Ancient Wisdom for Modern Change Agents:

A Compassionate Theory of Practice

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Abstract

I begin this paper by offering my definition of health in systems, from the individual to the organizational and community levels of complexity. In so doing, I make use of concepts such as positive and negative peace, the toxic system, the four archetypes of indigenous peoples, personal authority in the family system (PAFS), the Japanese concept of kyosei, resonant leadership and sustainability.

I proceed to present my Theory of Practice, including a theory of problem formation and a theory of change. Mine is a Theory of Practice that makes unique and integral use of Buddhist teachings as a system of living connections between the many vital parts of the theoretical discipline called Applied Behavioral Science.

Finally, I illuminate discoveries regarding family of origin connections to my Theory of Practice. In particular, I focus attention upon my journey along the continuum between duality and integration—from silence to finding my authentic voice.

How wonderful!
How wonderful!
All things are perfect
exactly as they are.

~The Buddha

Foreword

I recently heard a story that I connected with deeply in this experience of articulating a Theory of Practice. As I recall, it goes something like this:

A man is walking down a road, when he suddenly falls into a deep, dark hole. He spots a doctor walking by and says, "Hey, Doc! Can you help me? I've fallen into this hole and I can't get out." The doctor shouts back to him, "Are you hurt?" The man replies, "Well, come to think of it, I do feel a bit of pain from the fall." So the doctor writes a prescription and throws it down into the hole. "Call me in the morning if that doesn't work," he says as he walks away.

Next, the man spots a priest walking by the hole and says, "Hey, Padre! Can you help me? I've fallen into this hole and I can't get out." The priest asks, "Have you made your peace with the Lord, my son?" The man thinks for a moment and answers, "Well, Father, come to think of it, I haven't been to church in a long time." So the priest makes the sign-of-the-cross, writes down a prayer and throws it into the hole. "May the Lord be with you, my son," he says as he walks away.

Finally, a friend happens by the hole. The man exclaims, "Hey! Am I glad to see you! Can you help me? I've fallen into this hole and I can't get out." Without hesitation, the friend jumps down into the hole. "Why'd you do that?" the man asks, horrified, "Now we're both trapped down here!" The friend calmly replies, "Hey, I was once in a hole that looked an awful lot like this one. I can help you find your way out."

As I have engaged in answering the calling to become an agent of change in this world of ever-increasing complexity and danger, I have found the bottom of many a hole. I have also been blessed by the presence of many friends—in particular my colleagues and teachers—who have all jumped right in with me when it would have been much easier to drop learned prescriptions or heartfelt prayers from the distant safety of the ground above.

In offering me their support, their wisdom and their steadfast belief that I will always find my own way out of the darkness, they modeled for me the courage that it takes

to do this work and do it well, and in the process, we have all been transformed. To all of you, I am eternally grateful.

It is from that fertile ground of transformational courage and fervent gratitude that this Theory of Practice springs and will be offered to others.

~Sean Hatt

July 24th, 2002

Part One: What is Health?

In its simplest form, the concept of health may be described in terms of what it is not—an absence of disease. However, recent world events challenge us to think otherwise. Marianne Williamson (2002) compares this view of health to defining peace as the absence of war, and uses Martin Luther King Junior's thinking about positive vs. negative peace as supporting evidence. According to Williamson, King defined negative peace as a state of the absence of war, but with an abundance of underlying tension and anxiety, while positive peace is the absence of war accompanied by justice and brotherhood. Williamson offers that this state of negative peace is what erupted so explosively on September 11th of 2001.

Systems Theory demands a similar definition of health taking into account much more than merely the presence or absence of disease. In my view, evaluating health considers all of the following factors:

- Factor One: The presence or absence of disease in the individual parts of a system;
- Factor Two: The nature of the relationships between the parts of a system;
- Factor Three: The nature of the relationships between a system and other systems composing a greater whole;
- Factor Four: The nature of the relationship between a system and the greater whole within which it is imbedded.

When assessing the health of a system, in addition to these four factors, we must also take into account a fifth: The system's ability to recognize adaptive and maladaptive circumstances, conditions, behaviors or relationships, and its capacity to change in response.

As a simple example of the fifth factor of systemic health, Harrison Owen (2000) writes about "the toxic system" (p. 83), in which he describes how at the moment of birth, the conditions in the womb become not only uncomfortable, but also unsafe to mother and child alike. Considered in an isolated manner, the conditions of the mother/child

system would appear to be catastrophic, when in fact, viewed through a wider lens, they are simply a miraculous call for the system to evolve to a higher order.

Applying five systemic health factors to define health in an individual human being

Factors One and Two: Considering the presence or absence of disease in the individual parts of a system and the nature of the relationships between these parts.

A healthy person attends to the three vital components of her being—body, mind and spirit. She takes care of her body by eating right, exercising, and limiting or avoiding altogether harmful substances or actions. She is also in a calm state of mind, with an ongoing, developing self-awareness of her adaptive and maladaptive emotions and thought patterns and their origins[1]. She possesses a genuine curiosity about the world and a hunger to learn. Finally, she balances care and concern for her body and mind, with her spiritual wellbeing. That is, she takes time to be in contemplation—attending to the archetype of the Healer. Of this archetype, Angeles Arrien (1993) writes that the Healer is a universal mythic structure present in all human experience, and among indigenous cultures supports the principle of paying attention to what has heart and meaning. Healers recognize that the power of love is the most potent healing force available and thus seek to extend it through acknowledgement, acceptance, recognition, validation and gratitude. (p. 49)

In addition to caring for each component element of her being, the healthy person understands and actively cultivates the vital connections between the body,

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[1] Tara Bennett-Goleman developed "Schema Therapy" whereby she maps the mind and demonstrates how much of what troubles us may be categorized into ten basic emotional patterns or schemas. Her book *Emotional Alchemy* is a highly recommended source from which to learn more about how to become aware of and repair maladaptive emotional habits.

mind and spirit, and in a peak state of health, sees them not as separate, but rather together, as an integral whole.

Factors Three and Four: Considering the nature of the relationships between a system and other systems composing a greater whole and the nature of the relationship between a system and the greater whole within which it is imbedded.

Having defined the parts of a human system and described what health looks like within and between them, let's turn our attention now to relationships between a healthy person, other people, and the world around her.

The healthy person understands simultaneously her "individual rights" and her "sense of belonging" in the systems she is a part of, to borrow language used by Carl Whitaker in his foreword to *The Intimacy Paradox* by Donald Williamson (1991). Whitaker goes on to say that in creating healthy relationships within the primary system—her family of origin—she becomes "adept at living in the outside world."

So what about the paradox of simultaneously holding individual rights and a sense of belonging? The best definition I have found is known as Personal Authority in the Family System or (PAFS) as described by Donald Williamson (1991, p. 40-41)[2].

In cultivating personal authority, she attends to the archetype of the Warrior, described by Arrien (1993) as the way of the leader, protector, sorcerer, adventurer and explorer. In so doing, she develops the guiding principal of showing up and choosing to be present, cultivating honor and respect for all things, employing judicious communication, setting limits and boundaries and rightly using power. (p. 15-22)

[2] For a detailed recap of the elements of Personal Authority, refer to Appendix A.

All of these skills and qualities combine to allow the healthy person to simultaneously see themselves as an individual and as an integral part of a complex web of relationships. She may also have the capacity to hold the paradox of dependent origination[3], that is, the simultaneous existence of the self, and its essential dependence for existence upon its relationship to others and the whole. In reaching beyond cause and effect relationships, this rather abstract aspect of the concept of dependent origination signals what is perhaps the deepest essence of an understanding of the concept of interdependence.

Factor Five: Considering the system's ability to recognize adaptive and maladaptive circumstances, conditions, behaviors or relationships and the capacity of the system to change in service of health.

Having described the healthy human being both individually and in relationship, let us now turn our attention to her capacity for change.

The fifth factor of systemic health takes into consideration all of the others and then poses the question—"Given what I now know, what will I do next?" The healthy individual constantly considers this question and is both willing and able to make a decision to change, or not, based upon the situation's adaptive or maladaptive qualities and alignment with her goals and core values.

Enter the archetype of the Visionary and the concept of truth, with a small "t". The healthy individual is able to "make the truth visible" (Arrien, 1993, p. 79) without attaching blame or judgement. In other words, she both owns and speaks her truth, but does not impose it. Perhaps most importantly, she tells the truth to herself.

This factor of health is also a question of range. The healthy individual possesses the ability for not only subtle, incremental, or linear change, (which could also be defined as "learning" or "self-correction") but also the capacity—indeed the

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[3] For more information about the concept of dependent origination, refer to pages 35-47 of *Ethics for the New Millennium* by His Holiness The Fourteenth Dalai Lama (1999).

courage—to undertake radical, transformational[4] change if necessary. Owen (2000) describes transformation as "a state change, and as such manifests as a non-linear, discontinuous process, marked by radical ending (death) and radical new beginning." (p. 80)

This capacity for transformation requires attention to developing the archetype of the Teacher and, according to Arrien (1993), openness and non-attachment to outcome. (p. 109)

Having defined the healthy individual, what is a healthy organization or community?

The very same qualities of healthy individuals may be expanded and re-fit in order to hold my view of healthy organizations and communities.

However, rather than talking through the five systemic health factors as I did in defining my view of health at the individual level, I will introduce instead two complimentary constructs for describing my thinking on the healthy organization and the healthy community. They include the Japanese concept of *kyosei* and Capra's definition of *sustainability.*

The healthy organization

A healthy organization has imbedded within it all of the qualities of the healthy individual, as described previously. In both deed and word, the healthy organization values and cultivates health in its people, and is aware of and concerned about its impact on the world.

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[4] Recall Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine's thinking from 1967 on *dissipative structures*. He observed that living organisms not only maintain their stable life processes under conditions far from equilibrium, but that they also evolve, going through new instabilities on the way to transforming themselves into new structures of increased complexity. (Capra, pg. 86-89)

Not surprisingly, healthy organizations also have healthy leaders, who ideally may understand and cultivate the qualities of *resonance*. Goleman, et al (2002), describe the concept of resonant leadership:

> One sign of resonant leadership is a group of followers who vibrate with the leader's upbeat and enthusiastic energy. A primal leadership dictum is that resonance amplifies and prolongs the emotional impact of leadership. The more resonant people are with each other, the less static are their interactions; resonance minimizes noise in the system…The glue that holds people together in a team, and that commits people to an organization, is the emotions they feel.
>
> How well leaders manage and direct those feelings to help a group meet its goals depends on their level of emotional intelligence. [See my description of Factors one and two in the section on individual health, in particular the cross reference to schema therapy, for more information.] Resonance comes naturally to emotionally intelligent leaders. (p. 20)

In addition to self-aware, resonant leaders, the healthy organization also has imbedded within its culture a profound understanding of its connection to other organizations and the world, which is not limited to a self-serving, dualistic lens. (For example, the typical awareness of the other at an organizational level may be limited to concepts like "the competition", "marketshare", "our suppliers", "regulatory requirements" and the like.)

The ability to cultivate and hold an outward, open awareness simultaneously with a constant, vigilant, inward focus, is beautifully embodied in the Japanese concept of *kyosei.* The concept was institutionalized as a core value at Canon by a visionary leader named Ryzaburo Kaku, who led that company from 1977 to 1997, and is best defined as "the spirit of cooperation in which individuals and organizations live and work together for the common good." (Kaku, 1997, p.1)

In Kaku's (1997) own words:

> I began to see Canon's need for a philosophy of kyosei when we started doing business on a global scale. As we built plants, hired workers, and managed our finances in foreign countries, we encountered a new set of business challenges. These challenges were more than tactical business concerns, such as responding to fierce competition, managing suppliers, or dealing with currency risk; they were

global *imbalances*[5]–I identify three—that continue to trouble us. They need our collective attention as corporate leaders and as citizens of the world. (p. 2)

Canon uses their awareness of the potential impact on the world vis-a-vis these imbalances to shape virtually every major decision they make in their company, from employment policies overseas, to where to locate manufacturing facilities, to technology research and development programs[6].

I believe that the basic principles of kyosei can be employed by a healthy organization of any size with the help of this simple phrase: Think Globally. Act Locally. Recall the theory that as a butterfly flaps its wings in Tokyo, it affects the course of a tornado in Texas.

The healthy community

In a word, healthy communities are *sustainable.* Fritjof Capra (1997) used our understanding of eco-systems as both autopoietic networks and dissipative structures to formulate a set of five principles to help guide us in building sustainable human communities[7] (p. 298-304): interdependence, flexibility, partnership, recycling and resilient diversity.

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[5] The three imbalances Canon keeps in mind as they do business on a global scale are:
1) imbalances between countries with trade deficits and those with trade surpluses;
2) the vast income imbalance between wealthy and poor nations;
3) the imbalance between generations in terms of our current consumption of the earth's natural resources and what will be left for the future.

[6] For a description of the five stages of Kyosei, refer to Appendix C.

[7] See Appendix B for a more detailed explanation of Capra's thinking.

Part Two: Theory of Problem Formation

Edgar Schein (1988) wrote, "all organizational problems are fundamentally problems involving human interactions and processes. No matter what technical, financial, or other matters may be involved, there will always be humans involved in the design and implementation of such processes. A thorough understanding of human processes and the ability to improve such processes are therefore fundamental to any organizational improvement." (p. 12)

It is in this understanding of human interaction and processes that my theory of problem formation in human systems resides.

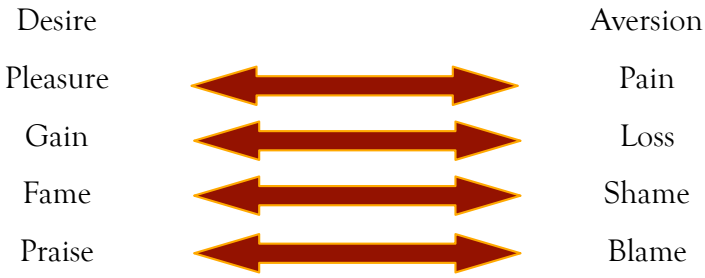
Lack of Awareness and Compassion leads to Ignorance of the Truth, Attachment and Avoidance: The Three Poisons

The basis of problem formation in human systems at any level of complexity is, in its simplest form, a fundamental *lack of awareness of the self*, both as a discrete system, but more importantly in relationship to others and the whole. In that lack of awareness, there is an accompanying *lack of compassion*, both for the self and the other.

Ultimately, this lack of awareness—whether we're talking about self-awareness, accurate empathic understanding of others, awareness of impact on others or the environment—and its accompanying lack of compassion, results in a dualistic view of the world. Right vs. wrong. Black vs. white. Us vs. them. Good vs. evil. Dualism is fertile ground for manufacturing what in Buddhist philosophy are called *The Three Poisons*: Ignorance of the Truth, Attachment (or Desire), and Aversion. (Das, 1997, p. 58-60)

Ignorance of the Truth is fairly self-explanatory and refers to delusion and confusion. The idea is that without awareness, we don't tend to perceive the truth as it is without twisting it into a story about how we would like or wish things to be, or perhaps how we fear them to be. How prevalent is this particular poison in today's headlines regarding accounting and insider-trading scandals in some of America's largest corporations?

Surya Das (1997) discusses the other two poisons of *Desire* and *Aversion* in terms of four dysfunctional continua with Desire and Aversion occupying opposite poles.[8] (p. 240):



I posit that *any* problem in a human system, whether at an individual, family, organizational or community level, may be traced to Ignorance of the Truth, Attachment (or Desire), and/or Aversion, and that cultivating awareness and compassion will counteract all three of these powerful poisons.

To support this premise, I call upon the work of a theorist with whom I do not particularly agree, John Kotter (1996), and his "eight errors common in organizational change efforts that fail" (p. 4-15). Note that Ignorance of the Truth is potentially at play in each and every one of these examples. As such, I concentrate on examining Kotter's thinking alongside the four continua of Desire and Aversion:

- *Allowing too much complacency*: Kotter (1996) talks about leaders who fail to create sufficient urgency, and overestimate their ability to force change on an organization. What he really addresses here is resistance to change in the form of avoidance of pain. He also mentions an attitude that accompanies complacency, "Yes, we have our problems, but they aren't that terrible and I'm doing my job just fine." (p. 5) This suggests also the avoidance of blame and the avoidance of shame, as implementers of the proposed change may tend to take personally the necessity for the change in the first place.

- *Failing to Create a Sufficiently Powerful Guiding Coalition*: This failure is about pulling people together as a team to support a change effort. This could be rooted in avoidance of pain, particularly if a leader fears the work it takes to

[8] Kalu Rinpoche originally taught Lama Surya Das this concept in the form of the Eight Worldly Winds or Influences in the early 1970's. He maintained that tracking our motivations against these influences would render a clear picture of intent and in so doing, set us free to make informed choices about our actions.

build a team. But it could be just as easily rooted in attachment to fame and a desire to exercise power as a "mythic hero".

- *Underestimating the Power of Vision*: The absence of a sound vision is a huge problem in organizations and may be a manifestation of a lack of moral courage and commitment in leadership. (Choose any one of the four aversions.) It takes nerve to articulate what a leader and his or her company stands for and then to *stick to it*, come what may.

- *Under-communicating the Vision*: I see this in a very similar way to the previous problem regarding vision. In addition, it could be traced to the avoidance of pain in much the same way as was the case in *failing to create a powerful guiding coalition.*

- *Permitting Obstacles to Block the New Vision*: All of the obstacles Professor Kotter mentions and their accompanying resistance may be traced to the continua of aversion and desire in numerous combinations. This is fertile ground for fallacious thinking.

- *Failing to Create Short-term Wins*: This is really about an attachment to the idea of being rewarded for doing what must be done. In this scenario, pleasure is actually *exchanged* for pain. Ultimately this is highly erroneous thinking. Leaders would be better served to cultivate compassion for self and others in the midst of the pain of hard work with the intent of finding joy and learning in the struggle itself.

- *Declaring Victory Too Soon*: The idea of "victory" alone points to dualistic thinking—us vs. them, right vs. wrong, win vs. lose, etc. Again, this is rooted in all four attachments.

- *Neglecting to Anchor Changes Firmly in the Corporate Culture*: Kotter (1996) talks about two factors in anchoring new approaches in the corporate culture. First is a "conscious attempt to show people how specific behaviors and attitudes have helped improve performance." Second is the necessity for "sufficient time to ensure the next generation of management personifies the new approach". The first reinforces attachment to praise and gain. The second could be unconsciously tied to attachment to fame in the form of ego driven legacy building. (p. 14-15)

So what is the framework for cultivating awareness and compassion in order to combat the Three Poisons? It is my way of thinking about change, indeed about life—an Eightfold Path to Transformation.

Part Three: Theory of Change in Human Systems

Background

Before I get into the specifics of my Theory of Change, offering some background information regarding Buddhist philosophy will be useful, as my theoretical framework makes integral use of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path to Enlightenment.

The Four Noble Truths

The Buddha's ancient teachings are built upon the foundation of Four Noble Truths (Das, 1997, p. 76-89). These truths may easily be adapted for examining human experience at any level of systemic complexity—from individual to community and beyond.

The First Noble Truth: Life, by its very nature is flawed, difficult and imperfect. Juxtapose this truth with the Buddha's teaching appearing at the beginning of this paper—"How wonderful! How wonderful! All things are perfect, exactly as they are!"—and you have the essence of the great paradox that calls us to acceptance and acknowledgement of the truth, as it is, without the false protection of delusion.

The Second Noble Truth: Craving is the root cause of all of life's difficulties—the nagging, incessant thirst for things to be something other than they are. It is not the desire for improvement that is the problem, but rather our attachment and identification with a specific end or outcome that causes suffering.

The Third Noble Truth: It is possible to end suffering by changing the way we think, act and relate to each other and the world.

The Fourth Noble Truth: There is a path to the end of suffering—a road map, if you will: The Noble Eightfold Path to Enlightenment, which is the basis for my Theory of Change.

Intent of my Theory of Change

Martin Luther King, Junior quoted Gandhi when he said "The end is inherent in the means." (M. Williamson, 2002) That is why the central intent of my Theory of Change

is to cultivate awareness and compassion in individuals and the organizations and communities we create on the way to "the end" called systemic health.

Imbedded in my definition of systemic health as applied to the organization, lies the potential for results like higher quality, innovation, better efficiency, increased profits, greater worker satisfaction, increased wellbeing of people and families, and a cleaner natural environment. Of course many leaders driven by the desirability of these and other similar benefits, occasionally even under the guise of such lofty rhetoric as "in the interests of National security", justify less than peaceful or compassionate means to reach what they view as "health". For example, we hear about corporations slashing workforces in service of shareholder value while still paying huge executive bonuses, or the exploitation of cheap overseas labor, or companies who illegally seek to limit others through anti-competitive practices. Ultimately these are all Machiavellian tactics[9], whether we're talking about business, politics or foreign relations—which ultimately result in much more harm than good in the end.

A few words about Organizational Transformation vs. Organizational Development

It is also important to understand that my intent in embarking on this journey is not to specialize in Organizational Development work. Though I don't dispute the usefulness of OD in the right circumstances, I intend to *concentrate* on helping leaders transform themselves and their organizations. Why? It's about time.

According to Harrison Owen (2000), "organizational development occurs at those times when the surrounding environment is relatively stable, (while) organizational transformation occurs at those times when the surrounding environment radically alters, to the point that the previous way of doing business is no longer appropriate or workable." (p. 80)

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[9] From *The Prince by Machiavelli*: "It must be understood that a prince cannot observe all of those virtues for which men are reputed good, because it is often necessary to act against mercy, against faith, against humanity, against frankness, against religion, in order to preserve the state."

To borrow a line from Alcoholics Anonymous "Your best thinking got you here." (M. Williamson, 2002). The same can be said for the mess we have created as a global human community.

If the time for transformation has not yet arrived, then when?

The Eightfold Path[10] *to Organizational Transformation*

Though the presentation of each part of this approach to transformation appears in a linear fashion, it is not meant for application as such. Like the Buddha's teachings, this approach is meant to be viewed as a circle[11]—"an eight-spoke wheel with interconnected links directed at helping develop all three essential values" (Das, 1997, p. 93)— which are translated into organizational transformational terms as Wise Conduct, Ethical Conduct and Aware Conduct.

Cultivate Wise Conduct: Clarity of Vision and Purity of Intent

Clarity of Vision

Clarity of Vision is about seeing the world as it really is. At the individual level, this thinking calls for a fundamental understanding of reality vs. fantasy. How do we begin to see and actually take responsibility for how we construct our own experience? This has an awful lot to do with the concept of *personal authority* as advanced by Donald Williamson (1991, p. 40-41)—in particular his ideas about taking "responsibility for all of one's

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[10] The Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path is organized into 3 essential values: *Wisdom, Ethics and Meditative Awareness*. (Das, pg. 93) Within Wisdom fall *Right View* and *Right Intention*. Within Ethics fall *Right Speech, Right Action* and *Right Livelihood*. Within Meditative Awareness fall *Right Effort, Right Mindfulness* and *Right Concentration*.

[11] An excellent theoretical adjunct to this model is the Transformation Cycle from Quinn's (1988) work in *Beyond Rational Management* (p. 17)

experiences, decisions and actions in life and for the consequences that flow directly from these."[12]

At the organizational level, this translates to getting clear about core values and core purpose[13] internally, and getting real about opportunities and threats externally.

Using the Waterline Model (Harrison, Short, Scherer revision) as a theoretical construct, the focus for the leader at this place on the wheel is on roles and goals.[14]

Purity of Intent

Purity of Intent is about purifying attitudes and thoughts. Das (1997) writes:

> This step asks us to purify our attitudes and thoughts—to become totally straightforward and honest with ourselves—and, in so doing, to develop a working loving-kindness, empathy and compassion toward all creatures. (pg. 131)

At an individual level, Purity of Intent asks us to have the courage to see one another as peers—as all in the same leaky boat, together—and to put aside our illusions and stories we tell ourselves about others. Again, Williamson's (1991) thinking on personal authority is of great importance to developing this element.

Purity of Intent also challenges us to avoid such behaviors as triangulation or the practice of "idiot compassion" (Das, 1997, p. 224)—enabling another to continue self-destructive behavior.

At an organizational level, Purity of Intent begins to insist upon the cultivation of high-quality relationships, both within and without. Internally, that calls for concentrated

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[12] This is also where the Buddha included key teachings on Karma—the law of cause and effect.

[13] I particularly appreciate the work of Jim Collins in his book *Built to Last* when considering the concepts of Core Ideology.

[14] Connor's SATA model from *Managing at the Speed of Change* is an excellent choice for assisting in the clarification of roles in a change process.

effort developing relationships at the group and interpersonal level[15]. Improving awareness of group development stages, developing core communication skills, and honing helping skills could be in service to that end.

Externally, the stories of Canon's adoption of kyosei as a core practice are excellent examples of what happens when the second element of the essential value of Wise Conduct is highly developed and provide a tangible, compelling benchmark of future success for any organization courageous enough to follow their lead.

Cultivate Ethical Conduct: Truth, Responsible Action and Right Livelihood

Truth

In terms of Ethical Conduct, I refer to truth and its presence in speech. (Telling ourselves the truth about reality is inherent in cultivating Wise Conduct, which is essential to cultivating Ethical Conduct, and vice versa.)

On the subject of truth telling, the Buddha's words are most eloquent and simple:

> If he is called to tell what he knows, he answers if he knows nothing: 'I know nothing.' And if he knows, he answers, 'I know.' If he has seen nothing, he answers: 'I have seen nothing.' And if he has seen, he answers: 'I have seen.' Thus, he never knowingly speaks a lie, neither for the sake of his own advantage, nor for the sake of another person's advantage, nor for the sake of any advantage whatsoever. (Das, 1997, p. 173)

Martin Luther King Junior issued this admonition to seekers of truth and justice:

> Don't worry about numbers. A lie will fall. Doesn't matter how long it's going to take for the lie to fall. If it's a lie, it will fall, and it will fall of its own dead weight. You just claim a ground of truth. (M. Williamson, 2002)

There is ample evidence for the efficacy of this thinking in the headlines of the morning newspaper.

Responsible Action

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[15] I particularly value the work of William Isaacs in his book *Dialogue*, in addition to Donald Williamson's work in *The Intimacy Paradox*.

Responsible Action is what ultimately flows from a powerful commitment to truth—both in terms of cultivating Wise Conduct (acknowledging what is) and Ethical Conduct (telling the truth). In one way, Responsible Action is truth made visible.

Though Responsible Action shows up at every level of systemic complexity, it is particularly important for leaders[16].

Besides being truth made visible, Responsible Action also shows up as awareness of and caring about impact on others. Decisions as to what products and services to produce, by what means, and at what cost to the health of the collective are examples of dilemmas around Responsible Action. In this form, at the individual level, Responsible Action translates to what products and services are purchased by each of us, and at what cost to the health of the collective.

Right Livelihood

In the simplest, most elegant terms, Kahlil Gibran wrote of the concept of Right Livelihood:

> When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music. To love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret. All work is empty save when there is love, for work is love made visible. (Das, 1997, p. 230)

Right Livelihood in an organizational sense is about doing good work for others. If the organization isn't actively sharing its wealth, its intellectual and human resources for the greater good, then there is a deficit in this aspect of cultivating Ethical Conduct. Another way *love is made visible* at the organizational level is in how it treats its members—through development programs, wellness programs, benefits, hiring practices, even what it calls them[17].

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[16] Ronald Heifetz (1994) provides a powerful example of not only a lack of Ethical Conduct in terms of speech and action, but also a lack of Wise Conduct in his analysis of the total destruction of Germany by Adolph Hitler during WWII, located on pages 23-24 of his book, *Leadership Without Easy Answers.*

[17] For example, at Canon, there is no distinction between factory and office workers. Everyone is a "sha-in" which translates to "a member of the company." (Kaku, 1997, p. 5)

In its elemental state, Right Livelihood is an individual responsibility[18]. Recall the earlier references to four continua of Aversion and Desire. In assessing Right Livelihood, each person must evaluate their true motivation for doing the work that they do. Is it about attachment to impermanent, worldly things? Is it about aversion to that which we fear? Or is it about fulfilling a higher purpose—being in service? *(Note: This is a great example of why this model must be employed in wheel form as the connection to the individual aspects of cultivating Wisdom are profoundly important here.)*

Cultivate Aware Conduct: Mastery, Mindfulness and Disciplined Attention

Mastery

Mastery is a critical concept to cultivating awareness on many levels—personally, as leaders, as organizations, even as entire communities.

Senge (1991) defines Personal Mastery beautifully:

> Personal Mastery goes beyond competence and skills, though it is grounded in competence and skills. It goes beyond spiritual unfolding or opening, though it requires spiritual growth. It means approaching one's life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to reactive viewpoint. (p.141)

In the practice of mastery in organizations, Quinn (1988) describes:

> ...people (who) do not see their work environment only in structured, analytic ways. Instead they also have the capacity to see it as a complex, dynamic system that is constantly evolving. In order to interact effectively with it, they employ a variety of different perspectives or frames. As one set of conditions arises, they focus on certain cues that lead them to apply a very analytic and structured approach. As these cues fade, they focus on new cues of emerging importance and apply another frame, perhaps this time an intuitive and flexible one. At another time, they may emphasize the overall task, and still another, they may focus on the welfare of a single individual. (p. 3-4)

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[18] Senge's (1991) work on Personal Vision in *The Fifth Discipline* (p. 147-159) is my principal theoretical framework for thinking about Right Livelihood.

As was the case regarding Right Livelihood, Mastery is largely an individual responsibility, with the organization providing *Open Space*[19] to cultivate it.

Mindfulness

In terms of cultivating Aware Conduct, Mindfulness is the practice of cultivating awareness of the self and our own emotional and psychological experiences. This is especially important in a world of constant change.

Conner (1992) referred to the phases of negatively perceived change as immobilization, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, testing and acceptance (p. 133). Similarly, Bennett-Goleman (2001) described how the kind of negative perception to which Conner refers arises out of "our deepest emotional schemas, ingrained patterns of perception and response that lead us over and over to react to similar triggers with a maladaptive, habitual set of thoughts, feelings and reactions.... Schemas dictate their own reality" (p. 76).

In all such experiences, the common denominator is a perceived lack of control.

While understanding the psychology of the change process is useful, the accompanying physiological processes are equally important. Negative emotional responses have guided our species survival for millions upon millions of years of evolution. The human brain is well designed for responding quickly to physical emergencies. The problem is people often find themselves "hijacked—swept away by anxiety or anger better suited for handling bodily threats than the subtleties of office politics" (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002, p. 28).

The possible consequence of negative emotional response amounts to an analog for infectious disease contagion and is tied closely to the physiology of the brain, specifically the limbic system. Scientists have begun to refer to the nature of the limbic system as that

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[19] Owen's (2000) work on Open Space Technology is a wonderful theoretical framework from which to consider cultivating Aware Conduct at the organizational level—from Mastery to Mindfulness to Disciplined Attention.

of an "open loop" (Goleman, et al., 2002, p. 6). In other words, our emotional systems are wired to external sources in order to manage themselves.

In many ways, the skill of Mindfulness is present in this entire Eightfold Path to Organizational Transformation model. Without it, cultivating both Wise and Ethical Conduct would be an impossible task. By way of metaphor, attempting change without cultivating mindfulness would be akin to losing one's eyesight while on a solitary trek in the wilderness.

Disciplined Attention

The practice of Disciplined Attention is the glue that holds this entire model together, and the essence for the reasoning behind its circular design.

Again, I quote Lama Surya Das (1997) and a short story that he tells to illustrate what I mean:

> Many years ago, a Zen master was on her deathbed. All the monks, nuns and disciples respectfully came to ask for her final word. "What," they questioned, "is your final instruction to us? What did you learn in your life? What is the secret of Zen?" She just said one word. "Attention."
>
> The disciples were not satisfied. They wanted a death poem, a meaningful story, or a wisdom sutra. So they asked again, "What is the most essential secret? What is the main practice? What is Buddha?"
>
> Again, she answered, "Attention."
>
> The disciples became confused. It still wasn't enough. They wanted her to say more, like "pay attention to your teacher," or "pay attention to the Buddha and the Dharma." So they asked again.
>
> "Before you breathe your last, tell us what to do with Attention. Tell us what is the essence, how to meet the Buddha?"
>
> You know what she said, "Attention." (p. 335)

Cultivating and practicing Disciplined Attention to all three essential values at once is what allows us to simultaneously hold the polarities and complexities of life, and

leadership. It is the essence of non-dual awareness—what separates true Masters from the rest.

There is no separation between self and other. There is no separation between self and the family system or the community. There is no separation between the corporation or the government and its impact on the health of each of its employees, or the world 20, 50, 100 or 500 years from now.

Concluding words about The Eightfold Path to Organizational Transformation

This framework for doing our work in the world—the work of change, the practice of Applied Behavioral Science—requires each and every component of the model to receive equal importance. There is no "right or wrong" way to apply it, other than to ignore or even slightly undervalue one of the eight spokes on the wheel. There is only *the best way for me* as a change agent, in this sacred moment in time. The theoretical models I have included as support for my thinking, are my examples today. I look forward to building and evolving my theoretical stores of knowledge as I continue on this journey of discovery.

Part Four: Family of Origin Connections

To My Theory of Practice

In a wonderful synchronicity, I happened to be reading *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, et. al, 1986), while I thought about this paper. As I did so, the proverbial light bulb sat poised above my head.

As I learned about the "silent women" (p. 23) and their struggle to be heard and feelings of deafness, dumbness, even incompetence, I recalled my early family of origin connections to an ongoing internal struggle. These words are mine from last year's self-assessment:

My struggle, though it is diminishing, is still around the following questions:

- *"If I ask for what I want or need, will I be heard?"*
- *"If I ask for what I want or need, will I be judged as selfish?"*

- *"If I ask for what I want or need, will I be rejected?"*
- *"Am I worthy of getting what I want or need?"*

I also recalled the importance of differentiation efforts, in particular between my Father and me, as I read about the women who were characterized as "receivers of knowledge" (p. 35) in a dualistic world of authorities and needy students. In particular, I made connections between the male world view of "authority-right-we"(p. 44) and my powerful memories of childhood experience in a household with a dominating (though very kind, generous and extremely well-intentioned) father.

As I progressed in my efforts at differentiation, in part through doing the family of origin interview work, I was able to make a profound shift in my own experience, not unlike that of the experience described in the progression to subjective knowledge in the book. I traced that shift to a tearful moment during the final module of curriculum last year when I realized that I was so much more like my mother than I had ever known, and that this realization did not make anyone "wrong". Suddenly, I was able to see both of my parents' gifts to me, within me, and in a combination that was completely and uniquely mine.

The connections continued as I saw myself in the "subjectivist women" in their quest for self (p. 77) and how they walked away from their pasts with little forethought or reason and began to assert their own authority and autonomy.

Reading on, I saw myself yet again in the progression toward "procedural knowledge" or "the voice of reason" (p. 97), as I recalled when I began to cultivate genuine fascination with not only the content of what people thought, but also the way they formed their opinions and ideas. This represented a significant shift away from my experience of the norm in my family of origin—a norm that in my view was rooted in some degree of superiority, along with a very well intended acceptance or tolerance of differences.

The development of "connected knowing" (p. 115) was also a point of difference between my family of origin and my emerging authentic Self over the past two years. Again, my experiences of the norms in my family included making up stories and being content

with them, rather than getting inside someone else's skin in order to actually gain a different lens through which to materially experience the world.

So with this year's assessment still ringing in my ears, I reached Chapter 7—*Constructed Knowledge: Integrating the Voices*, and the proverbial light bulb that sat poised above my head not only switched on, it EXPLODED! Integration was the key point in my faculty feedback and represented a critical step to leaving a dualistic view of the world forever behind me. To quote Belenky, et. al (1986):

> It is in the process of sorting out the pieces of the self and of searching for a unique and authentic voice that women [and apparently men, like me] come to the basic insights of constructivist thought: *All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known.* (p. 137)

In writing this paper, I have experienced just such a shift in awareness of my Self—a powerful move toward peace and the integration of all I know, all I have been, all I am now and aspire to be, and all I hold as sacred.

This is my authentic voice.

--Sean Hatt

Appendix A:

Williamson's (1991) Personal Authority in the Family System (PAFS)

- PAFS includes the ability to know and direct one's own thoughts and opinions as well as emotional freedom to choose whether or not to express these at any given moment or occasion, regardless of intense social pressures or expectations from family members or others.

- PAFS includes the ability to value one's personal judgement consistently and to be able to make decisions and act on one's own good judgement. This skill assumes the ability to be able at times to be an observer and a critic of one's own processes and responses.

- PAFS includes the ability to take responsibility for all of one's experiences, decisions and actions in life and for the consequences that flow directly from these. The underlying assumption is that one creates all of one's experiences in life…One is constantly and continuously in the business of constructing a "personal reality" in life: on "chooses" how to assimilate or internalize it, and "chooses" how to behave in light of these.[20]

- PAFS includes the ability, coexisting and interacting with the aforementioned abilities, to connect emotionally with other people in as self-expressive and intimate, or in as reserved, a fashion as seems appropriate, and as one freely chooses at any given time. This ability includes the skill to fuse with another in an intense love relationship, but at the very same time to retain some degree of [choice] and self-control within the decision and the fusion. This indeed is the case whether it is a decision to initiate intimacy or to respond to an initiative, or a decision to decline or to move away from such moments and acts of emotional fusion.

- Finally, personal authority includes the ability to relate to all other human beings as peers…faced with life and death and all the other expressions of human vulnerability, [we are all] in the same "leaky boat".

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[20] This calls to mind the notion of autopoiesis—the organization of the living, or the "self-making" nature of living systems as originally put forth by Maturana and Varela in 1970, and discussed by Capra (1997, p. 95-99).

Appendix B:

The Five Stages of Kyosei

According to Kaku (1997), kyosei manifests itself in five distinct stages:

- Economic Survival: Organizations must begin kyosei by working to secure stable profitability and strong market positions. They benefit society by producing needed goods, consuming raw materials and employing people. However, taken too far, this stage of Kyosei can be unhealthy. The example presented by Kaku is the U.S. practice of reducing workforces to increase profits while they continue to pay large bonuses to their CEO's. Kaku says increased profits are "only the beginning of a company's obligations. As they mature, businesses need to understand that they play a larger role in a larger global context." (p. 4)

- Cooperating with Labor: The second stage of kyosei begins when management and workers begin to cooperate and see one another as essential to their collective success. For example, at Canon, there is no distinction between factory and office workers. Everyone is a "sha-in" which translates to "a member of the company." (p. 5)
  The problem in this stage of kyosei is that an organization may become so inwardly focused as to forget about responsibilities outside itself.

- Cooperating Outside the Company: The third stage of kyosei begins when a company begins to cooperate with outside groups, such as customers and suppliers. Respect is the key to this stage, which when reciprocated shows up as loyalty. Competitors are also invited into partnerships and joint ventures, and community groups join with the organization to solve local problems.

- Global Activism: Kaku says that when a company begins to operate large operations around the world, it is ready, in fact it must, enter this fourth stage of kyosei. This is where global imbalances begin to shape the organization's decision making. Kaku cites examples:

  > ...a company can help reduce trade friction by building production facilities in countries with which its home country has a trade surplus. By setting up R&D facilities in foreign countries, companies can train local scientists and engineers in cutting edge research work. By training local workers and introducing them to new technology, corporations can improve the standard of living of poor people in poor countries. And by developing and using technology that reduces or eliminates pollution, companies can help preserve the global environment. (p. 4)

- The Government as a Kyosei Partner: Once a company is globally connected, it is ready to move to an advanced stage of kyosei. Using their power and wealth, fifth stage companies are in a position to influence governments to work toward correcting the three major imbalances. Kaku goes out of his way to emphasize that this is very different from traditional relationships between big business and government in which incentive deals are cut or special subsidies or protective tariffs are instituted to preserve selfish interests.

Appendix C:

Capra's (1997) Characteristics

of Sustainable Community

- Interdependence: This is defined as the awareness among the members of a community that we are all connected in a complex web of relationships. It is from this connection that we "derive our very existence". We are mutually dependent upon each other for our lives, and the success of the whole necessarily depends on the success of each member, and vice-versa.

- Recycling: Capra explains this principle by talking about the cyclical nature of ecological processes, and the need for man-made processes to mimic those of nature:

  The cyclical nature of ecological processes is an important principal. The ecosystem's feedback loops are the pathways along which nutrients are recycled. Being open systems, all organisms produce wastes, but what is waste for one species is food for another, so that the ecosystem as a whole remains without waste…The lesson for human communities here is obvious. A major clash between economics and ecology derives from the fact that nature is cyclical, whereas our industrial systems are linear. (p. 299)

- Partnership: This is critically important given that "the cyclical exchanges of energy and resources in an ecosystem are sustained by pervasive cooperation." (p. 301)

- Flexibility: This aspect of sustainability is dependent upon the presence of multiple feedback loops, which tend to bring a system back to a point of balance after it encounters a deviation from the norm. The more variables that are available for adjustment, the more dynamic is the system, the greater is its flexibility, and the greater is its capacity to change in service of its own health.

  Capra also makes mention of another important aspect of flexibility, that of conflict resolution. The ecological view of conflict acknowledges the potential importance of all sides of a conflict, and that contradictions are resultant signs of the community's diversity and contribute to its viability. (p. 303)

- Resilient Diversity: Diversity is important in a sustainable community because of overlapping contributions. In an ecosystem, it shows up as bio-diversity. If a

particular species disappears, a diverse ecosystem will reorganize itself to make up for the loss of function that species contributed. The analog in human communities is that of ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as diversity in relationships, political ideologies, religious philosophies, learning styles, etc...Resilient human diversity means the community has available to it many possible responses to the same problem, opening up a wider range of possibilities for finding a solution.

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