for clients.

The brain is wired in such a way that it would prefer that any action be taken over remaining stagnated.

Cognitive Choice

In *Stumbling on Happiness* author Dan Gilbert analyzes the need for the brain to take action over inaction. He presents the following paradoxical question:
You are introduced to someone you find attractive and then given the following two options:

(1) Marry them. In which case, the person will become a pyromaniac down the road and light your house on fire.

(2) Not marry them. In this case, they will become a billionaire (Gilbert, 2007).

When asked which option people will regret more, the majority of individuals choose option two. At first, this sounds like a ridiculous choice because not being married to a billionaire seems like a better option than having your house burned down, but the brain is anticipating future simulations based on what it already knows and what it has a context for. Everyone has experienced loss in some form or another. When the brain encounters these scenarios, it recognizes the loss in option one and can see the positives in overcoming it because it has experienced overcoming hardship in the past. With option two, most people do not have a context for what it is like to be married to a billionaire, so the brain struggles to simulate an actual and positive outcome. Without context, without comparison, the brain cannot formulate an accurate prediction of the future, creating an irrational dissonance, which leads to feelings of regret. (Gilbert, 2007)

Behavioral Economics Theory

Irrational decision making is reflected in the field of behavioral economics and the work of Dan Ariely. The focus of Ariely's work is heavily finance centered, but the concepts that drive people to make seemingly irrational decisions can be applied to the field of coaching and the work of Gilbert. In *Predictably Irrational* Ariely explains the brain's need to function within a framework of comparisons. Just like Gilbert's regret scenarios, Ariely emphasizes the brain's need to make comparisons in order to take action. Ariely uses the example of a lawnmower.

When a brain encounters a store with only one model for sale, it struggles to determine the lawn mowers value. Is $3,000.00 a good or bad price? If one left the store without making a decision, Gilbert might hypothesize that she would experience regret since her brain lacked a context for the value of a lawnmower making her unable to foresee a positive outcome and take action in making a purchase. If she is shopping in a store with two models of lawnmowers, the one previously mentioned and one with slightly better

features, but nearly double the price, the decision to purchase the $3,000.00 lawnmower becomes clear. She can take action, and the feelings of regret are not experienced. Human brains are hardwired to compare things, and the brain will make comparisons most easily and as lazily possible. (Ariely, 2010).

The Naturally Lazy Brain

The work of Daniel Kahneman analyzes the brain's tendency towards laziness. In his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*, he introduces the two systems of the brain: the impulsive and automatic system one and the conscious, aware, and considerate system two. As clients come to understand how and why they make decisions the decisions they do, it is significant to know how

these two systems of the brain do and do not work together and what the impact this conflict could be in decision making and a client's ability to take action. (Kahneman, 2015) Kahneman presents the following mathematics problem in his book:

> "A baseball bat and a ball cost $1.10. The bat costs $1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?"

System one approaches this problem as simple and straightforward because it things it can handle it. The system one answer to this problem is that the ball costs $0.10, but system one actually cannot handle this problem, it is too complicated, and in its impulsivity, it jumps to what looks like the most straightforward conclusion; but, system one is wrong. When system two is employed to tackle this problem, the brain realizes that the wording of this question matters if the ball costs $0.10 and the bat costs a dollar more than that the bat costs $1.10 bringing the checkout total to $1.20 ($1.10 + $0.10). In order to get a checkout total of $1.10, the ball must cost $0.05 ($0.05 + $1.05 = $1.10); this is math problem better suited to the particular and conscious system two. (Kahneman, 2015)

A Matter of Evolution

Why would the brain function like this? The answer lies in the brain's evolutionary history. System one is a wiring pattern left over from the grassland creatures from which humanity evolved. Impulsivity and rapid decision making is crucial to the survival of an organism in the wild. As humans evolved, developed cultural norms and language, and

molded the environment to fit their needs, the newer regions of the cerebral cortex wired themselves into system two, which excels at self-control and sustained focus. The technological advances of the past two hundred years have changed humanity's environment faster than evolution can keep up,

so all humans retain both sets of neurological wiring. System one is reflective of first reactions and impressions but lacks the focus and attention needed to determine if initial judgments are accurate. When system one is unsure, it kicks the problem back to system two, but at the cost of energy expenditure. The brain uses more energy than any other organ in the body and processing information through system two is a more energy consuming process than information processing through system one, so when given the option the brain will always err on the side of energy conservation regardless of whether or not that leads one to make the right decision. (Kahneman, 2015).

What Kahneman calls The Law of Least Effort has implications in the field of coaching. The brain's natural impulse to default to system one to conserve energy may explain why a client repeatedly makes impulsive or poor decisions. System one will not relent to system two unless it feels that the energy-sucking intelligence of system two is necessary; the brain conserves energy by limiting one's intelligence and decision making power. In short, the brain is lazy. In coaching, helping a client understand that this naturally occurring process may lead to impulsive and repeated poor decision making may be the key to developing strategies with the client to raise awareness and work towards implementing habits that override these naturally occurring processes. (Kahneman, 2015)

The Asynchronicity of the Brain

The human brain is an exquisite piece of machinery with an evolutionary history dating back 850 million years to the first ancient ancestors who were able to transmit electrochemical signals through tissues. (Robson). The brain's original wiring allowed human ancestors to survive and reproduce successfully in a competitive and unpredictable wilderness. With the evolutionary development of a sizeable cerebral cortex, language, and culture, the human brain developed a second wiring system enabling self-control, sustained focus, and complex decision making; cognitive skills that are crucial to survival in today's corporate-run wilderness. These systems have not co-

existed long enough to work synchronously, and the brain's inability to seamlessly move from one to the other results in reduced or impulsive decision making. The brain is also hardwired to create realities where none exist, a need that subsists due to limited physiology, but that can have broad-reaching consequences for one's measure of happiness.

Gilbert expands on this idea in his work and, like Kahneman, his theory is founded on the brain's need for comparison. Gilbert claims that feelings of unhappiness arise from the dissonance between expectations set by the brain and reality.

Selective Perception Breeds Selective Recollection

The way one sees the world and the way one experiences the world differs due to the brain's incredible ability to fill in the missing information. The brain continually takes in so much information that in order for memories to be stored, they are compressed. A computer processor is a commonly used analogy to describe cognitive functioning because computers also compress large files when storing them. Large computer flies, like memories, lose some of their quality when they go through the compression process. In order for the brain to store a lifetime of memories, it distills each one down to Cliff's Notes version of the event. Gilbert states, "The fact that we often judge the pleasure of an experience by its ending can cause us to make some curious choices." (Gilbert, 2007). Gilbert is saying that in the storage and distillation process, the memory of a great night may be reduced to the miserable last half hour where a friend throws up on a pair of new shoes because in the distillation process the brain exaggerates the lousy part of the experience leaving one to remember the whole night as a bad memory.

In contrast, when one thinks of something pleasurable, system one (once again overlooking system two) tends to let the imagination take one's expectations to the most pleasurable extreme, disregarding millions of other possible scenarios and setting up a situation where anything less than the imagined scenario leads to disappointment. (Gilbert, 2007) Ariely describes this phenomenon in behavioral economics as the endowment effect or the idea that what place a higher value on things once we own them. The first principle of the endowment effect states that people love what they own, simply

because of the memories and fantasies they have about it (Ariely, 2010). The value that is placed on memories, which Gilbert claims are faulty and full of the brain generated augmented reality, explains system one's eternal optimism approach to setting extreme expectations about future experiences, but the constant unfulfillment of these high expectations can lead to feelings of discontent, hopelessness, and unhappiness. (Gilbert, 2007)

A Conflict of Desire

A quick Google Search yields the following case study from Chris Wesley: "Geoff is intelligent and a competent professional, but in social situations, he considers himself something of a disaster, and his life is a much smaller one than he would prefer because of it. He is struggling with two sides of himself. One wants to be outgoing and fun-loving; the other fears rejection. Unfortunately, this latter half seems to be in charge. So, one half of Geoff keeps putting himself in promising situations then his other half keeps sabotaging them. Geoff is very frustrated and out of ideas." (Wesley, n.d.)

Geoff's situation is reflective of many clients who seek coaching and exemplifies the principles born from the cognitive revolution. The first observation that is apparent in Geoff's story deals with expectations. Gilbert's work applies to this facet of Geoff's situation because he appears to be setting expectations for these "promising situations" that are not met in his reality. It is a situation that everyone has experienced when expectations are raised, and the follow through falls short. Compounding Geoff's frustration is that his hope falls party on himself and party on the reaction he wishes to elicit from others so when the reality is mismatched to his expectations Geoff internalizes his disappointment believing that it is a reflection of him trapping himself in a cycle of action and adverse reaction.

As a coach, one could help Geoff see that his expectations are only one of the thousands of possible outcomes he will experience. The first step in ending Geoff's cycle of frustration would be to address his expectations. Are his expectations realistic and achievable? Are Geoff's expectations better viewed as long term goals? If so, what are the attainable short term goals that he can set to work towards this more encompassing goal? By coaching Geoff around the endowment effect in this way, he can experience small successes more

frequently, alleviating his frustration by taking small steps to break the cycle in which he has become stuck.

Working with Geoff on attainable goal setting to alleviate the pressure of his expectations only works in conjunction with Kahneman's understanding of the brain's two systems. As an "intelligent and competent professional," Geoff may benefit from a coach that explains the dynamics at play between the brain's system one and system two. Since this is a lifelong struggle that Geoff has experienced, he has reinforced the neurological pathways that sabotage his social situations. For Geoff's brain, this enhanced pathway has become the path of least resistance. By setting unattainable expectations, the moment a factor fails to meet Geoff's expectations, his system one takes charge to get him out of there and protect him from the rejection he most fears.

Coaching Geoff to understand that he is going to be fighting his neurological hardwiring may help to alleviate the frustration he experiences even if his smaller goals are not initially met. Change can be accomplished if Geoff is consistent in his efforts to work through the disappointment as he rewires his neural pathways. As a coach, explaining what is occurring in the brain, especially in terms of Kahneman's two systems, Geoff gains the capacity to understand that the frustrations he may feel are progressive. In turn, this understanding may allow Geoff to have compassion towards himself and his journey. This new insight and self-compassion may enable Geoff to tolerate his frustrations better and motivate him to keep working towards achieving his smaller goals. As these goals add up and the small achievements compound, Geoff should see change as his life becomes more in line with his desires.

Summary

To summarize the work of Gilbert, Ariely, and Kahneman:

(1) The brain operates using two systems of hardwiring. System one is the most primitive and operates as a reflex of gut instinct. With its quick response time, system one jumps to make decisions to conserve energy.

(2) System one is always at odds with system two, a more recently developed schema that allows for self-control and sustains attention at the expense of energy usage and system two will only take over when it is permitted to by system one.

(3) Both systems are operating in a neurological ecosystem that compresses memories for efficient storage at the cost of memory quality. When the memory is recalled as a scaffold for decision making, the brain fills in the lost details using what it perceives as relevant information, regardless of what actually happened.

(4) The brain is terrible at filling in the missing information. This process is necessary because of a fault in the physiological wiring of the eye. The blind spot created at the junction between the retina and the optic nerve leads to a permanent blind spot in the field of vision. When the impulse is sent from the eye to the brain, the brain uses memories and contextual clues to fill in what is missing. This process serves a need in visual processing, but for some reason has persisted in other areas of the brain dealing with information processing.

Understanding the brain's ability to manipulate both one's past and future can have far-reaching implications for the field of coaching. Kahneman's work explains how the brain's extemporaneous system one can jump to conclusions, preventing a more pragmatic and analytical approach to decision making, and how this system can generate lofty expectations which when not met can result in a slew of negative feelings and outlooks. When working with a client, uncovering and changing their core false beliefs can be a crucial exercise in overriding the impulsivity of system one and creating space for the conscious operation of system two.

Ariely and Gilbert insist on the brain's need for comparison in order to make sound and informed decisions. By helping a client identify a list of core values that resonate with their life desires and personal belief system, they carry with them a moral measuring stick. Having an identified set of comparable values allows clients to examine situations through a "values lens," allowing them to quickly compare the options and make informed decisions that resonate with their desired future. By empowering a client to understand and then manipulate the normal functions of the human brain, clients are endowed with the ability to make informed decisions on a more regular basis. The sum of

these small decisions will lead them to the desired and fulfilling life they are striving to achieve.

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You Have to Go Slow to Go Fast

Paulette Rao MCC BCC

I have been training, supervising and mentoring coaches for over a decade to hone their skills towards mastery and, for some, to gain their ICF credential. I believe that with continuous reflective practice any coach can get closer to mastery. I am also confident that I can help coaches learn how to manage their performance anxiety to allow their talent to flow naturally while teaching them advanced skills to facilitate change more quickly and easily. I have seen a few bad habits get in the way of effective coaching from some of the most seasoned and best-trained coaches in our industry. Therefore, in this article, we will explore one bad habit to break and follow with a new habit to create in its stead.

Bad Habit to Break

Thinking that good coaching means to fully reach the client's outcome for the session in an arbitrary 60 minutes. There is no preferred destination other than where you are at any given time in the conversation. Thinking so will take you off track. This is true in life and true in coaching. If you pay attention to the process, the destination takes care of itself. Anyone who has studied coaching competencies knows that the setting of an outcome, an attendant measure of success, and deeply exploring the meaning of this outcome are integral to effectiveness. What happens though, as a dutiful coach, is that we feel compelled to get them there, wherever "there" may be in that session. This self-induced pressure to reach a destination in an arbitrary time slot triggers our limbic system (the emotional seat of the brain) resulting in a diminished capacity of the pre-frontal cortex, which is where we do our rational thinking and our coaching.

Our prefrontal cortex gets flooded with cortisol when wondering if we will or won't get there—if our status as a competent coach could be diminished in our or our client's eyes if we don't reach Point B. Pressuring ourselves is a recipe for this stress response, resulting in a distraction and unconscious, ineffective coaching. So, the paradox is that the thing you want is the very thing you significantly diminish attainment of by the mere wanting of it.

Your self-induced pressure to deliver the outcome leads to a decline in your ability to deliver.

Good Habit to Create

Deeply breathe, meditate or simply close your eyes for a moment to get centered before you coach so that you can genuinely s-l-o-w yourself down enough to get present and reap the benefits of what presence allows for. Slowing down allows for getting conscious in the moment. It sets the ideal conditions for you to notice what you might have otherwise missed. It allows you to more deeply listen and reflect back with startling accuracy. It opens the gateway to listen beyond the words-- to get beyond the surface "what" of their narrative. It primes us to listen for who they are being in that moment not just what they are thinking and doing. P presence creates the fertile ground for conscious and effective coaching to take root.

When we are present, we do not have a pre-determined agenda for how far or even where the conversation should go. We know it will get where it is supposed to go and there is no impulse to change that which is not in our control. We relax into the fact that everyone has a unique journey in their path, and we respect that journey by not trying to speed it up or steer it. We reconnect to the fact that our most important role is to hold a space for and facilitate their reflection without rushing them towards a solution. They will see what they need to see on their time, not ours.   By being present we allow for whatever is meant to emerge. We can sense the clients' energy better in this state and this allows us to make better decisions about the next coaching move--where to go with what they offered us.

Here's an example. Just because a client states that she wants to come away from the session with a strategy to confront her leader about not getting that promotion may not mean that is what she will still want to get to as her session outcome once she starts to unpack her thinking – which has not even happened yet! Maybe she will see that it's about managing her feelings of rejection and inadequacy while simultaneously learning to market her results better within the organization. If we rush past their declaration of the outcome initially presented and don't take the time to luxuriously explore what achievement of this outcome will mean for them, how motivated and committed they feel, how getting this

promotion is fundamental to their development, what it will allow for, and how it will feel, and the like, then we have not helped them fully explore. It is not about our ability to make the client-declared outcome manifest in one session but rather our ability to explore that topic fully with an eye towards it so that what is meant to emerge does.

Whether 10% or 99% of the clients' session outcome is achieved, moving towards it is the aim, not how long time it takes to set the agreement or where the path may lead. In many cases, if we slow down to deeply explore the value the outcome imparts and their vision of their ideal self, they may actually find something deeper. How many times have you sought a goal only to find out there was something else tucked right below the surface to think through first? Masterful coaches are not attached to the client's self-declared goal post. They know that there is no way to predict where the session will go and a timeline cannot be attached to a client's evolution.

A masterful coach also does not assume that what the client says they want is what they ultimately need. It's a starting point for the journey, which is always a great thing. Coaching is like life. Things happen on the universe's timetable, not ours. It may be slow, fast or somewhere in-between. The dilemma for coaches is that we have to detach from what the solution will look like and how long it will take. If we don't, we are likely to miss it. Many coaches forgetting that the "achievement" of any outcome is not our work. Our work is to have the client set a destination for the session and to use that as a direction to start the conversation. Achieving or not achieving the client's exact outcome is something we cannot control. Nor should we! I can hear the pushback already. "It is our job to facilitate insight, is it not?" Yes! But where is the timeline posted? Did I miss it?

Nowhere in the plethora of human potential literature does it say it is fruitful or reasonable to have an expectation around the "how long" or "when" this happens. It's always been about having an aim, making progress one step at a time without attachment to the result. Yet, when we coach we think we need to achieve the client's outcome in an arbitrary 60-minute session. Can you see the insanity in this? Rushing the client to solution or action signifies that you are not present and as a result, not as effective as you could be. Plain and simple. Slow down! Let things move at their own pace.

Here's what I encourage you to think about as you practice getting comfortable with the pressure and uncertainty of achieving an outcome in a structured session. No matter how small your outcome may be for a session, rushing towards it never correlates with attaining it. Conscious intuitive, coaching does! Go slow to go fast. You cannot rush a miracle. Going deep is the BEST insurance that your client will gain value. So what if the session outcome was not (fully) attained! Was something valuable learned?! The point of setting an outcome for a conversation is for steerage, not velocity. Be as present as possible. You cannot be present if you are focused on achieving. Slow down, breathe and get present as many times as you need to in the call. It's normal to have performance anxiety. Give yourself permission to take deep breaths each time your nerves kick in.   Reflect back their outcome as many times as you need to! You both need to be crystal clear that this declaration is what they truly want and that you fully understand it. Rush through this part and you may wind up heading in the wrong direction.

You've got to aim before you fire or, as Stephen Covey says, you may climb the ladder only to find out you are on the wrong wall! I have learned that clients often come to insight as they set the session agreement! Why? They start to see beneath what they think they want to what they need, for who they need to be, what the challenge really is…not what they thought it was the first time they articulated it to the coach You can think of setting the agreement for the session as helping them sift through thousands of words floating in their brain that represent what they are struggling with for who-knows-how-long into a sentence or two. This takes time and patience. Bottom Line The moral of this story is to be present so that you can go slow and deep, not fast. Fast does not beget fast.

As David Whyte says in *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, "Speed doesn't come from speed. Speed itself has never been associated with good work by those who have achieved mastery in any given field. Speed is a result, an outcome, an ecology of combining factors on a person's approach to work; deep attention, well laid and sharpened tools, care, patience, the imagination engaged to bring disparate parts together in one whole." Good coaching can only occur when you are supremely present and knowing there is no guarantee of a result in 60 minutes. Coach with presence and the rest will take care of itself.   "Speed is addictive; it

undermines nearly everything in life that really matters: quality, compassion, depth, creativity, appreciation and real relationship"

Leadership Development Goals

Maynard Brusman

Part One: Are You Part of the 3 Percent?

Do your organizational leaders have clearly defined written goals? Research shows that those people who actually sit down and write out their goals not only end up achieving them, but have higher incomes and ratings for overall success and life satisfaction.

According to Brian Tracy in his book *Goals!*, there is a study that reveals just how effective written goals can be. Here is what Tracy reports:

Mark McCormack, in his book *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School,* tells of a Harvard study conducted between 1979 and 1989. In 1979, the graduates of the MBA program were asked, "Have you set clear, written goals for your future and made plans to accomplish them?" It turned out that only 3 percent of the graduates had written goals and plans. Thirteen percent had goals, but not in writing. Fully 84 percent had no specific goals at all.

Ten years later, in 1989, the researchers interviewed the members of that same class again. They found that the 13 percent who had goals that were not in writing were earning twice as much as the 84 percent of students who had no goals at all. And most surprisingly, they found that the 3 percent of graduates who had clear, written goals when they left Harvard were earning, on average, 10 times as much as the other 97 percent of graduates all together. The only difference between the groups was the clarity of the goals they had for themselves when they graduated.

Yes, you read that correctly. The 3 percent who had clear, written goals earned *ten times*

as much as the 97 percent who didn't have clear, written goals. Almost all successful people have goals, and outstanding high achievers have clearly defined written goals. That said, how come so few people actually write out their goals?

Why Not Set Goals?

There are four main reasons people don't set clear goals and write them out. Many people say they can't be bothered to take the time to sit and write them out, preferring to keep them in their heads. But no one is really that busy, as it only takes a few minutes. The real reasons are probably deeper, involving the fact that if they are kept in —the head, it is easy to change, revise and ignore them. This avoids accountability issues and facing failure. Looking further into the psychological reasons, we find the following four factors:

1. **First, most people don't realize the importance of goals.** If you grow up in a home where no one has goals or you socialize with a group where goals are neither discussed nor valued, you can very easily reach adulthood without knowing that your ability to set and achieve goals will have more of an effect on your life than any other skill. Look around you. How many of your friends or family members are clear and committed to their goals? Successful people are all committed to action plans. They set goals out in writing and follow them.

2. **They don't know how to set goals.** Some people confuse goals with wishes and fantasies. They think in terms of -having a lot of money, —getting a great job, —having a nice family, —getting fit, without breaking these wishes down into their component parts and the action steps it would take.

   These aren't goals but wishes and fantasies common to everyone. A goal is different. It is clear, specific and measurable. You know when you have achieved it or not.

3. **They have a fear of failure.** If goals aren't written down, we can change them to match what is actually achieved without having to face any feelings of failure. Furthermore, many people make the mistake of setting goals that are easily attained in order to avoid failing. This is a form of unconscious self-sabotage. They end up going through life functioning at sub-optimal levels rather than at the level they are truly capable.

4. **They have a fear of rejection.** The fourth reason people don't set clear, written goals, is that they fear they will be seen by others as ridiculous if they fail. They don't want to face criticism be seen as not capable or worthy. This is one reason to keep goals confidential when you begin to
start out with goal setting, other than sharing with your coach, mentor or a trusted peer.

3 Reasons Your Goals May not Work

Knowing the barriers to successful goal-setting, you are ready to learn how to set goals that will help you succeed and find the satisfaction you deserve. You may already have in mind three important goals for yourself that you've been wanting to achieve for a while. Go ahead and write them down now; save them for review later. Before you can set effective goals, however, you need to consider the three elements listed below:

There are three main reasons why your goals may fail to inspire and motivate change.

1. **The goal isn't valued enough**—you haven't committed your mind *and* heart. It doesn't align with your values. It may be something someone else thinks you should do, or, it may compete with other values you find more important.

2. **Your goal isn't specific**—it's too broad and overwhelming. While —getting fit is admirable, it really isn't a goal—rather the outcome of attaining the more

specific goals of working out regularly, doing sports and eating less junk food.

3. **Your goal isn't supported**—you don't have a coach or mentor to cheer you on in your little successes, or to help you come back after a setback.

Each of these elements must be carefully considered in creating goals that you can achieve. Once you have aligned your goals with your true identity, values and life purpose, you will find them easier to accomplish. The energy will flow, because the goals are an expression of your true self. Then, when you have written down your goals in a specific, clear, measurable way that is time-framed, the small steps along the way will become evident. This also keeps the energy flowing, and helps you to remain focused on the goal.

The best way to get support for your goals is from a coach. Friends and family members may be helpful, or not. A professionally trained coach is an expert at helping you to achieve what you want. He or she can also help you with the goal setting process to ensure that your goals are aligned with your values.

Resources:

Tracy, B. (2003). *Goals! How to Get Everything You Want —Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible.* Berrett-Koehler.

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Part Two: Strategies for Aligning Purpose, Identity and Values

"Begin with the end in mind," encourages Stephen Covey. When you look at your life, there are so many goals you could pursue. But before you can set meaningful goals for yourself, you need to know where you want to go. If you clearly understand where you want to be, you can make sure your actions bring you closer to that place each and

every day.

Corporations spend billions every year on strategic planning. They align their business goals and operations with their mission and values – their core reasons for being in business. Executives also involve themselves in similar planning sessions with their executive coaches. They examine their strengths and weaknesses with their coach, they look at their career and personal goals, and make strategic decisions about where and how to spend their time and energy.

Career coaches do the same thing with individuals. They explore and clarify with you your identity, your values, and your true purpose in life. How can you know what you need to do, where you need to spend your time and energy, if you don't know what is most important to you? This is difficult and important work. And it is hard to do alone. Taking the time to make personal definitions for yourself will make the process of goal setting and staying on track much easier.

Regardless of whether your goals are to finish a college degree, get a better job, buy a home, or lose weight, the process is the same. Goals you set must be consistent with your true identity if you want to sustain your motivation over time.

Here are three essential elements you must consider before writing down your goals:

1. **Examine your identity**: Quite simply, who are you? Self-awareness is the cornerstone to emotional intelligence and so important that this one feature will do more for your success in life than any other social competency. If you know yourself well, you can choose a path aligned with your strengths and weaknesses. You will not get distracted by people, places and things that are not congruent with your true self.

   How do you improve your self-awareness? Through working with your coach, doing assessments, examining your attitude, your passions, your self-image, examining your assumptions and beliefs and being willing to ask for and receive feedback.

Avoid defining yourself in terms of external things (job titles, education, family roles, etc.) and look at your personal integrity, ethics, and things that are important to you.

There are several behavior styles and personality type assessments available through your coach. Learning about your own preferred, natural way of behaving and thinking can greatly improve your understanding of yourself. As a side benefit, it also improves your understanding of others different from yourself. Ask your coach about the DiSC, PIAV, Meyers- Briggs, or other assessment tools.

Here are some questions to ask yourself to gain clarity about your identity:

> When thinking about myself, what am I most proud of? How would my friends describe me?
>
> How would my co-workers describe me? What does my family say about me?
>
> What are the three most important areas in my personal life? How have I changed over my adult years?
>
> What are my strengths?
>
> What do I avoid or dislike doing?

2. **Define your values:** What are your most fundamental beliefs? Identify three important moral values that are important to you. The more clearly defined your values are, the more energy and focus you will have for your goals. Values provide the basic structure you need to build your personal life, your career, your business and any other aspect of your life.

   Consider your attitude towards other people. Think about your current obligations to your community, family and friends. Reflect on the core beliefs you have that you would want to pass on to the younger generation. If you were to mentor someone, what values would you project as being most important in the world?

Here is an exercise to help define your values. Look over the following list of values and rank each from 1 to 10 (with 1 representing values most important to you). Be sure to add any that are important to you but not on this list.

Security	Wealth	Good health
Relationship with spouse	Relationship with children	Relationship with family
Fame/recognition	Job/career	Power
Happiness	Friendship	Retirement
Owning your own business	Long life	Travel
Respect of peers	Spiritual fulfillment	Charity
Having fun	Sports/fitness	Learning/education
Peace/tranquility	Influence	Integrity/ethics
Artistic expression	Community involvement	Ecology/environment

What are the five values you ranked the highest? Those five values should be receiving 80% of your time and energy. Write down your five most important values on a separate sheet of paper and post them somewhere you will see them every day. This will drive your actions and keep you focused on what is most important.

These values are the foundation of your success. They help you prioritize the goals you set for yourself. Without values clearly defined and prioritized, it is difficult to prioritize goals. This makes it easier to make a choice when commitments compete for your attention.

3. **Establish your goals:** Goal setting is not easy. It is hard work requiring time and thought. It means soul searching. Fear of failure – and fear of success – can stop people from setting clear goals and interferes with the process of actually putting them into writing.

If you have completed steps one and two – you have examined your identity and clarified your values – then you have already done the hard work. The goal setting should be a natural extension of your values.

If you value good health, then your goals of eating well and exercising regularly follow naturally. Focus on only three goals at a time, in order to be focused. Break each goal down to two or three components, along with specific, measurable, realistic time-frames.

Resource:

Tracy, B. (2003). *Goals! How to Get Everything You Want —Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible*. Berrett-Koehler.

Part Three: What's so SMART about Goals?

Goals are very exciting and energizing. They drive us to achieve beyond our expectations. They make it easier for us to focus and concentrate, and give us permission to say —no   to distractions. Then dreams really do come true. But unless you spend time to explore, plan and prioritize, setting the wrong goals can lead to disappointment and disillusion. This saps your energy and motivation.

It is crucial that you motivate both your mind (what you think you should do) and your heart (what you value). It is difficult to examine your values, beliefs, and true purpose without a trusted partner such as a coach. Once you have explored with your coach what is really important to you in your life (career, family, community, your values and purpose), it should become clear what you need to do. Your goals are a natural extension of your values.

Goal-Setting is Not for Sissies!

If you have prioritized 3 areas or values in your life, you are ready to set your goals. Three is an ideal number, as more than that can disperse your focus and

concentration. You should be prepared to spend time, money and energy on achieving these goals. Remember, *goal setting is not for sissies!* It requires sacrifice. You have to really want to achieve them and be willing to say —no to distractions.

At this point you're ready to cast those ideas into the form of a SMART goal. A SMART goal is:

> S—specific
>
> M—measurable
>
> A—attainable
>
> R—realistic
>
> T—time framed

1. Be **specific** when you write down a goal. Narrow your focus. —Getting fit is not a goal, but an outcome. —Exercising regularly is not specific enough. Write down things like, —Ride bike 40 minutes four times a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday). Start small and start specific. You can always expand goals as you make progress.

    Don't try to be all inclusive. Focus on making progress on two or three goals before expanding them. The more you can refine and define, the more specific you are, the easier it is to stay focused. Don't forget to ask for the help of your coach. Your coach can send you email reminders and hold you accountable.

2. Write down your goals and their **measures**. You will need to track the minutes, the days or the number of times you engage in your goal behavior. If you don't complete the originally defined time or measure, write down the minutes you did complete. This will track your efforts and help sustain you when you lack energy or motivation.

3. Make sure the goal you write down is **attainable** and **realistic**. If you know that 40 minutes on the bike will exhaust you, or create stress because of the time involved in showering, changing, or other inconveniences, then

change the goal to something easier and more attainable.

Make sure your goal is something you like to do. When you create pleasurable memories when you are engaged in the activity, then you increase your chances of doing it more often. If running on a treadmill makes you think of sweat and dread, then think about the fun you have when you run outdoors with a friend. One person reads books on a stationery bike, and the memory of reading a good story is associated with exercising. Some people find it useful to reward themselves after goal activity, as long as the reward doesn't sabotage.

"No pain, no gain" is true in many areas of goal setting. Remember, if there is too much pain, you will not gain your goal. Make sure you are willing to pay the price of achieving your goal.

By the same token, you need to evaluate and review your goals so that they are not too easy. If you are well on your way to achieving your goals, then you may have set them too low. Try stretching them 10 or 20 percent. If you are not on track, give yourself permission to reduce them by 10 percent. You should review them regularly with your coach and look at issues of alignment with your values. If you are not achieving your goals, you may have picked the wrong goals. People usually do what they want to do, and if you are choosing not to follow your goals, there is a reason that needs to be explored with your coach.

4. Your goals need to be **time-framed**. There needs to be a beginning and an end. This would look something like this: Have a fifteen percent increase in sales by the end of the year. This should be tracked at regular intervals. Furthermore, since sales increase could be a function of number of clients, there might be more specific goals for number of client contacts.

For example, you may have a goal of writing one article a week for your newsletter or e-zine to your clients and prospects. This may mean you need to read two books a month, spend one hour a week of internet or library research, and spend at least an hour writing, editing and formatting each week.

As you track your progress, ask for someone to hold you accountable.
Research shows that it is easier to stay on track when you have support and
reminders. Your coach is trained and has expertise in this area. Ask for help.
You don't have to do this alone.

What to Do When Goals are Incomplete

There are no failures. With the help of your coach, you can review without judgment
and look at your shortages. This is where real learning about yourself takes place. The self-
awareness that can be gained when you set a goal that you do not achieve is worth the
price of admission.

But these lessons are difficult lessons to learn by yourself. With a coach, reviewing
the reasons for incompletion tells us something about our true values, competing
commitments, real priorities and gives us invaluable information about *what really
matters* to us.

If self-sabotage appears, there are reasons that can be examined. Often there
are —old tapes   or outdated assumptions and beliefs that can be re-examined and
revised. Our goals bring out limiting beliefs about ourselves. But rather than giving
in to them, use your coach to explore them and to revise them into empowering
beliefs.

Choosing and planning your goals is hard work. It takes time and commitment. The
rewards, however, are great. By aligning your head with your heart, you will set
meaningful, attainable goals that will help you make progress toward what you truly
value in your life.

**Working with a seasoned executive coach trained in emotional intelligence and
incorporating leadership assessments such as the Bar-On EQ-i and CPI 260 can
help you become a leader who develops and achieves significant goals.** You can

become a better leader who models emotional intelligence, and who inspires people to become happily engaged with the strategy and vision of your organization.

Promoting Change in Your Coaching Practice

Joel DiGirolamo and Thomas Tkach

A model of adult change can provide valuable structure for your coaching engagements, bringing awareness to specific areas where blocks or resistance may be occurring and illuminating pathways for deeper exploration.

Each of us is born with a specific personality, or temperament, that will have a strong influence on our motivations and behavior patterns. Psychologists frequently refer to these as trait behaviors. Experiences we have throughout our lifetime overlay upon our temperament and bring about modifications in behavior, developing what are described as state behaviors. If we are willing, we may continue to explore our behaviors and evolve until the day we die. These behaviors and the motivations behind them are the framework from which we all operate.

Kurt Lewin, an early social psychologist, observed how groups would evolve through "unfreezing," shifting and then "refreezing." Individuals are no different. Business trainers Edgar Schein and Warren Bennis utilized this concept in multi-week corporate leadership development retreats they developed in the 1960s. Perhaps the most familiar and famous coaching tool emerging from these developments is David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, shown below.

Coaches frequently use the learning cycle to promote a shift in a client's paradigm, values or self-identity. This tool encourages clients to observe and reflect upon specific experiences. The idea is that the reflection will help develop new concepts pertaining to that experience so that the client may form new attitudes or behaviors in future experiences. Taken a step further, organizational development and leadership development professionals have applied this concept to situations where a client's or organization's paradigms no longer fit and one must explore more abstract layers in their framework.

The Experiential Learning Cycle

(Kolb, 1971)

Most clients feel emotions, if not in their body, then at least in their head. Emotions can often signal when something is awry and that a change is needed. We may think of this as a sort of base layer in the framework, what we call level 0. At the next level up reside the logic and facts from which we operate. For example, suppose a team leader holds the belief that all workers will inherently expend as little energy as possible. He observes his team working at what he perceives to be less than 100-percent effort despite his continued exhortations and incentives. Clearly a new model, or schema, must be developed to embrace the idea that some other force or factor may be at play. In essence, he must move up to the next level, or loop, of learning. Theorists dubbed this concept double loop learning.

Business theorist Chris Argyris collaborated with philosopher Donald Schön to take the concept of double loop learning into executive leadership development. As the executives were struggling to understand why a specific situation wasn't working out as planned, Argyris and Schön encouraged them to move up to the next level and explore new values, beliefs or schemas that may fit. Subsequent theorists probed an additional level and landed upon the idea of changing self-concept and learning style. These highest-level

changes manifest themselves in profound shifts in the individual's outlook and subsequent behavior. These conceptual levels create the framework we all use as a backdrop for our daily behaviors.

We call this model the Generalized Model of Adult Change (GMAC) since it appears to have broad applicability to adult humans.

Generalized Model of Adult Change (GMAC)

Existing Framework
3. Self-Concept, Learning Style
2. Values, Beliefs, Schemas
1. Facts, Logic
0. Body Sensations

Raw Data

Cognitive Information

Sensory Input

Filter Through Existing 0, 1, 2, 3

Evaluate Against Existing 0, 1, 2, 3

How High is Desire or Pain?

High / Low

New Attitude or Behavior

Develop New 0, 1, 2, 3

Consonance

Live in a State of Dissonance

Happy

Uncomfortable

New Me

We are all constantly bombarded with information. Our framework continuously filters this barrage of information and consciously or unconsciously allows a small amount through to our conscious awareness. Once we receive the information, we then consciously or unconsciously evaluate the information against the existing framework and feel either in consonance with that information or in dissonance with it. If we're in consonance with it, then we feel happy and continue on with life. In the event that we find ourselves in dissonance with it, we make a conscious or unconscious decision as to whether or not we will do something about the situation.

As humans, we generally change because we are either running away from something painful or toward something we are seeking. If the pain we are experiencing due to this dissonance is not very high or the desire toward a new state is insufficient to bring us to action, then we may choose to just live with it and remain uncomfortable. However, if the pain or desire becomes too great, we may reflect upon the situation and attempt to develop a new attitude or behavior—a change to our existing framework. And then the cycle continues anew.

Incorporating this model into your coaching may provide insight into areas where your client is encountering obstacles and identify a path forward. As you become proficient at looking at your client's goals and progress through this lens, the process should flow with ease and fluidity.

Life as Lottery: Coaching About Regret

William Bergquist

I don't play the lottery. As the president of an independent graduate school of psychology, I have enough risk assessment to handle in my life. A friend of mine, however, does play the lottery and recently bought some tickets for a "Power Ball" lottery that apparently had accumulated quite a large sum of money for someone to win. Having been doing quite a bit of reading in recent years about something now called "behavioral economics", I began to think about what must be going through the minds (and hearts) of those who did NOT win the lottery.

Specifically, I was wondering what it would be like to have a lottery ticket that is only one number off from the winning ticket—if this is a lottery where you get to pick your own number. Or what about the person who holds a ticket that was purchased at a store where the winner also bought her ticket? What if you purchased your lottery ticket one minute before or one minute after the winner bought her ticket? The behavioral economists do research on and write about the impact of almost wining something. It is the person who is just a moment away from success or that could have won "if only" that shows the strongest signs of regret.

Having missed the lottery by one number is much more painful than missing it by twenty numbers; it is also much more painful if the lottery ticket was purchased in the same store at almost the same time as the winner ("if I had only not purchased that extra box of cereal and gone directly to the check-out counter to get the winning ticket!"). What do we do after we experience the regret? What decisions do we make and what actions do we take? Do I say "chance passed me by . . . " In which case, I'm going to avoid this lottery at all costs in the future. Or so we say: "I'm so close I can taste it" and participate even more earnestly in this lottery.

Behavioral economists like Daniel Kahneman observe that regret evokes much stronger emotions that either the thrill of winning or the agony of defeat (and loss). There apparently is nothing more motivating than seeking to avoid regret for a decision that

was wrongly made or for a decision that was not made. And it might also be the case that nothing is more decisive than the decisions we make and actions we take post-regret.

What about the men and women we coach—either as a personal coach or coach to an organizational leader? What role does regret, the avoidance of regret, and post-regret decisions and actions play in their lives and work? In what ways, if any, do we help our coaching clients address the dynamics of regret?

As a starting point, I would suggest that the following questions be posed. These questions might engender reflections by our clients about the dynamics of regret in their own life and work:

In retrospect, what decisions and/or actions would you choose to change over the past (three months, six months, year)?
Why would you make these changes (if any)? What real difference would they make in your life/work?

What do the decisions you have made and actions you have taken during the past (three months, six months, year) tell you about your personal values and/or about your perspective(s) on life and the world in which you live?

What do your regrets about decisions not made or actions not taken (during the past three months, six months, year) tell you about your personal values and/or your perspective(s) on life and the world in which you live?

When you have been confronted with regret what decisions do you subsequently make that are influenced by the regret and what actions (if any) do you take?

There are many other questions that might be asked about "the road not taken" or "the wrong road taken." These reflections about regret will often be accompanied by strong emotions—so we need to be prepared to witness these emotions and sit with our client as they explore the nature, extent and ramifications of their regret. It is also critical that we move forward with our client beyond the regret.

We move with them into the future. I often talk with my clients about "leaning into the

future" (an important part of an appreciative perspective in the coaching process). Leaning (and learning) into the future is particularly important with regard to regret--because we can readily be frozen in our regret and not move beyond it. Alternatively, we stumble into the future filled with unprocessed emotions and unresolved internal conflicts. We have to remind our clients (and ourselves) that there will be many more lotteries in our future. There are many more paths to be taken, more decisions to be made and more actions to be taken in our future – and they can be directly aligned with our values and perspectives. So, forward we move . . .

Coaching to Shift Corporate Consciousness

Janet Sernack

In a recent *Fast Company* article "[Why Millennials Don't Want to Buy Stuff](#)," the author states that *"Humanity is experiencing an evolution in consciousness. We are starting to think differently about what it means to 'own' something."*

Technology is facilitating this evolution, and new generations are championing it and "the big push behind it all is our thinking is changing."

So how is our thinking changing, from what and to what? What is driving this supposed evolutionary shift and what can we do as coaches to align to it?

In our interconnected world, we can find practically anything we want, at any time, through the "unending flea market of the Internet." This is altering the balance between supply and demand and is overwhelming us with choices—people's concept of value and their motivations for purchasing are constantly shifting.

This is causing organizations to not only redefine what value means in the eyes of their customers and potential users, but also to find new ways of connecting our clients as to how their product or service can:

- *Make people's lives better.*
- *Connect people to a broader community.*
- *Connect people to something bigger than themselves.*

Doing this enables us to explore new ways of helping our clients to better ignite people's motivations for purchase.

This requires us to help our clients create:

- Sharp deviations from conventional thinking, planning and development processes

for new products and services so that they create the real value customers and potential users are seeking.

- Major disruptions to how they see, attend to and connect with the whole so that they know how to generate creative ideas and innovative solutions that solve customers, business and society's most inherent and wicked problems.

Perhaps the first key step is to work on attending to and evolving our own consciousness because to solve a problem, we need to shift from the same consciousness that created it.

To shift our consciousness, we first need to be aware of it and pay deep attention to it to shift our blind spots.

A first key step is to know how to see the world in new ways.

Developed by Otto Scharmer and described in his *book "[Theory U](),"* he states that "What we pay attention to and how we pay attention—both individually and collectively—is key to what we create.

What often prevents us from "attending" are what Scharmer calls our "blind spots," the inner place from which each of us operates.

Learning to be present to and become aware of our blind spots is critical to bringing forth the profound strategic, systemic and innovative changes our clients are seeking in business today.

To generate discovery, we need know how to prototype, verify and manifest the new.

The next key step is to know how to enable our client to generate discovery. Joseph Jaworski, in his book "[Source]()," describes the generative discovery process as a way of:

(1) Being open to alternate and differing world views;

(2) Operating from the stance of human possibility;

(3) Tapping into the generative order of the universe, the field of active information—

the Source.

Jaworski broadly outlines the seven core practices:

1. **Preparation:** Undertaking a disciplined path of inner self-management.
2. **Igniting passionate purpose:** Defining your own unique necessity, for an innovative solution to a clearly defined problem, with the personal foreknowledge that the solution exists in the realm of human possibility.
3. **Observing and immersing:** Seeing reality with fresh eyes, suspending judgment and immersing oneself in the whole system.
4. **Letting go:** Releasing old mental models, mindsets and world views that will not serve your own innovation intention and process, beginning a period of incubation.
5. **Indwelling and illumination:** Living in the undertaking, surrendering oneself to the work, retreating and reflecting, being in nature as a portal and receiving illumination—the perception of a new reality, discovering the hidden solution.
6. **Crystallizing and Prototyping:** Transforming the business problem into an innovative vision and prototype.
7. **Testing and Verifying:** Transforming the new knowledge into commercially viable and useable products, services and strategies in ways that people will connect to, value and cherish.

Imagine if we could encourage our clients and their organizations to invest in evolving their consciousness?

To disrupt their habitual short term "stimulus-response" ways of operating in order to seriously connect with and redefine what value really means in the eyes of customers and potential users?

To find new ways of connecting people in organizations with their products or services that could really make their lives better, connect them to a broader community and to something bigger than themselves?

Wouldn't the world be a better place for it?

Finding Sanctuary in a World of Complexity, Unpredictability and Turbulence

William Bergquist

In a beautifully poignant song ("And So It Goes", 1983), written by the popular singer, Billy Joel, a sanctuary is described that exists in every person's heart. This part of our heart will always be "safe and strong." It is where we "heal the wounds from lovers past/Until a new one comes along." Sanctuaries of a similar nature exist in our heart and hopefully are supported by our organizations and society as a means of healing other wounds and providing space and time for needed reflection and inquiry.

We are currently confronting a postmodern world that is very complex. Clarity of mission and purpose seems critical in leading an organization, in large part because our organizations are fragmented, contradictory and unpredictable. We live in an era not of accelerating change, but rather of turbulence (the "white water" world): rapid change intermixes with patterned change, stagnation and chaos. In such a world, there is great need for Billy Joel's "safe and strong" sanctuary.

Complexity, unpredictability and turbulence are not new to us living in a postmodern world. And we are not the first people to yearn for sanctuary. Back in the 1930s, with World War II looming in the near future and the world limping its way out of a major recession, there was a strong need for sanctuary-- as captured in the popular film, *Lost Horizons*. Ronald Colman played the role of a very successful British statesman who is kidnapped and taken to a remote land called "Shangri-La." For Colman, as for many of us, this location held great attraction. It was free of pain and strife. Shangri-La also provided an opportunity for reflection on the complex and turbulent world outside, while giving those who entered its cloistered walls (in this case, a hidden valley) the opportunity for personal growth and renewal.

Colman, like many us who have created or stumbled into "Shangri-La," found that the hardest part is leaving and returning to a world that he no longer appreciated. However, "Shangri-La" like all sanctuaries exists precisely because of our need to remain engaged in

an active life in which we address the critical needs and concerns of our family, our organization and our community.

The Nature of Sanctuary

A sanctuary may be a physical location: a retreat, a "safe place" within or outside the organization. Some Japanese firms provide private rooms where employees can go to let loose their frustrations and anger. However, sanctuaries (almost by definition) usually exist outside of an organizational context. They are found in remote locations, hallowed grounds, beautiful settings or formally constructed retreat centers, spas and health resorts.

Alternatively, as Billy Joel suggests, the sanctuary may be within one's own heart or head. In one of his gentle stories from the Prairie Home companion radio program about life in a small Minnesota town ("Lake Wobegon"), Garrison Keiller (1983) speaks about the "storm home" that was assigned to him by his school when he was a small boy. Keiller lived in the country and had to get to school by bus. Consequently, to prepare for the possibility that he might be stranded in town as a result of a snow blizzard, the school gave him (and the other children living in the country) an alternative home to go to that is located in town. Keeler never had to go to this home; however, he often walked by his "storm home" and reflected on the loving, supportive nature of the couple who were his "storm parents." He often thought of this man and woman and their house when things were going bad or when he was discouraged. He fantasized that this couple had specifically picked him out as their "storm child" and that they would welcome him with open arms during difficult times.

We may have similar need for a "storm home" as adults working in a highly turbulent world. The"storm home" of the mind may be created through use of a technique or ritual that provides internal support and encouragement for our difficult decisions and risk‑taking behavior. In essence, we pat ourselves on the back or find a way (through meditation, daydreaming or quiet reflection) to calm ourselves down and gain a sense of reassurance. A colleague of mine who presides over an educational institution found that he could gently touch his forehead when under stress and evoke with this touch a sense of personal calmness. These moments of personal sanctuary during the day may be essential components in any postmodern survival kit. Another colleague ensures that she set aside

one day each week for her writing. A third friend insists on swimming in the San Francisco Bay every day during lunchtime. In each instance, an internal sanctuary that is "safe and strong" has been created for both healing and reflection.

The "Negative" Sanctuary

Many types of sanctuaries are available to us has inhabitants of the 21st Century. Some of these are quite beneficial, others are destructive. The safe spaces within our heads sometimes take the rather destructive form of projections upon our leaders. Our Tavistock colleagues suggest that we project onto our leader all of our own wisdom and knowledge. We perceive them as wise and compassionate people, when in fact they may be quite the opposite. This basic perception often prevents members of a group from "growing up" and when they do tend to grow up there often is a "revolution" in which the king or queen (i.e. , the leader) is deposed and replaced by one of the other members of the group. This cycle of dependency and counter-dependency is replicated again and again, leaving the group without continuity or an effective plan for group member maturation.

Alternatively, we project our aggressive attitudes onto the leader and make him or her a great warrior—or project our dreams and aspirations onto the leader and make this person into a great visionary. In the case of these latter two forms of projection, there is a swing back and forth from admiration of the leader to disillusionment -- much as in the case of dependency on the leader. All three sets of assumptions provide temporary "storm homes" when we are faced with the need to make decisions and establish commitments in a relativistic, postmodern context.

In his essay written more than two decades ago on the spiritual hollowness of the baby boom generation, George Sim Johnston (1990) identified four other types of destructive sanctuaries that seem to be still prevalent. He suggests that these sanctuaries may provide a "manipulable sense of well- being." One of these sanctuaries is sexuality -- the obsession with seduction and the almighty orgasm.

Unfortunately, this sanctuary in organizational life has often been employed by men, at the expense of women employed in the organization. A second destructive sanctuary, according to Johnston, has been politics. This sanctuary was particularly prevalent during

the Viet Nam war years and has more recently regained popularity with the threat of internal and external terrorism. War and politics become wonderful distractions from our immediate problems and concerns.

Johnston's third sanctuary is health or more specifically our obsession with exercise and diet. While many formal sanctuaries, such as health spas and recreational centers, do a wonderful job of providing sanctuary from tense daily living, there can be an overconcern that leads not only to alienation from some of life's richest treats but also isolation from other, diverse aspects of life. Finally, according to Johnston, new forms of religion serve as sources of sanctuary. The "new age" religions, according to Johnston, sometime provide temporary solace in part because they demand only temporary and superficial commitment.

We might add several other candidates to Johnston's list, especially when examining sanctuaries within organizational settings. One excellent candidate is power and status within the organization. If we can just get the corner office or the new company car, then all will be well in our own personal world. If we can just gain control over the budget or expand the number of people reporting to us, then we know that we have arrived and will finally find some happiness. Another candidate is wealth. For many of us, the accumulation of wealth not only becomes a sign of self-worth, but also a "storm home." If only we can set aside X number of dollars, we can weather any storm and, even more importantly, we can find some enduring sense of meaning and fulfillment in life.

This is the case, especially when we consider yet another candidate for sanctuary, namely, purchase and consumption of material goods. In 1955, Erich Fromm foresaw the role to be played by consumption in our postmodern world when he spoke of the "marketing orientation" of men and women in our Western world, and proposed that this orientation is a psychological defense against the terror of death and meaningless life. A somewhat more contemporary observer of American society, Sam Kean (Kean, 1991, pp. 110-111) suggested, similarly, that: "at worst, postmodern man is the concupiscent consumer. His tastes, life-style, and convictions are formed by fashion. Like the god, Proteus, and unlike the substantial self-made men of the last century, he changes shapes at will . . .You could call him disillusioned except that he has never dared care about anything passionately enough to have developed hope or illusion."

Organizational Sanctuaries

How do we ensure (or at least encourage) a more productive use of sanctuary? We would suggest that constructive organizational sanctuaries are created when space and time are found for: (1) reflection on past experiences in life (a passage into a deeper sense of self) and (2) experimentation in thought or action regarding future ways in which we wish to lead our lives. A number of years ago I asked a group of managers enrolled in a Masters level organizational behavior program to identify and study sanctuaries in their own organizations to see how these two factors play out.

My students identified many types of organizational sanctuaries, ranging from special rooms or outdoor spaces in the organization where employees call "cool out," to elaborate programs that focus on relaxation responses, meditation and other forms of stress reduction. Other managers commented on those special moments in the ongoing operations of their organization or work group when sanctuary is created.

Yet others spoke more personally of how work in and of itself provides sanctuary for them from other more stressful aspects of their lives (a marriage in trouble, loneliness as a single parent and so forth). Most often, however, our managers concluded that their own organization rarely if ever provided sanctuary for them. As a result, they look outside their organization for sanctuaries.

As organizational coaches and consultants, how do we help our clients to find or construct personal or organization-based sanctuaries? Can we consistently provide appropriate and constructive solace to the battered, perhaps indifferent, postmodernist? How do we help to create opportunities for reflection, experimentation and, ultimately, renewal and re-creation? In many instances, coaches and consultants help to create successful organizational sanctuaries by establishing temporary systems.

First described by Matthew Miles (1964), temporary systems are to be found throughout our society, but are often underused in formal organizational settings. Examples of temporary organizational systems that Miles offers include carnivals, theater, celebrations, games, retreats, workshops, conferences, task forces, project teams, coffee

breaks, and office parties. How do we create each of these settings in the organizations with which we work? At a more personal level, Miles identified psychotherapeutic sessions and personal growth programs as temporary systems. How do we replicate settings that are comparable to these sanctuaries?

Temporary systems can take on many different forms. Some provide short-term, ad hoc settings in which new methods or products are tested out (a "wind tunnel" for new ideas), while others provide regularly convened alternative structures , in which all or many members of an organization can identify and solve problems , communication , and manage conflicts in ways that are not usually employed in daily work life (what is sometimes called a "collateral organization").

Some temporary systems enable employees to try out a new skill without fear of failure (a "dress rehearsal"), while other temporary systems enable employees to get a taste of the endpoint to which they are striving. Regardless of the forum which these systems take, they provide a "storm home" that can help men and women return in renewed fashion to the postmodern fray.

More generally, coaches and consultants are effective if they help organizations find sanctuaries that exist at those moments and places in organizational life when there is, as Nevitt Sanford (1966) suggested many years ago, an appropriate balance between challenge and support. Often, as Csikszentmihalyi (1990) noted, organizational life is either quite boring or profoundly anxiety• provoking. It is in the threshold between boredom and anxiety that we find rich occasions for organizational learning as well as for personal growth and learning. It is in the threshold that we find Johansson's (2004) Medici Effect – the intersection of ideas, concepts and cultures.

As organizational coaches and consultants, we can be particularly effective in influencing the directions and cultures of organizations when we can help create conditions that are both challenging and supportive. Our attempts to encourage change (which inevitably increases challenge) must be matched with a comparable concern for support and nurturance. We are likely to find organizational sanctuaries when and where this balance is achieved. In creating a sanctuary, we must, as Riane Eisler (1987) has suggested, mold a chalice to contain the anxiety and direct the energy (Sanford's support), while also wielding the sword of change and transformation (Sanford's challenge) which helps to

mobilize creativity and energy in the first place.

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Divergent Collaboration

Bart Barthelemy and Candace Dalmagne

"If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes thinking about solutions."

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"You cannot solve a problem from the same consciousness that created it; you must learn to see the world anew."

Albert Einstein

When we combined these two Einstein quotes and applied them to very tough challenges, something interesting occurred. We called it, Divergent Collaboration . The main idea behind Divergent Collaboration is that attacking a problem with diversity and collaboration yields more powerful results than focusing only on generating solutions. By connecting individuals from a wide spectrum of backgrounds, fresh thinking is infused into a problem as it is explored in novel ways.

While typical collaborations try to harness diversity from traditional places – different departments of an institution, different fields in the same industry, or different stakeholder groups along the value chain (such as customers, suppliers, or even competitors) - Divergent Collaboration takes a more radical approach. It brings together people who have a range of relevant expertise on a problem, in the form of hobbies, work, education, or experiences, but in a different or tangential application, environment, or industry. New insights and ideas emerge from unrelated areas that would be missed using classical approaches to solving complex technology and business challenges. By innovating around the problem before jumping to solutions, there is a greater potential for coming up with truly innovative outcomes.

Many teams, groups and organizations approach innovation in relatively traditional ways: brainstorming for new ideas and approaches, setting up internal innovation teams, organizing Integrated Product Teams (IPTs), looking to their R&D laboratories for solutions, formally and informally soliciting inputs from outside solution providers, and

using the developing networking technologies to scan for solutions and expertise throughout the world.

All of these methods work quite well, particularly when the challenge or opportunity is reasonably well-defined and the potential solution space is generally predictable. But solutions are usually solicited from a relatively limited and traditional set of potential solvers and, not surprisingly, from experts or domains that are well known to the problem owner. This limits the possibility for really new and novel ideas and often leads to incremental improvements rather than breakthrough innovations. With Divergent Collaboration, organizations can open up the problem as much as possible and as early as possible, by looking at it from a variety of different and atypical perspectives so as to increase the potential for creative solutions.

The challenges where we applied Divergent Collaboration were long-standing programs, but there are certainly benefits to using Divergent Collaboration on brand new problems. While it can be applied at any time during the life of a project, challenge, or opportunity, employing the process as early as possible is a particularly effective and efficient use of this technique. Not only is there more freedom to pursue new directions, but the problem definition phase of a new problem is often much less expensive in terms of dollars, hours, timeliness and opportunity costs than the solution phase.

In any case, the process definitely shakes up a project and the potential negative consequences of this need to be acknowledged. The negative side arises from the fact that this technique will open up some new thinking that may be uncomfortable for the problem owner and the existing project team. The divergent aspect of this process will stimulate, on purpose, a change in thinking, some possible new paradigms, a potential need to change direction and at a minimum, a new look at the challenge. All of these elements require the acceptance of change as a possible outcome, and the project team needs to be open to dealing with these changes.

For the problems that we put through the process – Information Visualization, Resiliency, Human Performance Augmentation, and Man-Machine Teaming – Divergent Collaboration yielded very significant and innovative results and stimulated creative new

approaches and strategies. Some results include: new ways to deliver critical information to decision makers using artistic, multi-media, music and choreography for information visualization; holistic and neuropathic approaches to provide care for service personnel before, during and after high- intensity situations for better resiliency; augmentation of operator performance by integrating traditional neuroscience techniques with alternative approaches such as acupuncture, electromagnetic stimulation and tonal changes to maintain alertness; and consideration of generational differences as a guide to the development of advanced automated systems by Baby Boomer and Gen-X engineers for use by Gen-Y users.

Additionally, the Divergent Collaboration™ project on Man-Machine teaming resulted in the investigation of innovative approaches to situation awareness and minimally invasive procedures being used in robotic surgery for application to Unmanned Air Vehicles in high- intensity, high impact warfighting situations requiring precision strike. These non-traditional approaches were developed by participants from a variety of professions; the Divergent Collaboration™ teams included an astronaut, an orchestra conductor, a Catholic Brother, a US Navy Seal, a spy trainer, a special education teacher, a university softball coach, a robotics surgeon, and a Peace Corps worker who had just served in a remote African village, to name a few. These individuals were able to make connections that might otherwise be missed by people that have preconceived biases or are not able to look at their problem objectively because they work too closely to it.

The Ultimate Power Couple: Professional Coaches and Change Management Professionals

Jenna Filipkowski, Ph.D., ACC

As someone who knows a lot about individual's behavior change and organizational systems changes, I sometimes feel like an imposter. Over the past three years, I've researched, published and designed courses about change management. I have also become a mother, a full-time student, a business owner and a credentialed coach. And yet, despite experiencing significant personal changes, my attitude toward change has not significantly altered. Like most people, I still resist it.

Recently, the Human Capital Institute (HCI) and the International Coach Federation (ICF) conducted a study on change management and coaching. In our research, respondents identified coaching-related activities (e.g., one-on-one, team and work-group coaching) as the most helpful method to achieve change management goals and initiatives. Coaching-related activities are rated as more helpful than e- learning and classroom training.

Why? What makes this partnership work?

On paper, the change management process is linear, but the change experience is not. Sometimes change managers and leaders are guilty of oversimplifying this; they do not anticipate and plan for how change is experienced at the individual level. The motivation someone has to change increases and decreases depending on how much they need to change, their level of self-efficacy and how significant the change is to them. This is where coaching can help. Coaching is a powerful tool to identify and address individuals' resistance to change, and it should be part of any major organizational change initiatives.

Where does resistance come from? Coaches have a skillset to address these common challenges:

1. We fear we aren't able to meet the new reality.

We are afraid of what that failure might signify about our own capabilities. This fear can be immobilizing and resisting change may look like procrastination, self-sabotage or discounting organizational initiatives.

To overcome this, coaches can address clients' self-efficacy in one-on-one, team or group sessions; organizations can offer training and support; and leaders can encourage a growth mindset.

2. We have insufficient information about the change.

Compared to the people most directly affected by a change, change designers, managers and sponsors have had more time to process and prepare for a shift. An organization-wide technology change may take months or even years of planning, but too often, changes of this magnitude are only communicated to users as it is launched, upending their daily routines.

To overcome this, coaches can point out clients' non-evidence–based assumptions and encourage people to seek out more information. Those involved with the change should build multi-channel communication plans that identify new expectations. These plans should allow time for processing and Q&A sessions.

3. We imagine the worst possible outcomes.

When I was pregnant, I was scared about how a baby would impact the life my husband and I share. I realize now that if I allowed myself to imagine a different future then—one like my life today that is beautiful and so very fun as a family of three—I would not have felt so hesitant and nervous about becoming a mother.

Coaches hold space for clients to explore possibilities about the future, help surface fears and barriers and define a clear path for their goals. Coaches partner with clients during these transitions to support and challenge so they are better able to move toward their desired future.

4. We like things the way they are.

Most people cling to what they recognize, and yet, we also know that growth is inevitable. Messages of resistance from a client sound like communicating contentment with the status quo, expressing commitment to the current situation, and sharing the disadvantages of a change.

[Motivational Interviewing](#) is a technique used in coaching to build intrinsic motivation and strengthen the client's commitment to action. Coaches ask powerful questions to build awareness of the resistance, identify its symptoms and impact and help clients reframe the situation to one that is more positive and focused on their goals.

For the HCI ICF research study, I interviewed both change management professionals and professional coach practitioners. In the majority of interviews, it was a novel idea to pair change management practices with coaching. It's a powerful union to take coaching skills and apply them to change initiatives in a thoughtful way. How are you building a coaching culture for change management? What have you learned?

Section Three: Tools for Change

Three Tips for Developing Presence in a Hyperactive World

Susan Sadler

We've all had them: conversations in which you feel your mind wandering. To some extent, it's human nature. In fact, there's a popular notion that we have around 70,000 thoughts per day, though this is still undecided as there's no agreement among researchers as to the definition of a thought. If your mind wanders during a coaching session, that can be a problem. Maybe it's a fleeting distraction, a random thought or something that's more challenging to brush aside. The reality is we coach in environments with constant demands for our attention.

Coaching presence is one of the most important coaching competencies, as it underpins all the other competencies. Without presence, it will be difficult to demonstrate other competencies, such as establishing trust and intimacy, active listening, powerful questioning and more. Coaches often describe presence as being in the flow, an openness, and a connection to the conversation. People who have experienced someone's presence speak about its value and impact and how it made them feel.

It may seem counterintuitive that presence is both a way of being and doing—demonstrable and observable. It's a mindset as well as a combination of skills. How do we continue to develop it then, when the expectations, distractions and demands of the world move at breakneck speed?

Mindset

The mindset of a coach, before and during a coaching session, is paramount. Presence is, among other things, quieting one's mind and being open to whatever shows up and unfolds. It's how to listen without an agenda while picking out important beliefs, values, issues or challenges. It's how to be judgement-free and not secretly wishing your client were better at scheduling or prioritization (as an example). It's how to have more compassion and not rush to a solution. It's being comfortable with *being* and not necessarily *doing*.

While the competency of presence is well defined in the ICF Core Competencies, the demonstration of presence may feel more nebulous. If silence is an important part of demonstrating presence, how do we keep tuned in? Here are **three tips** to develop your coaching presence:

Mindfulness

If you already have a mindfulness practice, leverage it to quickly bounce back from, or even eliminate, distractions. Tap into what allows you to quiet your mind and let go, applying it in a coaching context. Anecdotal evidence suggests that mindfulness helps to clear one's mind more quickly under pressure, a key ability impacting presence.

Personally, I've struggled with internalizing many of the mindfulness courses and practices that I've learned. It took being side-lined by an injury and surgery to develop a meaningful mindfulness practice. I had to slow down. Meditation has allowed me to regroup more quickly in many different challenging contexts and situations.

Presence can be Learned

An important aspect of a coach's professional development is continuous learning. A recent article on learning in the *Harvard Business Review* suggests that "through the deliberate use of practice and dedicated strategies to improve our ability to learn, we can all develop expertise faster and more effectively. In short, we can all get better at getting better."

Writer and marketer Mike Fishbein correctly states that "learning takes time. You'll inevitably face failure and even boredom along the way." Fishbein quotes author Robert Greene of *Mastery*: "Practice, particularly in the beginning, is never exciting. To persist past these moments, you have to feel love for the field, you have to feel passionately excited by the prospect of discovering or inventing something new."

The takeaway? It takes time to learn. There's no finish line. Whether you're a new or experienced coach, you're always learning and evolving.

Acceptance

Coaches aren't robots; you may have an "off" day. Show yourself the same compassion and acceptance that you give your clients. Acknowledge that you're doing the best job possible at that moment in time. Be kind to yourself. If you're not already doing so, take time to pause, breathe and reflect on being in the moment, the dance of coaching and letting go—even when you're not at the top of your game. Focus on what you did well and learn for next time.

There were times in my early days of coaching when I talked too much and was too solution focused, too eager to "show" my client my value. It was my mentor coach who taught me that my presence was truly the gift of coaching. Yes, brainstorming strategies, tactics and action plans are all important, but what moves and inspires people is your presence. That has always stuck with me. If you intentionally prepare your mindset before coaching and develop and learn to enhance your presence skills, it will continue to bloom. Trust that your presence is enough.

The Application of Appreciative Perspectives
To the Coaching Enterprise

William Bergquist, Ph.D.

Appreciative inquiry has arrived! This term and the underlying concepts and attitudes associated with this term are flourishing in the fields of organizational development and organizational consultation. The term appreciative inquiry has even been abbreviated. Organizational consultants who are in the know now simply call it AI. This seems to be a sign that this organizational change strategy is now fully admitted to the club. There is an important difference, however, between AI and many of the other concepts of leadership and management that have passed like a forgettable breeze across the organizational landscape. AI has real substance. It offers great promise as a vehicle for shifting attitudes and as a way of informing and transforming organizational processes. There is much to appreciate in the progress made to date in the field of appreciative inquiry. Yet, more must be done if the full potential of AI is to be realized. Bergquist identifies ways in which AI can be expanded and, in particular, ways in which AI can be incorporated in a masterful organizational coaching strategy.

Expanding the Scope of AI

Structural strategies are needed to complement the current process-oriented and attitude-oriented strategies of Appreciative Inquiry (Bergquist, 2003). Furthermore, appreciative strategies can be effectively used by organizational coaches to both enhance the work being done by these coaches and expand the use and perspective of Appreciative Inquiry (Bergquist, Merritt & Phillips, 1999, 2004).

A remarkable organizational consultant and educational visionary, Goodwin Watson, suggested many years ago that effective and enduring organizational change requires more than just a shift in process or attitude. Watson suggested that all organizations are constituted of three dynamics: process, structure and attitude (Watson & Johnson, 1972). These are not priority steps in a systemic

intervention strategy, but instead function as interdependent leverage points for systemic organizational change and/or improvement. These three strategy points are understood as follows:

> **Structure** is all of those organizationally defined parameters and connections within and through which persons and processes in an organization carry out the purpose of the organization. It is the formal and dynamic architecture defined by the organization within which the mission of the organization is carried out.
> **Process** is inclusive of functions and activities that are integral to achieving the results of an organization. It concerns the day-to-day interaction among those who work in and for the organization.
> **Attitude** is the individual and corporate mental and emotional landscape upon which decisions about the organization and its process are navigated. It concerns the foundational culture of the organization, as well as the assumptions, beliefs, values and personal aspirations that animate and guide those engaged in the activities of the organization.

Watson proposes that all three of these strategic points must be engaged if organizational change and improvement are to be sustained. Leaders of an organization that introduce structural change, such as a re-engineered manufacturing procedure or a new employee compensation plan, will likely find it very difficult to sustain this structural change. They need the complementary changes in process (how people work in this new structure) and attitude (how people feel about working in this new structure with new processes). Similarly, process changes and changes in attitude are insufficient if the structures of the organization are incompatible with these processes and attitudes. Some change agents argue for a shift in heart (attitude), while others call for training and education (process).

Yet others advocate for legal changes (structure) or for changes in the organization chart (structure). Watson believes that structural changes are often very seductive because they require no more than the stroke of a pen or brute enforcement. Structural change, however, is often ineffective, or even counterproductive and destructive, when not accompanied by changes in process and attitude. Watson was prophetic in the 1950s when he declared that school desegregation (structural change) would be destructive and, ultimately, unsuccessful, if it was not

accompanied by changes in process and attitudes. Desegregation would only work if it was accompanied by programs that assisted the teachers in working with an integrated classroom (process change) and that prepared citizens for a shifting perspective regarding educational quality, governmental control and the civil rights that are inherent in citizenship (attitude change).

We can learn much from Goodwin Watson when considering ways in which the organizational benefits associated with appreciative inquiry can be sustained. At the present time, appreciative inquiry primarily concerns organizational processes and attitudes. This focus on process and attitude is commendable, given the all too frequent focus in contemporary organizations on structural change. Structural strategies, however, must be identified if the practitioners of appreciative inquiry are to take the next step. We can begin this process of expanding the concept of AI by looking at several different ways in which the processes and attitudes of appreciation have been described up to the present time. While much has been written over the past decade about the specific techniques of appreciative inquiry, I still value the earlier, more tentative and thought-provoking concepts offered at the point in time when the appreciative perspective was first being considered (Srivastva, Cooperrider & Associates, 1990). Therefore, I will anchor my brief description of appreciative processes and attitudes in these early formulations.

The Processes of Appreciation

These are three ways in which the term *appreciation* is commonly used. They are each related to the processes of appreciation. We appreciate other people through attempting to understand them. We also appreciate other people through valuing them and often seeing them in a new light. A third way of appreciating another person is by being thoughtful and considerate in acknowledging their contributions to the organization.

Understanding Another Person

Fundamentally, the process of appreciation refers to efforts made to gain a clearer understanding of another person's perspective. We come to appreciate the point of view being offered by our colleagues or the situation in which other people find themselves. This appreciation, in turn, comes not from detached observation, but rather from direct engagement. One gains knowledge from an appreciative perspective by "identifying with the observed" (Harmon, 1990).

Compassion, rather than objectivity, is critical. As appreciative managers, consultants, coaches or leaders, we care about the people and groups with whom we work. Neutrality is inappropriate in such a setting. Compassion, however, does not imply either a loss of discipline or a loss of boundaries between one's own perspective and the perspective held by the other person. *Appreciation is deeply caring about and caring for another person's problems, without personally taking on their problems.* We can appreciate another person's problems and assist this person in solving these problems without losing our personal identity.

Valuing Another Person

In some contexts, the process of appreciation refers to an increase in worth or value. A stock portfolio "appreciates" in value. This use of the term appreciation would seem, on the surface, to be economic in character. Value, however, can be assigned in non-financial terms. Van Gogh looked at a vase of sunflowers. He appreciated these flowers by rendering a painting of them. In doing so, he increased the aesthetic value of these flowers for everyone. Van Gogh similarly appreciated and brought new value to his friends through his friendship: "Van Gogh did not merely articulate admiration for his friend: He created new values and new ways of seeing the world through the very act of valuing" (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 123).

Peter Vaill recounts a scene from *Lawrence of Arabia* in which Lawrence tells a British colonel that his job at the Arab camp was to "appreciate the situation" (Vaill, 1990, p. 323). By appreciating the situation, Lawrence assessed and then added credibility to the Arab cause, much as a knowledgeable jeweler or art appraiser can increase the value of a diamond or painting through nothing more than the thoughtful appraisal. Lawrence's appreciation of the Arab situation, in turn, helped to produce a new level of courage and ambition on the part of the Arab communities with which Lawrence was associated. *Appreciative organizations create value, courage and ambition among those who are associated with the organization.* This is a key point in the process of organizational appreciation.

Recognizing the Contributions of Another Person

From yet another perspective, the process of appreciation concerns our recognition of the contributions that have been made by another person: "I appreciate the efforts you have made in getting this project started." Sometimes this sense of appreciation is reflected in the special

recognition we give an administrator for a particularly successful project or in the bouquet of flowers we leave with our secretary on National Secretary's Day.

While these occasional forms of recognition can be gratifying to those receiving the praise, appreciation can be exhibited in an even more constructive, ongoing manner through the daily interactions between a leader and his associates. *The consistent acknowledgment of contributions is embedded in mutual respect and it is founded on an appreciative attitude regarding the nature and purpose of work.* If the leader "sees work as the means whereby a person creates oneself (that is, one's identity and personality) and creates community (that is, social relations), then the accountability structure becomes one of nurturing and mentoring" (Cummings and Anton, 1990, p. 259).

THE ATTITUDES OF APPRECIATION

The term appreciation is now being used with regard to not only individuals but also organizational settings. It has become more closely aligned with shifts in organizational attitude. There are three ways in which the attitude of appreciation is exhibited in an organization. An organization is considered to be appreciative if one finds a positive image of the future within an organization, especially if this image infuses strategic planning in the organization with meaning and purpose. The organization is also appreciative if a concerted effort is being made to recognize the distinct strengths and potentials of people working within the organization. Finally, an organization is appreciative if its employees consistently value and seek to establish cooperative relationships and recognize the mutual benefits that can be derived from this cooperation.

Establishing a Positive Organizational Image of the Future

This use of the term appreciation relates both to individual attitudes and organizational climate. *Appreciative organizations lean into the future.* We grow to appreciate an organization by investing it with optimism. In an appreciative organization there is a pervasive sense of hope about the future for this organization and the valuable role it can play in society. "Organization-wide affirmation of the positive future is the single most important act that a system can engage in if its real aim is to bring to fruition a new and better future" (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 119). Effective leaders, in such a setting, will be "not only concerned with what is but also with what might be" (Frost &Egri, 1990, p. 305). Employees come to appreciate their own role and that played by other

members of the organization with regard to contributions that enable the organization to realize its purposes and values.

Recognizing Distinctive Strengths and Competencies

Appreciation in an organizational setting also refers to recognition of the distinct strengths and potentials of individuals working within the organization. An appreciative culture is forged when an emphasis is placed on the realization of inherent potential and the uncovering of latent strengths, rather than on the identification of weaknesses or deficits. This is a critical attitudinal variable. People and organizations "do not need to be fixed. They need constant reaffirmation" (Cooperrider, 1990, p. 120).

Even in a context of competition, appreciative attitude transforms envy into learning and transforms personal achievement into a sense of overall purpose and value. The essayist, Roger Rosenblatt, reveals just such a process in candidly describing his sense of competition with other writers (Rosenblatt, 1997, p. 23). He suggests that his sense of admiration for the work of other writers serves a critical function in his own life:

> Part of the satisfaction in becoming an admirer of the competition is that it allows you to wonder how someone else did something well, so that you might imitate it—steal it, to be blunt. But the best part is that it shows you that there are things you will never learn to do, skills and tricks that are out of your range, an entire imagination that is out of your range. The news may be disappointing on a personal level, but in terms of the cosmos, it is strangely gratifying. One sits among the works of one's contemporaries as in a planetarium, head all the way back, eyes gazing up at heavenly matter that is all the more beautiful for being unreachable. Am I growing up?

Paradoxically, at the point that people are fully appreciated and reaffirmed they tend to live up to their newly acclaimed talents and drive, just as they *live down* to their depreciated sense of self if constantly criticized or undervalued. Carl Rogers suggested many years ago that people are least likely to change if they are being asked to change. *People are more likely to change when they have received positive regard.* Appreciation and positive regard certainly seem to be closely related concepts.

Recognizing the Value of Cooperation

A final mode of appreciation is evident in the attitude of cooperation in an organization. *An organization is appreciative when efforts are made to form cooperative relationships and recognize the mutual benefits that can be derived from this cooperation.* A culture of appreciation provides organizational integration. It is the glue that holds an organization together while the organization is growing and differentiating into distinctive units of responsibility (Durkheim, 1933; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969). The appreciative perspective is particularly important when there are significant differences in vision, values or other cultural elements among members of an organization or among independent organizations that seek to work together (Bergquist, Betwee, & Meuel, 1995). If genuine and productive cooperation is to take place, then appreciation must embrace both judgments about reality and judgments about value (Cummings, 1990, p. 210).

An Appreciative Approach to Organizational Coaching:
Managing the Monkey

What about the application of AI to the field of organizational coaching? While there are many applications, I will focus on one, offering several suggestions specifically with regard to problem ownership in a coaching context. This application builds on the six definitions I just offered.

To solve a problem, someone must take responsibility for it. If the problem is particularly difficult to understand or solve, then no one may want to assume responsibility. Difficult problems are often ignored, for to acknowledge that the problem exists suggests that someone must solve it. At other times, difficult problems are directed upward in the organization, each employee looking to a boss for the answer. As president of the United States during the middle of the 20th Century, Harry Truman placed a sign on his desk stating that "the buck stops here." He recognized that difficult and (sometimes) seemingly irresolvable problems were often bumped up in the federal government until they reached the president's office. The president had nowhere to send these problems and hence had to solve them himself. Sometimes the ownership of problems moves down in an organization. Administrators shift blame for a problem from themselves to their subordinates, defining the problem as one of poor work habits or lack of motivation. Those at the bottom of the hierarchy are forced to work harder and smarter, precisely because no one higher up in the organization has taken responsibility for the broader problem.

The Leaping Monkey

There is yet another way that responsibility for problems gets reassigned. Managers or supervisors who are faced with a difficult problem may be tempted to bring in an advisor, consultant or organizational coach in order to shift responsibility to this person. This shifting of responsibility usually is not conscious on the part of the person requesting advice or consultation. However, the manager or supervisor may leave the meeting with an advisor, consultant or coach feeling enormous relief. A burden has been lifted off the manager's shoulders and placed on the shoulders of someone else. I propose that this shift in responsibility is a shift in problem ownership. Metaphorically, we suggest that a problem can be thought of as a monkey (Oncken & Wass, 1974; Blanchard, Oncken, & Burrows, 1991). The monkey often leaps from the shoulder of a client to the shoulder of her coach. A client enters a coaching session with the monkey on her shoulder and leaves with the monkey sitting on the shoulder of her coach.

How Do I Know When a Monkey Is Present?

It's not hard to tell when a monkey is present. Most of the time, when we are asked for advice from a member of our family, a friend or a colleague, it's clear that this person has a monkey on their shoulder. People in our society typically do not ask for help unless they have a monkey, for we value self-sufficiency and competence. While some people create *false monkeys* in order to get the attention of other people, most would rather not admit they have a monkey that won't depart.

More concretely, we know that a monkey exists whenever another person tells us one or more of three things:

- *Things aren't what I would like them to be* [recognition that a problem exists].
- *I want to do something about this situation* [assumes some responsibility for problem and is motivated to seek solution to problem].
- *I don't know what to do about this situation* [lack of clarity about nature of problem and/or lack of an adequate solution].

When someone makes one or more of these three statements to us (in whatever words are appropriate), then we know that a monkey is sitting on that person's shoulder.

How Do I Know When the Monkey Lands on My Shoulder?

This is also rather easy to detect. You will know the monkey is moving to your shoulder:

- The moment you *focus more on the problem than on the person who is telling you about the problem* [you begin to lose track of what the person is saying, having begun to think about the problem and its solution].

- The moment you begin to *offer solutions to the problem while the person is still talking about the problem* [you are usually not testing to see if the person has a clear idea about the nature of the problem or if she has identified her own solution to this problem].

- The moment you begin to *worry about your own ability to solve the problem* [rather than focusing on the other person's ability to solve the problem].

Sometimes you are not aware that you have taken on the monkey until after the coaching session has concluded. You know that you have the monkey on your shoulder if you:

- Continue to *worry about the problem* long after the session is completed.

- Continue to *worry about your ability to solve the problem* long after the session is completed.

- *Expect your colleague to check with you* about the problem and about progress toward resolution of the problem. Your colleague may seek to gain your approval or permission regarding a certain action. You may grow resentful if you are left out of this process, even though it is not really your problem.

- *Have responsibility for next step* and realize that nothing is likely to happen unless you take some action and follow-up on any solutions generated regarding the problem.

If any of these conditions exist during or after work with a client, then the monkey probably can be found sitting quite securely (and heavily) on the shoulder of her organizational coach.

What's Wrong with Having a Monkey on My Shoulder?

There is nothing inherently wrong with monkeys in moderation. We accept a bit of a monkey on our shoulders whenever we offer help and support to a colleague for a problem that we have just helped identify. We assist our elderly parent as she prepares for an upcoming operation. We help our child prepare for a play at his school. We take over temporarily for a colleague when she is ill or overworked. Most of the time, however, it is inappropriate to take ownership for a problem that is not ours. It is particularly inappropriate to take ownership away from a colleague when they are seeking our assistance as an organizational coach.

When we allow a monkey to leap to our shoulder, we have unduly and inappropriately burdened ourselves with someone else's problem (and reduced our capacity to address our own problems). Even more importantly, we have not been appreciative, and we have eliminated the opportunity for this other person to learn how to solve this problem (or a similar problem) in the future. We build client dependency rather than client independence. We exhibit little appreciation for our client's own strengths. We assume a deficit perspective regarding our client: apparently our client is not capable of solving his own problem. We also increase the chances that our client in the future will once again attempt to move a monkey from his shoulder to our own. A masterful and appreciative organizational coach knows when a monkey is present, when the monkey is threatening to leap on her shoulder, and when it is sometimes appropriate to accept this monkey and take at least partial responsibility for someone else's problem.

Keeping the Monkey on Our Client's Shoulder Through Advocacy-inviting Inquiry

As a way of actively engaging with her client, while keeping the monkey off her own shoulder, a masterful organizational coach may engage the subtle processes of advocating in a manner that invites inquiry and dialogue with a client (Argryis & Schön, 1975, 1978; Argyris, 1989; Senge,1990). There is nothing wrong with advocating—giving advice, offering one's own experiences, providing an analogy or metaphor, or even offering a suggestion that is "off-the-mark" in an interesting way. The key to appreciative coaching is to follow this advocacy with an invitation to the client—an invitation for the client to offer her own reactions to the suggestion being offered.

Rather than "easing in" with advice that is offered indirectly (through questions or by "beating around the bush"), the advice is offered directly and clearly. Furthermore, it is followed up with an exploration by both the client and coach of the strengths and weaknesses of this advice . The richness resides not in the advocacy provided by the coach, but rather in the dialogue that is evoked by this advocacy. The coaching process has become truly appreciative when advocacy is complemented by a invitation to joint inquiry, for the coach and client are assuming that the answer resides not with the coach, but either with the client or as an emergent property of the co-created rich dialogue that follows the coach's advocacy.

Organizational Coaching from an Appreciative Perspective

Whether one chooses, as a coach, to be a thoughtful and active listener, or to be someone who provokes dialogue by advocating, the effective organizational coach is appreciative—especially when working with seasoned and accomplished leaders. As the appreciative coaching process meanders, new directions emerge on the path. As the roots and branches of the acorn seek their own growth, the organizational coach allows for a free and protected space within which his client can experiment. Appreciative coaching involves a process of "walking with" one's client through complex problems related directly to their job and indirectly to their entire life. Organizational coaches challenge their clients' basic frames of reference and assumptions, while simultaneously supporting them in facing their demanding roles as leaders. In taking an appreciative perspective, a coach deeply values his client by willingly engaging in a dialogue from an assumption of mutual respect and a search for discovery of distinctive competencies and strengths. Cooperation is recognized as a value. Within this context, one's client feels safe to explore capacities and issues to develop and unfold her deeper self.

Masterful organizational coaching begins and ends with an inherent assumption that the primary source of information about a client resides within her rather than in other people. Initially, this would seem to be a rather individualistic and isolating assumption—and it certainly can lead to isolation if a client chooses to rely exclusively on her own perceptions and resources in making a decision or acting upon this decision. The primary purpose of organizational coaching is to break out of this isolation. The organizational coach serves first as a witness to the reflections of his client and serves second as a sounding board (or perhaps more accurately a mirror) that enables his client to observe her own internal processes from a point of detachment.

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Eight Ways to Deepen Appreciation through Coach-Based Consulting Questions

William Bergquist and Agnes Mura

In our own work with coaching and consulting clients – and particularly when we engage our unique coach-based consulting process, it is very appropriate and often very effective to engage an appreciative perspective. Following are the appreciative questions we offer our clients. We follow this presentation of the eight questions with a brief review of our coach-based consulting process and a restatement of the eight sets of questions with the broader framework in which these questions reside.

1. *Understanding:*

    What do you know to be true about the major challenges you now face?

    How do you know this is a true and realistic assessment?

2. *Valuing Another Point of View*:

    What might be a valid alternative way to describe the major challenges you now face?

    What might be a valid alternative way to frame, provide focus and provide an interpretation regarding the major challenges you now face?

3. *Recognizing Contributions*:

    Who are the other people in your life that can be of greatest value in helping you meet the major challenges you now face?

    What can they do that would be most helpful?

4. *Offering a Compelling Vision of the Future*:

    How would you like your life and work to be better than they are right now?

Why would this be an improvement?

What are you doing right now, that you are particularly proud or excited about?

Looking at the "altars" in our lives – what is around you that matters?

5. *Recognizing Distinctive Strengths and Competencies*:

   What are the primary talents that you bring to the major challenges you are now facing?

   How have these talents been most useful to you in your recent life?

6. *Uncovering Distinctive Strengths and Competencies*:

   What might other people who know you well identify as distinctive talents which you don't now acknowledge or frequently use when confronting major challenges?

   How would you best discover talents of which you currently are unaware?

7. *Recognizing the Value of Cooperation*:

   What could you do better in meeting your own major challenges by working closely with other people in your life?

   In what ways would this collaboration be of benefit to everyone involved?

8. *Constructing Provocative Propositions*:

   What is the most interesting and thought-provoking question that I could ask you right now?

   What would be your answer(s) to this question?

Coaching-Based Consulting

The distinct fields of *professional coaching* and *organizational consulting* are rapidly expanding throughout the world. Organizations engage executive coaches to support their leaders—challenged as they are by the complexity, unpredictability and turbulence of their markets - and of their own organizations. Such top executive coaches also have the opportunity to provide consulting services to their client companies, thus offering more systemic analysis and intervention capabilities. In practice, the interventions of consulting and coaching complement and leverage each other: consulting delivers broad

understanding and tailored solutions; coaching develops those who implement and execute the improvements.

There are many coach training programs that prepare professionals for (mostly personal and life) coaching, and there are some programs that prepare professionals for organizational consulting. But there is only one program that is specifically focused on the preparation of professionals for the integrative work of *coach-based consultants* (CBC). This cutting-edge CBC program and accompanying certification is being offered exclusively by the Santa Fe Center for Advanced Organizational Studies (a division of the Institute for Professional Psychology Studies: IPPS).

An appreciative perspective resides at the heart of a Coach-Based Consulting process. While this perspective borrows heavily from contemporary appreciative inquiry concepts and strategies, CBC offers a broader perspective, relying on the diverse perspectives offered in the original book on appreciative inquiry (Srivesta, Cooperrider and Associates, *Appreciative Management and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990). The major themes to be offered with this broader perspective are listed below.

The Nature of an Appreciative Perspective

Understanding

- Appreciating the context within which another person or organization is operating *("walking in their shoes")*
- Seeking deeper levels of meaning in the messages given by other people *(what we focus on becomes our reality)*
- Finding compassion for, but not merging with, another person's or organization's problems or identity
  {*standing for but not taking the place of—ensuring no distraction from other person's presence with the problem*)

Valuing Another Point of View

- Looking at the world from the perspective of another person, group or organization *(valuing differences)*

- Providing articulate admiration *(appraising worth from an outside point of reference)*
- Identifying the nature and power of alternative narratives *(the language we use to create our reality)*

Recognizing Contributions

- Acknowledging the distinctive, unacknowledged impact of other people (*"wind beneath my wings"*)
- Identifying and celebrating past efforts and achievement before undertaking new challenges *(we should bring along the best of the past when journeying into the future—provides both direction and motivation)*
- Establishing an ongoing mutuality of respect, including rituals of recognition and respect (*"celebrating what's right with the world!"*)

Vision: A Compelling Image of the Future

- Investing oneself and other people with a compelling sense of hope/optimism *(reality is created in the moment and there are multiple realities)*
- Balancing a concern for "what is" (reality) with attention to "what could be" (ideal) (*balancing challenge and support*)
- Identifying ways all parts of system can contribute to a compelling future (*collaborating into the future:" it takes a village"*)

Recognizing Distinctive Strengths and Competencies

- Focusing on strengths rather than deficits *(we are more likely to change when we have been appreciated than when we have been criticized and told to change)*
- Focusing on lessons to be learned from mistakes and, in particular, the elements of competency and success within the mistake *(success-orientation versus failure*

avoidance)

Uncovering Distinctive Strengths and Competencies

- Discover obscure strengths through the encouragement of feedback that focuses on moments of
competency and success ("*catch them when they're doing it right!*")
- Realize potential and latent strengths through the provision of safe times and places for exploration, experimentation and learning (*creating sanctuaries*)

Recognizing the Value of Cooperation

- Integrating oneself through an appreciative culture (*appreciation is pulling inward not pushing outward*)
- Recognizing and uncovering the strengths and competencies of another as they seek to appreciate our distinctive strengths and competencies (*strategic advantages of cooperation and mutuality*)

Constructing Provocative Propositions

- A statement bridging the best of "what is" with a speculation or intuition of "what might be" (*"leaning into the future"*)
- Stretch the realm of the status quo, think in systemic terms, challenge assumptions or routines, and suggest real/desired possibilities (*"beating and breaking the bounds"*)

Coaching is about More than Asking Questions

Marcia Reynolds, Psy.D., MCC

I've heard a lot of people define coaching as an inquiry-based process. I've even had people tell me they were taught to only ask questions. Many coaches rely on lists of questions to help them coach.

Coaching isn't about asking versus telling. It's about creating a new awareness, which includes the reflective practices of sharing observations and sensations, motivational acts of encouraging and challenging, and ways of holding the space in the moment so the person can fully experience their self even when it feels uncomfortable. Coaches do all of these things as well as questioning.

The ICF defines coaching as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential." Within this partnership, the coach shares observations of what the client is experiencing in the moment, encourages people to talk things through, challenges them to stretch their goals based on strengths and aspirations, and maintains silence as appropriate when people are processing a new, and maybe difficult, view of themselves and the world around them.

To me, the key competency isn't powerful questions; the foundation of coaching is presence. The coach needs to be present to the whole person and his or her experience. This includes acknowledging the emotions the client is feeling in the moment and recognizing the energy shifts that are occurring (a person can feel excited and resentful in one sentence!).

When coaches are grounded in the moment and are open and listening with their entire nervous system, including the heart and gut, they can receive nuances and shifts that indicate what is most important to the client. When a coach maintains this presence, the

client's defenses drop. The client feels safe enough to self-reflect, experience vulnerability, and express the awareness that is emerging.

The coach then uses both direct communications (i.e. sharing observations, intuitions based on what the client shared, and shifts in the desired outcome of the session) and questions to help the client self-reflect and explore their motivations, blind spots, and desires more deeply. The questions come from what the coach is present to, not from remembering good questions from a list. In fact, thinking often gets in the way of good coaching!

Coaching is an Awareness-Based Process
Coaching is an organic, spontaneous process based on the intention of helping a client think more broadly for themselves. To do this, you must:

- Seek to go deeper into the client's experience instead of jumping to find solutions
- Release both evaluations of the client and yourself
- Be willing to be share what you sense and able to accept you could be wrong
- Open your heart to the essence of what is being conveyed
- Open your gut to courageously share with compassion
- Receive the gifts the person is sharing – their vulnerability, insights, yearnings and fears. Check out if what you sense rings true for them and give them time to process what they are coming to understand

There is so much more to coaching than asking questions. Yes, powerful questions initiate profound shifts in thinking, believing and actions. The bulk of what a coach does is asking. It's asking in the service of creating a new awareness. Noticing, sharing, encouraging, challenging, and silence are important parts of this process as well.

The Process of Reflective Coaching: Levels of Inquiry

William Bergquist, Ph.D.

During the past twenty five years, increasing attention has been given the field of organizational consulting to the processes of reflective inquiry—initially championed by Donald Schön, his colleagues, Chris Argyris and Peter Senge. While reflective inquiry is often an unpredictable process—similar to improvisational jazz and theater in many respects—there are, still, a few reflective moves that have been found to be particularly effective when engaged in a coaching process. Specially, I propose that an effective reflective process often involves moving back and forth through seven specific levels of analysis. Each level offers a different perspective and a different reflective lens.

1. The reflective process often begins at Level One with the client reporting on their *Observation* of a specific event. The reflective coach will begin with a request: "Tell me what happened." or "Tell me what you are seeing in this email."

2. Given this initial observation (and the narrative or brief story accompanying this observation), a coach and client can begin moving toward Level Two: an examination of the *Data* that has been obtained. The coach asks: "What did you see that is relevant to your immediate concerns and interests?"

3. From here a coach and client can move to a Third Level, which is concerned with the *Meanings* that a client assigns to the Data that has been gathered. A relevant question is: "What does this mean for you?" or "How does this data relate to an important issue in your (work) life?"

4. Level Four involves the identification of and analysis of *Assumptions* that underlie the Meaning the person has assigned to the Data. The coach asks: "How do you know that your observation is accurate?" "How do you know that the meaning you assigned to this data is appropriate?" This will either help validate the assumptions the client made or clarify any misperceptions he had formed or even lead to a total shift in perspective, if needed.

5. At Level Five, the coach is helping her client access some *Conclusions.* Several questions are often asked at this level: "What do you want to do about this situation?" "What can be done to address your concerns about what you have observed?"

6. These questions inevitably move the client and coach to Level Six, which is concerned with *Beliefs*. The coach asks: "Why do you think this decision is appropriate?" "What makes you think that taking this action in this situation will lead to success?" "How confident are you that this will be effective?"

7. Finally, at Level Seven, *Action* takes place, based on the Conclusions reached and the Beliefs that support these conclusions. In post-Actions reviews, the coach will be encouraging her client to reflect on the actions taken by asking: "What did you actually do?" "What occurred when you took this action?"

In subsequent sessions of reflective inquiry, a coach and client can now *reverse* the levels of analysis. As reflective coaches we begin with Level Seven and the post-*action* review questions already associated with this level: "What did you do?" and "What occurred when you took this action [what were the consequences]?" "What worked, what didn't work, in your view?" We then return to Level Six and a focus on *Beliefs*. In encouraging our client to reflect at this level we now ask: "What does the way in which this action went (successful or unsuccessful) tell you about the world and about you in this world?" The Fifth Level is now concerned with how our client reached *Conclusions* with regard to the world he engages. A coach accesses this level when asking: "What have you learned from this action?"

At the Fourth Level, a coach now encourages her client to reexamine the *Assumptions* being made (based on the Conclusions reached). One of the questions that might be asked by the coach

encourages a client to enter the Domain of Information: "How do you know you are accurate in your assessment of this action and its actual or potential impact?" Another question encourages the client to move into the

Domain of Intentions: "What was this action intended to accomplish?" Yet another question encourages movement into the Domain of Ideas: "Why do you think this was the appropriate action to take?" From here a coach and client can move back to the Third Level, which is concerned with the *Meanings* that a client assigns to the specific Assumption or set of Assumptions he has made that led ultimately to his Beliefs regarding outcomes and the Actions taken (and more immediately to the Conclusions reached). Relevant questions include: "How does an important issue in your life relate to the action you took?" and "What are you discovering/learning about the resolution of this important issue by virtue of the specific action path you took?"

The coach is now ready to assist her client in moving back to the first two levels. At Level Two, the client revisits the *Data* that has been collected—now with greater clarity regarding the lens through which he is gathering (and interpreting) this data. The coach will ask such questions as: "What do you now think are the most important facts to know about the situation you confronted?" "About what facts are you most confident and about what are you now less certain?" The reflective coach is not so much challenging the validity of her client's data as encouraging her client to revisit his data analysis—and realize that there are other interpretations that might be entertained and other perspectives that might be taken when viewing the current situation. These alternative interpretations and perspective may, in turn, have led, eventually, to different decisions and a different course of action. Finally, at Level One, the coach encourages her client to reconsider the *Observation* he initially made. The coach now asks: "Tell me what you now think happened?" The reflective coach encourages her client to construct a new narrative, based on his journey up and down the levels of analysis.

The labels for each level and the key question(s) to be asked at each level can serve as a format for documenting the levels of reflection that are being engaged. The coach and client may either move from Level One toward Level Seven, or from Level Seven toward Level One—or (as we have

proposed) from One to Seven and back again to One. The word "level" in no way is intended to imply that one form of inquiry is more "important" or more "advanced" that another form. It is the process of moving up and down the levels that is critical to the reflective process.

Donald Schön (1983) *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York: Basic Books.

Talking Polarities: From Just Either/Or to Supplementing Either/Or w/Both/And

Margaret Cary, MD MBA MPH PCC and Cliff Kayser, MSOD, MSHR, PCC

"I'm so exhausted. I love my patients, but caring for them gets in the way of time with my family. I have young kids and I want to be there for them. My dad was always at work and I barely remember him. I don't want that to happen to my kids."

Does this sound familiar?
Which comes first, your professional life or your personal life?

Answer: They both do – but at different times. When the tension between professional and personal is poorly leveraged over time, both will suffer as a result. If we step back far enough, what we're likely to see is that the dynamic tension between the two fell into the "Either/Or" category of a problem to solve. A simple reframe that could make big difference in success, is the thinking that's being applied – rather than EITHER one OR the other, think, "How might I leverage this tension to get the benefits of BOTH Professional AND Personal Lives, to support wellbeing? This reframe is important – whatever your profession.

Work with us here as we walk you through creating your own Polarity MapÒ, using Professional and Personal Lives as an example.
Here's a blank map.

Polarity Map®

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Greater Purpose Statement

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole
Upsides/Positives

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole
Upsides/Positives

and

Downsides/Negatives

Downsides/Negatives

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole **to the neglect** of the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole **to the neglect** of the left pole

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the left pole.

Greatest Fear

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the right pole.

What is your Greater Purpose Statement, or GPS? Let's use "WELLBEING – As an excellent clinician, who is satisfied with how I've integrated other important parts of my life." What is your greatest fear? Let's use "Being depressed, unhappy and an incompetent physician."

Polarity Map®

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Wellbeing

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole
Upsides/Positives

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole
Upsides/Positives

and

Downsides/Negatives

Downsides/Negatives

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole **to the neglect** of the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole **to the neglect** of the left pole

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the left pole.

Depressed, Unhappy and Incompetent Physician

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the right pole.

Next, write your preferred polarity in the racetrack blank on the left, labeled "A." Because this is an issue about coaching physicians, who (for better or worse) put their Professional Life first, let's put "Professional (Life)" on the left and "Personal (Life)" on the right.

Professional & Personal Lives

Action Steps — How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Wellbeing

Action Steps — How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole
Upsides/Positives

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole
Upsides/Positives

Professional Life and **Personal Life**

Downsides/Negatives   *Downsides/Negatives*

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole <u>to the neglect</u> of the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole <u>to the neglect</u> of the left pole

Early Warnings — Measurable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the left pole.

Depressed, Unhappy and Incompetent Physician

Early Warnings — Measurable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the right pole.

Facilitated by Margaret Cary, MD MBA MPH PCC of The Cary Group Global, © Polarity Partnerships 2013 Polarity Map (adapted 2016)

Next, look at the upper left quadrant, or LUQ for those of us familiar with examining abdomens, labeled "B." Write down all the positives, or "upsides," as they're called in Polarity Thinking, to focusing on our professional lives. We'll choose three for this example:

1. Security and confidence we're making a difference in our patients' lives
2. Intrinsic satisfaction from the work
3. Our earnings support our families

Professional & Personal Lives

Action Steps — How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Wellbeing

Action Steps — How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole
Upsides/Positives
1. Confidence we're making a difference in our patients' lives.
2. Intrinsic satisfaction from the work.
3. Our earnings support our families.

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole
Upsides/Positives

Professional Life and **Personal Life**

Downsides/Negatives   *Downsides/Negatives*

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole <u>to the neglect</u> of the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole <u>to the neglect</u> of the left pole

Early Warnings — Measurable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the left pole.

Depressed, Unhappy and Incompetent Physician

Early Warnings — Measurable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the right pole.

Facilitated by Margaret Cary, MD MBA MPH PCC of The Cary Group Global, © Polarity Partnerships 2013 Polarity Map (adapted 2016)

Follow the arrow to the left lower quadrant, or LLQ. What happens when we focus too much on our professional lives to the neglect of our personal lives, the negatives, or

"downsides"?

1. Isolation and loss of personal relationships

2. Poor health, physical, mental and emotional

3. Loss of identity outside work – as spouse, parent, friend

Professional & Personal Lives

Follow the arrow again, this time crossing at the midpoint to the right upper quadrant, to the upsides, or positives, of focusing on our personal lives. We're starting to feel better as we consider three results of focusing on our personal lives.

1. Less burn-out

2. More drive and fewer regrets

3. Time to spend with family and friends.

Professional & Personal Lives

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole?
What? Who? By When? Measures?

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole?
What? Who? By When? Measures?

Wellbeing

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole

Upsides/Positives
1. Confidence we're making a difference in our patients' lives.
2. Intrinsic satisfaction from the work.
3. Our earnings support our families.

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole

Upsides/Positives
1. Less burnout.
2. More drive and fewer regrets.
3. Time to spend with family, friends and down time activities.

Professional Life   and   Personal Life

Downsides/Negatives
1. Isolation and loss of colleague relationships.
2. Poor health – physical, mental and emotional.
3. Loss of identity outside work – as spouse, parent, friend.

Downsides/Negatives

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole to the neglect of the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole to the neglect of the left pole

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the left pole.

Depressed, Unhappy and Incompetent Physician

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the right pole.

Facilitated by Margaret Cary, MD MBA MPH PCC of The Cary Group Global, © Polarity Partnerships 2013 Polarity Map (adapted 2016)

We're feeling satisfied, and then we get a nagging feeling we're not doing enough for our patients as we drop into the right lower quadrant to the downsides, or negative results of over- focusing on our personal lives. Here are three examples from other polarity maps we've seen.

1. Financial concerns
2. Danger to patients and inefficiency of care
3. Lose professional integrity.

Professional & Personal Lives

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole?
What? Who? By When? Measures?

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole?
What? Who? By When? Measures?

Wellbeing

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole

Upsides/Positives
1. Confidence we're making a difference in our patients' lives.
2. Intrinsic satisfaction from the work.
3. Our earnings support our families.

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole

Upsides/Positives
1. Less burnout.
2. More drive and fewer regrets.
3. Time to spend with family, friends and down time activities.

Professional Life   and   Personal Life

Downsides/Negatives
1. Isolation and loss of colleague relationships.
2. Poor health – physical, mental and emotional.
3. Loss of identity outside work – as spouse, parent, friend.

Downsides/Negatives
1. Financial concerns
2. Danger to patients and inappropriate care.
3. Loss of professional integrity.

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole to the neglect of the right pole

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Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the right pole.

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"Great. Now what?" I can hear you say.

Let's go back to the upsides of your professional lives. Here are a few of others' ideas for maintaining the positive results from focusing on their professional lives, called Action Steps. What is this? Who does it?

1. I will develop more professional relationships – e.g., coffee with three colleagues each week
2. I will establish a structure and timelines
3. Establish boundaries for your time

Here are a few ideas for maintaining the positive results from focusing on your personal lives.

1. Make a list of what's important – to guide you
2. Take your own advice
3. Define priorities/values/boundaries

Note #3 for both are similar. This is called a High Leverage Action Step – by setting boundaries you are helping to maintain your position in the upsides of both professional and personal lives.

Now to the Early Warnings, which are measurable indicators to let you know you are dipping into the downside of the indicated pole, to the neglect of the other pole. Professional Lives Early Warnings

1. Poor sleep
2. Difficulty demonstrating empathy with patients
3. Anhedonia

Personal Lives Early Warnings

1. Poor care evaluations from patients, administrators and quality of care committees
2. Negative feedback from staff and peers
3. Patient satisfaction plummets

Professional & Personal Lives

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

1. I will develop deeper professional relationships; e.g., coffee with at least one colleague each week.	
2. I will establish a schedule for my life to provide structure.	
3. I will establish, and adhere to, boundaries on my time.	

Wellbeing

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole

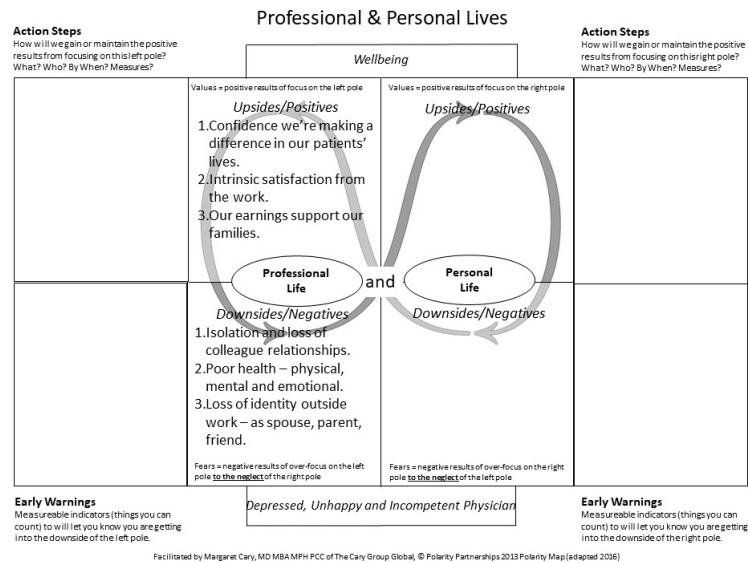*Upsides/Positives*
1. Confidence we're making a difference in our patients' lives.
2. Intrinsic satisfaction from the work.
3. Our earnings support our families.

Professional Life and **Personal Life**

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole

Upsides/Positives
1. Less burnout.
2. More drive and fewer regrets.
3. Time to spend with family, friends and down time activities.

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

1. I will make a list of my values - what's important - to guide me.
2. I will take my own advice – that which I give to my patients.
3. I will establish a schedule for my life to provide structure.

Downsides/Negatives
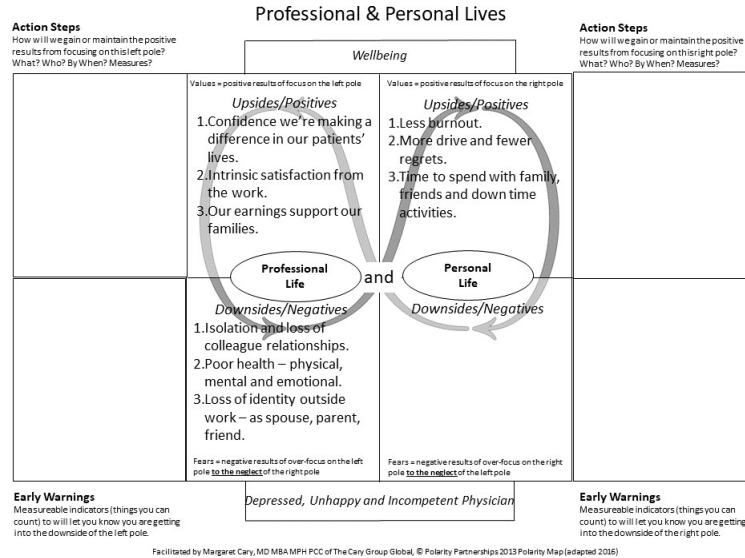1. Isolation and loss of colleague relationships.
2. Poor health – physical, mental and emotional.
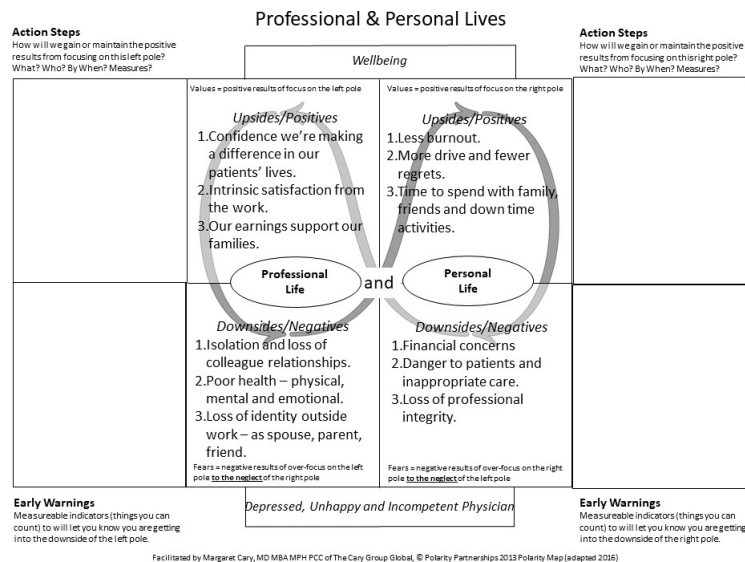3. Loss of identity outside work – as spouse, parent, friend.

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole **to the neglect** of the right pole

Downsides/Negatives
1. Financial concerns
2. Danger to patients and inappropriate care.
3. Loss of professional integrity.

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole **to the neglect** of the left pole

Left side:
1. Poor sleep.
2. Difficulty demonstrating empathy with patients.
3. Anhedonia.

Right side:
1. Poor evaluations from administrators and quality of care committee.
2. Patient satisfaction plummets.
3. Negative feedback from staff and peers.

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the left pole.

Depressed, Unhappy and Incompetent Physician

Early Warnings
Measureable indicators (things you can count) to will let you know you are getting into the downside of the right pole.

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Let's look at a Polarity Map for Mission and Margin.

Margin and Mission

Greater Purpose Statement (GPS) – why leverage this polarity?

Sustainability of Best Place to Give and Receive Care

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?
1. Provide partnership infrastructure at point of care to enhance interdisciplinary ownership of practice and fiscal responsibility
2. Develop staff competency with fiscal responsibility to partner in financial mgmt

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole

A. The organization's commitment to provide cost effective care & service
B. Money being available to support needed improvements
C. Pride in the fiscal soundness of the organization

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole

A. Actions demonstrating a caring & compassionate culture
B. Money to provide adequate tools & resources to develop quality care
C. The organization's strong market share providing a sense of job security

Action Steps
How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?
1. Monitor and interpret patient & staff satisfaction and quality indicators
2. Clarity & ownership on what matters most, core beliefs and shared purpose
3. Infrastructure to support interdisciplinary partnership & evidence-based, integrated, individualized care based on scope of practice
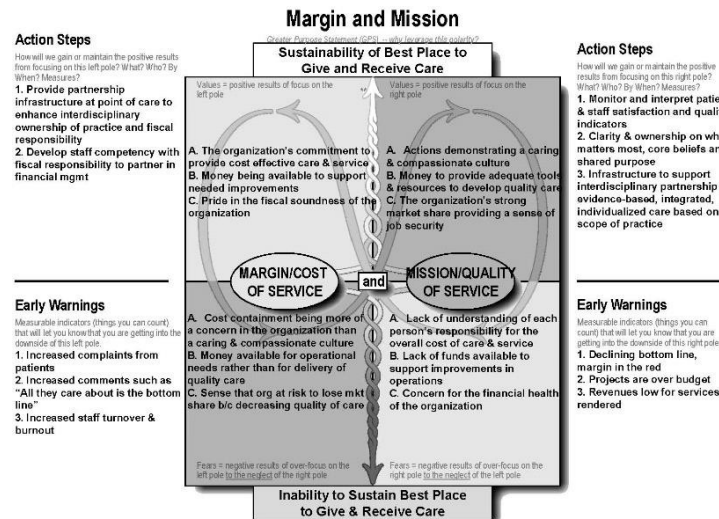
MARGIN/COST OF SERVICE and **MISSION/QUALITY OF SERVICE**

Early Warnings
Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this left pole.
1. Increased complaints from patients
2. Increased comments such as "All they care about is the bottom line"
3. Increased staff turnover & burnout

A. Cost containment being more of a concern in the organization than a caring & compassionate culture
B. Money available for operational needs rather than for delivery of quality care
C. Sense that org at risk to lose mkt share b/c decreasing quality of care

A. Lack of understanding of each person's responsibility for the overall cost of care & service
B. Lack of funds available to support improvements in operations
C. Concern for the financial health of the organization

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole **to the neglect** of the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole **to the neglect** of the left pole

Early Warnings
Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this right pole.
1. Declining bottom line, margin in the red
2. Projects are over budget
3. Revenues low for services rendered

Inability to Sustain Best Place to Give & Receive Care

"Patient care, patient care. You doctors are all alike – you're always focused on yourselves and caring for patients. Yeah, right. We need money to run the operation."

"You suits are all alike – all you think about is money. You don't understand patient care. We want a caring a compassionate culture."

"You don't understand your responsibility for our overall costs. I'm concerned that we won't

have enough money for the improvements we need."

"I cannot get my patients into hospital. Our patients are starting to ask about going to another hospital."

Does this sound familiar?

When we're arguing we tend to start with the upsides of our preferred pole, and the person at the other pole argues for the upsides of his pole. Here's a learning point: We're more afraid of the downsides of the non-preferred pole than we are enthusiastic about the upsides of the preferred pole. Humans are naturally risk averse. Research show that we're more apt to hold onto something we have, sometimes to our detriment, than we are to take a risk.
So . . . how can this help you when you're working through a polarity pair, such as Mission and Margin?

Map the polarity pole you prefer, say Mission. And then put yourself in the role of the person who prefers the other polarity pole, in this case, Margin. What are the downsides of your preferred pole – the negatives from focusing too much on Mission to the neglect of Margin? Address these fears when negotiating with those who prefer the other pole. Even better: Ask the person who prefers the other pole to work with you.
Look at the downsides of focusing on the pole you don't prefer – and ask your counterpart to address those.

Our clients, and especially our physician clients, find this a valuable exercise to complete, to understand other points of view, in negotiation and patient care.

The Editors/Co-Curators . . .

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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 published work ranges from the personal transitions of men and women in their 50s and the struggles of men and women in recovering from strokes to the experiences of freedom among the men and women of Eastern Europe following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In recent years, Bergquist has focused on the processes of organizational coaching. He is coauthor with Agnes Mura of Coachbook, co-founder of the International Journal of Coaching in Organizations and co-founder of the International Consortium for Coaching in Organizations. 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.

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important professional coaching resources in the world, LPC provides a critical stewarding function in this dynamic and evolving field of human service.

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Dr. Jim Goldstein is the creator and CEO of the Powerful Partnerships® Coaching Program. His program was created in response to what he saw in his private practice and in his consulting practice – unconscious patterns of communication and interaction that unwittingly interfered with the development and maintenance of healthy relationships. He developed a way of communicating and acting that has a transformative effect on relationships in both families and in work situations. He has taught his method to couples and to leaders of organizations with equal success. Since 1993 he has been a nationally recognized coach, trainer, author and professional speaker for small and medium sized companies as well as for some of the largest organizations in the country.

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Mark McKergow PhD MBA is an author, consultant and speaker who specialises in bring new ideas to the management world. Mark is most recently co-creator of Host Leadership (www.hostleadership.com), which has developed the paradigm of leading as a host. He is the co-author of Host: Six new roles of engagement (Solutions Books, 2014). Mark is also known for his work in developing the international Solutions Focus community since 2000 and is co-author of three books on SF including the best-selling 'The Solutions Focus'. He was closely involved with founding both the international SOLWorld network and the SFCT professional body for Solution Focused consultants and trainers.

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Paulette Rao is a leadership coach and trainer at major corporations around the world. As founder of True North Resources, her coaching consultancy, Paulette helps leaders enhance their own performance as well the performance of their teams while achieving organizational objectives. Paulette's leadership coaching is informed by her 28 years of experience as a senior executive and marketing leader in corporate America. As a Board Certified and Master Certified coach, Paulette works with senior executives, high potentials, and emerging leaders at Fortune 500 and smaller organizations to help them hone the skills they need to improve their performance and develop others in their organization to create positive and profitable change.

MARCIA REYNOLDS

Dr. Marcia Reynolds has 34 years of experience in organizational training and development, with 20 years as an executive coach. She coaches, teaches classes, and presents at conferences around the world on emotional intelligence and transformational coaching. Marcia is a Master Certified Coach, past global president of the International Coach Federation (ICF), and the Association for Coach Training Organizations (ACTO). Excerpts from her three books, including her book on coaching, The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversations into Breakthroughs, have appeared in Fortune Magazine, Fast Company, The New York Times, Fortune.com, CNN.com and numerous business magazines in Kazakhstan, Russia and Singapore.

PETER ROCHE

Peter Roche is a founding partner of the London Perret Roche Group LLC, (LPR). Peter's passionate interest in collaborating with visionary leaders as they re-invent their enterprises to produce results which they often consider unattainable, is what led to the foundation of the firm. Designing strategies, structures and culture to intentionally unleash the creativity, passion and intelligence of people in large enterprises is the focus of his work. Aside from leading LPR over the last twenty years, Peter has been the visionary, designer and leader of successful innovative large-scale transformational change projects for many industry-leading global corporations in North America, Europe and Asia.

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Susan Sadler, PCC, of Sadler Communications Pte Ltd., coaches people to have more confidence, courage and creativity, as well as a more professional impact. Originally from California, Susan has worked in Asia for more than 20 years and has appeared on the radio and in magazines. Susan Sadler served as President of the ICF Singapore chapter. When not coaching, she serves as a volunteer at the Asian Civilizations Museum and received an award for her volunteer contributions.

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CHARLES E. SMITH

Charles E. Smith Ph.D. is a highly experienced Futurist, Author, and Executive Coach, current interests are in the future of democracy at all levels of society, deep dives into the nature of collaborative innovation, conscious conversations, and podcasts to engage large numbers of kindred spirits and businesses. Charlie holds an MBA from the Harvard Business School, a Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from Case Western Reserve University, and a Certificate in Gestalt Methods from the Gestalt Institute of Cleveland. Dr. Smith has written three books, "The Merlin Factor, Leadership and Strategic Intent" "Navigating from the Future," "Don't be a Noddle in Someone Else's Soup" and many articles located in the Library of Professional Coaching and Eruditio, a Journal of the World Academy of Art and Science.

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Kevin Weitz, Psy.D. specializes in helping leaders define and align their organization's culture and day-to-day behaviors with business strategy to execute effectively. Recently, his work has focused on shaping behaviors to reduce "insider threats" to highly confidential company information and cybersecurity. Dr. Weitz has global experience with multinational organizations in the US, Canada, Kazakhstan, Latin America and South Africa. and holds a Doctor of Psychology (Organizational) degree with a specialization in organizational behavior change. Kevin has authored a Kindle e-book about organizational culture change entitled "The House of Culture".

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