

THE LEADERSHIP CATALYST: A NEW PARADIGM FOR
HELPING LEADERSHIP FLOURISH IN ORGANIZATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis codifies a leadership paradigm that was born out of my experience as a naval officer, a corporate manager, and a director in a non-profit program and is informed by my study of leadership over the last 30 years—culminating in my completion of the Organizational Dynamics program.

The basis for my model is a declaration that a good leader is someone who develops, creates, or otherwise inspires leadership abilities or improved performance in others—a leadership catalyst. My premise is that by becoming leadership catalysts, people can become force multipliers in their organizations by helping to exponentially improve the organization's leadership capability. In a chemical solution, the catalyst creates a reaction that enables the original materials to become more than they are capable of becoming by themselves. Likewise, a person who is being a leadership catalyst enables others to become more than they are capable of becoming by themselves. My model melds concepts from neuroscience, cognitive psychology, ontology, and even quantum physics to describe how a person can become a leadership catalyst by being mindful, connected, intentional, generative, and heretical. Each of these five components represents particular intentions by the leader and serves as a guide for the leader to be authentic, generous, and effective at producing results.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Intent

This paper is designed to describe a model of leadership that has percolated in my mind for a number of years and has finally coalesced into the Leadership Catalyst. (See Appendix A for the list of questions that I used as a type of mind map for creating the model.) I have been dancing with the challenges of leadership for more than 30 years, starting with my membership in a Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) unit in high school, through a fourteen-year career as a naval officer, and in leadership positions in a technology startup and a non-profit organization. I have developed and delivered leadership curricula at the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA or Naval Academy or Academy), for an American Management Association (AMA) leadership course at the local community college, and as an independent consultant, but I had not synthesized everything I have learned about leadership into any kind of working model until now.

My thesis is a description of the thought processes and experiences that led to the formation of the leadership catalyst model, supported by research in neuroscience, cognitive behavioral psychology, ontology¹, and the new sciences that back up my thinking. It begins with the background of how my leadership catalyst journey started—with the dissonance I experienced as a naval officer teaching leadership and ethics at the Naval Academy. I found myself trying to

reconcile how the leadership practices I had experienced and seen rewarded in the Navy seemed to be so at odds with the more enlightened and arguably more effective leadership concepts I was teaching at the Academy. Moreover, that dissonance did not dissipate with my experiences in the corporate and non-profit worlds, either.

In the remainder of this chapter, I establish my argument for why a new leadership model is necessary, even though there have been innovations in leadership and management theories since the start of the Industrial Age. In Chapter 2, I describe the qualities that make my model a novel and worthwhile approach to becoming an effective leader. Chapters 3 through 8 provide the details about each of the components that make up the framework of my model, and Chapter 9 describes my view of how someone can be a catalyst for improving the performance of others.

Although I have created a developmental process for creating leadership catalysts, it is not the intent of this thesis to provide details or validation of my process. In Chapter 10, however, I address some of the challenges inherent in effective and long-lasting leadership development and discuss some developmental techniques that address those challenges.

The final chapter is a discussion of the next steps needed to further validate the effectiveness of the leadership catalyst model, as well as the conclusion of my thesis.

The challenge of terminology

In this work, I will be describing a new paradigm for *leadership*—something that has been defined in myriad ways by the many people who have written about the topic. Even Warren Bennis, a pioneer in leadership studies, refrains from pinning it down in his classic, *On Becoming a Leader*, suggesting that, “To an extent, leadership is like beauty: it’s hard to define but you know it when you see it” (2003, p. xxix). For the purpose of this paper, however, I refer to *leadership* as the capacity to influence others to commit to achieving a common goal or objective. A *leadership catalyst*, then, is someone who is able to influence others to commit to achieving a common goal or objective and—at the same time—improve the ability of those others to do the same with others.

While Bennis does not define leadership, he does go into detail about what it means to be a good leader (as one would expect from the book’s title). He describes the differences between leaders and managers (pp. 53-55), which highlights an additional challenge in leadership terminology: the almost synonymous use of the terms *leader* and *manager* in common conversation. Some people use these words interchangeably to represent the same concept, while others—like Bennis—argue an important distinction between the two. In his book with Joan Goldsmith, *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader*, he states that “there is a call, at the beginning of this tumultuous twenty-first century, for a new brand of leaders who are distinct from what we think of as traditional managers” (2010, p. 30).

Whereas managers are necessary to keep the machinery oiled and the organization on track, leaders are crucial to create a viable future,

empower others to make it real, foster continual learning and growth, and enable those traditional managers to get their jobs done, and done well. This distinction between leaders and managers is vital to understanding what it will take to meet the demands of our times and to provide for the roles that will successfully deliver the future we need and want. Leaders master and alter the context—the turbulent, ambiguous surroundings that seem to conspire against them and threaten to suffocate them. Managers surrender to the context, without challenging it. They are focused on commanding others and controlling the details. Leaders investigate reality, embracing and carefully analyzing the pertinent factors. On the basis of their investigations, they actively dream up and powerfully communicate visions, concepts, plans, and programs. Managers are more likely to accept what others tell them and to take it for granted as the truth. They implement visions without probing for a deeper understanding of what is truly needed or wanted and why that is so. Leading is about effectiveness. Managing is about efficiency. Leading is about direction and values, about what and why. Management is about systems, controls, procedures, policies, and structures. Leadership is about trusting people to innovate and initiate. Management is about copying and maintaining the status quo. Leadership is about being creative and adaptive; it is about searching the horizon, not just considering the bottom line. And, in fact, every organization needs and wants both roles to be filled by appropriate candidates who understand the expectations for their roles and are committed to getting the job done. In short, there is a profound difference—a chasm—between leaders and managers. To state it succinctly: *A manager does things right. A leader does the right things.* (pp. 30-31)

This contrast between being a leader and being a manager resonates with my own consideration of the two roles and harmonizes with my concept of being a leadership catalyst. While I have not yet decided whether they are mutually exclusive functions, as Bennis seems to suggest, or if one is a subset of the other and a person simply switches hats depending on the situation, my view is that being a leader requires something more of a person than being a manager. This is why I have tried to use the term *leader* rather than *manager* as much as possible in this thesis. When I do use terms like *manager*, *boss*, or *supervisor* to remain consistent with a cited source, however, I am referring to those aspects of

the position that pertain to leading people and inspiring improved performance from them. To me, you manage things, but you *lead* people.

Background

I first became interested in leadership development as a lieutenant assigned to teach at USNA, in 1994. Before my assignment as a leadership and ethics instructor, I had served five years in the Fleet on two different ships, leading teams of up to 100 people. As much as I hate to say it, I did not apply any particular concepts from the leadership courses I took as a midshipman to any of the leadership challenges I faced as a junior officer. All I remembered from those courses were the five types of power—legal, reward, coercive, referent, and expert (French, 1956)—and Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs. For the most part, my approach was a combination of conditioned responses gained during my formative years and trial-and-error intercessions as my teams performed various missions. While I achieved success as a leader and received good performance ratings, I did not feel very confident in my ability. There was a lot of “fake-it-until-you-make-it” going on. I felt like I was in reaction mode most of the time and was certainly not very proactive in taking my teams to a higher level of performance.

When I returned to teach leadership and ethics at the Academy, the curriculum was in the process of an overhaul. We started teaching topics such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI), Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, Total Quality Leadership (based on the tenets of W. Edwards Deming's Total Quality Management), Rushworth Kidder's *How Good People Make Tough Choices*, and Josephson's *Six Pillars of Ethical Behavior*. We also made the

application of these concepts by midshipmen (as the students are called, due to their military rank) in the leadership laboratory of Bancroft Hall—the eight-winged, five-storied, dormitory where all 4,500 students live and practice leadership on a daily basis—a graded element of the courses rather than simply suggesting them as “good practices,” as was done during my own days as a student.

While teaching, I remember thinking, “Man, I wish I had had this stuff as a midshipman. I would have felt better prepared as a leader in the Fleet!” Instead of my subconscious conditioning driving my behaviors and succeeding mostly through happenstance, I would have had an actual tool kit of behaviors I could utilize with intention. I felt I would have been a more thoughtful, proactive leader—one who would have diagnosed situations more accurately, designed more effective interventions that lifted my people to a higher level of performance and leadership, and been better able to effect positive behavior change for myself and those I led.

That is when I decided that leadership development and creating positive behavior change would be my career focus. I wanted to help people become more effective in their work and relationships. I wanted to help people become more satisfied and energized by their lives and their work.

Given the level of frustration and dissatisfaction with work and bosses out there, my calling seems to be a timely one.

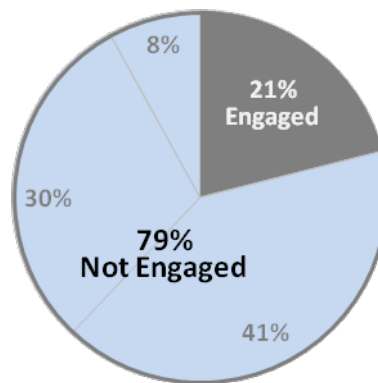
Dissatisfied workers

The Dilbert comic series is still popular for good reason, and the New York Times bestseller *The No Asshole Rule: Building a Civilized Workplace and Surviving One That Isn't* (Sutton, 2007)—which won the 2007 Quill Award for best business book—resonates out in the workforce. It can be argued that this is evidence that people are not enjoying themselves at work, which is a shame, because we easily spend 24% to 50% (or even more) of our time there (if you consider workweeks now span 40–90+ hours). This is a good indication that the more people enjoy their work, the more fulfilling their lives will be.

Right now, however, too many people are just going through the motions. They are working to the rule of their job description—if even that—and rarely do they go above-and-beyond the call of duty. People are putting in the time, perhaps, but very few are actually engaged at work. In *Closing the Engagement Gap: How Great Companies Unlock Employee Potential for Superior Results*, the authors report that “While the vast majority of people we survey regularly say they want to give more to their companies...four out of every five workers worldwide are not delivering their full potential to help their organizations succeed” (Gebauer, Lowman, & Gordon, 2008, p. 13). The authors conducted a *Global Workforce Study*² and found that only 21% of workers can be considered *engaged* in their work. For them, an engaged employee is someone who “*understands* what to do to help her company succeed, she *feels* emotionally connected to the organization and its leaders, and she is willing to put that knowledge and emotion into *action* to improve performance, her own and the

organization's" (2008, p. 10). Of the remaining workers, shown in Figure 1³, 8% are disengaged, 30% are disenchanted (they still feel some connection to their organization and could still become engaged if the conditions are right), and 41% are barely even enrolled, meaning "they are capable, they care, and they're ready to be engaged. Unfortunately, they are not being inspired or motivated—by their organizations or their bosses—to consistently put forth discretionary effort" (2008, p. 5).

Figure 1. Ratio of Engaged to Disengaged Workers



Bosses are the reason for a large part of this dissatisfaction with work. Gallup research has found that employees do not leave companies—they leave managers and supervisors: "The impact that a supervisor has in today's workplace can be either very valuable or very costly to the organization and the people who work there"⁴ ("Gallup management journal," 1999).

Levels of engagement appear to change dramatically not with macroeconomic swings, but only through better managers—and *the aggregate quality of managers isn't improving*....It's a real blind spot in the corporate world, a rare situation in which, never mind the moral considerations, executives aren't even being selfish very well. The failure to make work more invigorating has industry leaving a lot of money on the table. *The cost of lost productivity due to disengagement, conservatively expressed, is \$300 billion in the United States.* (Wagner & Harter, 2006, p. 206 [location 2507 of 2883 on Kindle])

Gary Hamel, a Visiting Professor of Strategic and International Management at the London Business School and author of *The Future of Management*, has this to say about the research findings:

This is a scandalous waste of human capability, and it helps to explain why so many organizations are less capable than the people who work there. Weirdly, many of those who labor in the corporate world—from lowly admins to high-powered CEOs—seem resigned to this state of affairs. They seem unperturbed by the confounding contrast between the essential nature of human beings and the essential nature of the organizations in which they work. In years past, it might have been possible to ignore this incongruity, but no longer—not in a world where adaptability and innovation have become the sine qua non of competitive process. The challenge: to reinvent our management systems so they inspire human beings to bring all of their capabilities to work every day. (2007, pp. 57-58)

As the math shows in the *Global Workforce Study*, an *astounding* 71% of the global workforce could be motivated to bring more to their organizations. The potential in people is there, but leaders do not seem to be able to access, harness, or inspire it.

Ill-equipped leaders, outdated models

Why are so many leaders unable to engage their people and create emotionally safe, encouraging, and fulfilling environments? Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee provide some insight into the answer by suggesting that most people's leadership behaviors are picked up subconsciously and used irregularly:

The lessons people get in leadership start very early in life, from observing teachers, coaches, clergy—anyone who has been in the role of leader in their lives. These models offer the first scaffold for people's own leadership habits, their original ideas about what a leader does. Then, as they begin to step into their first leadership role in clubs, teams, student government, or as leaders in their peer groups, they put those models into practice. In their jobs, they encounter new leaders and try out new

leadership behaviors, adding on to that early initial scaffolding that they had built....

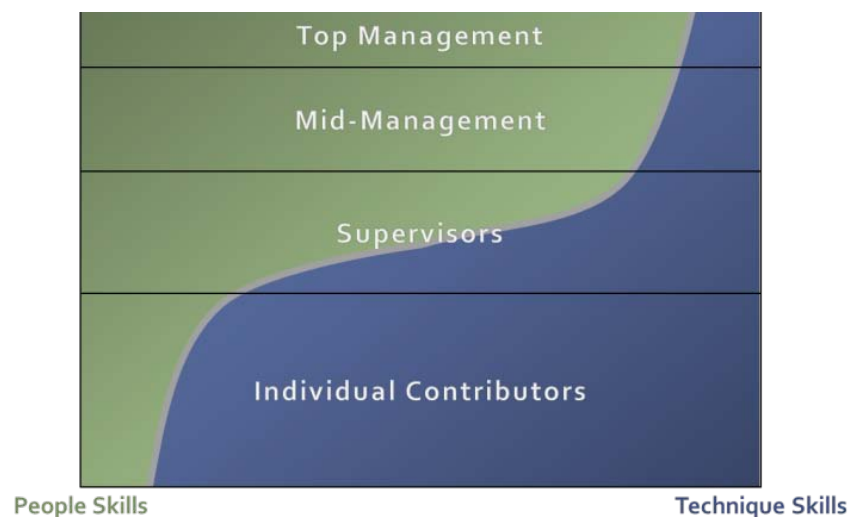
All this learning goes on tacitly, most of the time without people even being aware that they are mastering such lessons, in what amounts to stealth learning. It's an elegant system, for the most part. The problem, though, is that people pick up their leadership habits rather haphazardly over the course of life through repeating what they see their models do, or through repeating their own attempts at leading...People end up with a mixed bag of leadership skills, akin to having mastered a few golf strokes but being a terrible putter. (2004, pp. 154-156)

In the absence of any leadership development opportunities, people will fall back to the conditioning set by the leader role models available to them during their formative years. This means that any time they face an adversity within their team, they will find themselves resorting to behaviors they learned in their developmental years—the ones set by their parents or coaches or other adults they observed as they were growing up. Yelling, blaming, throwing a stapler, or kicking a chair can often be traced back to behaviors a person experienced with an irate parent or coach. Sometimes, if an organization is lucky, the newly appointed supervisor will reflect on good and bad examples of leadership behaviors they have seen or experienced and apply those lessons to their own team. As the previously discussed research suggests, however, this does not happen very often.

Figure 2 represents what I feel is the balance between the *people* skills and the *technical* skills people need, to be effective, as they rise in the organizational structure.⁵ (In this representation, technical skill refers to a person's ability in a particular subject matter, or the *techniques* of the job, rather than skill in any specific technology.) In this diagram, individual contributors—workers who are

not responsible for the performance of any other employees—can be thought of as people who are relied upon to carry out specific duties in their area of expertise, comprising the greater portion of technique skills shown. Once promoted to supervise a team of people, however, the individual must exercise an ability to effectively work with, and lead, other people. As an individual gains more and more responsibility in the organization, the diagram shows that the majority of the skills needed to be effective have less to do with the actual technical tasks of the work “in the trenches” and more about developing effective relationships with people. (Rintzler & Brown, 2002)

Figure 2. People skills vs. technical skills in a corporate hierarchy



In my experience, however, people are often promoted based on anything *but* their ability to work with people. They are given responsibility for the performance of a team and left to their own devices as how best to lead them. Rodd Wagner

and James Harter, who pull from decades of Gallup research, describe this in their book, *12: The Elements of Great Managing*:

The title of manager is too often doled out as a reward for tenure and connections, for solid performance that demonstrates no particular ability to deal with people, or as the sole path of progress in a company that does not know how to create highly valued non-managerial positions. Enterprises that wouldn't think of letting an accounting school dropout run its finances, a Luddite run IT, or a klutz supervise safety routinely let dislikable, insincere, or aloof men and women assume stewardship for a crew of the company's ostensibly greatest assets. (2006, p. 205 [location 2494 of 2883 on Kindle])

One can imagine a celebratory dinner with the family on Friday night and a new office and title on Monday often being the only concessions a person receives before being thrust into the complex world of leading those who were recently peers. As the data in this chapter suggests, too many people are left to figure out leadership on their own, with poor results for organizations and workers.

I encountered this firsthand when I went to work for a technology start-up after leaving the military. I was employee number 451 in a company that grew from 130 to 1,134 employees in less than three years. This accelerated growth rate only emphasized the deficiencies in the organization's promotion and leadership development practices, which were typical of many organizations, as I have come to discover. As this company grew, promotions were frequently based on a person's IT skills or seniority in the company—preference given to the young “techno-wizzes” who built the initial technology structure of the company, regardless of any lack of real business experience. There were no leadership development processes or mentoring programs in place—not even a corporate philosophy providing general guidance—to give these supervisors and managers

a road map for leading others. The result was a lot of micromanaging, leadership “playacting,” and inter-departmental rivalries that, in my opinion, contributed to the company ending in bankruptcy in its fourth year.

Even when an organization does provide some type of leadership development opportunity to its people, the evidence from the Gallup organization implies that it has had little effect. This may be attributable to what Hamel sees as the lack of management innovation since “the invention of industrial management at the dawn of the 20th century” (2007, p. 5). [Hamel does not distinguish between the terms *management* and *leadership*.]

When compared with the momentous changes we’ve witnessed over the past half-century in technology, lifestyles, and geopolitics, the practice of management seems to have evolved at a snail’s pace. While a suddenly resurrected 1960s-era CEO would undoubtedly be amazed by the flexibility of today’s real-time supply chains, and the ability to provide 24/7 customer service, he or she would find a great many of today’s management rituals little changed from those that governed corporate life a generation or two ago. Hierarchies may have gotten flatter, but they haven’t disappeared. Frontline employees may be smarter and better trained, but they’re still expected to line up obediently behind executive decisions. Lower-level managers are still appointed by more senior managers. Strategy still gets set at the top. And the big calls are still made by people with big titles and even bigger salaries. There may be fewer middle managers on the payroll, but those that remain are doing what managers have always done—setting budgets, assigning tasks, reviewing performance, and cajoling their subordinates to do better. (2007, p. 4)

Alvin Toffler, a well-known social thinker and futurist, recognized three decades ago that “patterns of leadership and management will have to change” (1980, p. 206). He described society’s historic economic development as an evolution of waves—from agriculture to industrialization to knowledge and information. In his book, *The Third Wave: The Classic Study of Tomorrow*, he states that:

...the characteristic problems of industrial society—from unemployment to grinding monotony on the job, to overspecialization, to the callous treatment of the individual, to low wages—may, despite the best intentions and promises of job enlargers, trade unions, benign employers, or revolutionary workers' parties, be wholly unresolvable within the framework of the Second Wave production system [industrial]. If such problems have remained for 300 years, under both capitalist and socialist arrangements, there is cause to think they may be inherent in the mode of production. (1980, p. 206)

Toffler saw that the leadership philosophy that had gotten us well into the Industrial Age would not be sufficient to meet the challenges of this current wave.

A different approach might be needed:

The emerging civilization of the Third Wave [knowledge and information] demands...a wholly new type of leadership. The requisite qualities of Third Wave leaders are not yet entirely clear. We may well find that strength lies not in a leader's assertiveness but precisely in his or her ability to listen to others; not in bulldozer force but in imagination; not in megalomania but in recognition of the limited nature of leadership in the new world. (1980, pp. 403-404)

Instead of treating workers as interchangeable cogs who are to be seen and not heard, leaders need to recognize that people want to be challenged. People want to contribute and make a difference. Instead of insisting that personal issues and feelings should be left at the door when an employee comes to work, leaders need to recognize that, more and more, people want jobs that have meaning: they want to work for something important rather than just live to go to work. Finally, leaders need to recognize that the people they lead are the reason for their success. The leader's job is not to herd, cajole, push, or incentivize but to remove obstacles, inspire, encourage, and elicit the best efforts from people.

This necessary change in leadership perspective can be seen as a reflection of changes in scientific perspective, as science has shifted from a Newtonian-

based view of the world to one based on quantum physics. Margaret Wheatley, author of *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* describes how, in the early years of the 20th century, science was brought in to the burgeoning field of management theory as a means of giving it more credibility, and that it still influences the thinking:

Each of us lives and works in organizations designed from Newtonian images of the universe. We manage by separating things into parts, we believe that influence occurs as a direct result of force exerted from one person to another, we engage in complex planning for a world that we keep expecting to be predictable, and we search continually for better methods of objectively measuring and perceiving the world. These assumptions...come to us from seventeenth-century physics, from Newtonian mechanics. They are the basis from which we design and manage organizations, and from which we do research in all of the social sciences. Intentionally or not, we work from a worldview that is strongly anchored in the natural sciences.

But the science has changed. If we are to continue to draw from science to create and manage organizations, to design research, and to formulate ideas about organizational design, planning, economics, human motivation, and change processes (the list can be much longer), then we need to at least ground our work in the science of our times. We need to stop seeking after the universe of the seventeenth century and begin to explore what has become known to us during the twentieth century. We need to expand our search for the principles of organization to include what is presently known about how the universe organizes. (2006, pp. 7-8)

Wheatley is encouraged by new discoveries in biology, chaos theory, and quantum physics that can be used as metaphors in which to reassess our view of organizations and leadership:

I believe we have only just begun the process of discovering and inventing the new organizational forms that will inhabit the twenty-first century. To be responsible inventors and discoverers, we need the courage to let go of the old world, to relinquish most of what we have cherished, to abandon our interpretations about what does and doesn't work. We must learn to see the world anew. As Einstein is often quoted as saying: No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. (2006, p. 7)

Something different—but not necessarily new

It is becoming a cliché, but another saying attributed to Einstein seems to sum up the results of leadership development for most organizations: *The definition of insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting different results.* Organizations and leaders keep trying the latest management and organizational change crazes in an effort to make employees more productive, yet they fail to recognize that something must be missing—because the results hardly ever change, according to Gallup. Wheatley sees this as a terrible record of failures:

Beyond the fads that have swept through large organizations, think of all the contemporary leadership problems that are variations on the theme that we don't know how to work together. We struggle to help teams form quickly and work effectively. We struggle to learn how to work with the uniqueness that we call diversity. We are terrified of the emotions aroused by conflict, loss, love. In all of these struggles, it is *being human* that creates the problem. We have not yet learned how to be together. I believe we have been kept apart by three primary Western cultural beliefs: individualism, competition, and a mechanistic worldview. Western culture, even as it continues to influence people everywhere, has not prepared us to work together in this new world of relationships. And we don't even know that we lack these skills. In a simple example of the difficulties created by this ignorance, many MBA graduates who've been in the field a few years report that they wish they had focused more on organizational behavior and people skills while in school. (2006, pp. 164-165)

I say this is evidence that something else is required. We need a different perspective on what it means to be a leader, what it means to elicit the best work from others. We need a more effective approach to how we look at and develop leadership in our organizations. And because we are looking for something different, why not take advantage of new insights in the sciences. As Wheatley suggests, there are lessons to be learned from the latest findings from biology

and quantum physics. According to Goleman and others, the latest findings of neuroscience offer some new perspectives on which behaviors contribute to good leadership and why.

There are also lessons to be learned from our past—messages that got lost in the excitement and rapid pace of the Industrial Revolution. Mary Parker Follet, a political scientist and social work pioneer in the 1920s and 1930s, talked about aspects of leadership that were mainly ignored by the entrepreneurs of the day, but are now emerging into the current lexicon of leadership. Peter Drucker, a leading voice in the leadership arena for more than two decades, called Follet “the prophet of management” (Follett & Graham, 1995, p. 8). She was lecturing organizations on the benefits of *power-with* rather than *power-over*, self-managed teams, the dignity of workers, and seeing conflict in a positive light, while the captains of industry were busy wielding the mechanistic whip on their people to achieve faster production—no matter the cost to the people who served as the cogs and gears powering the engine. In his introduction to *Mary Parker Follet Prophet of Management: A Celebration of Writings from the 1920s*, Drucker shares how her writings were left off of the reading lists he requested from some of the most important people in the field of management in 1941:

The only explanation is that her ideas, concepts, and precepts were being *rejected* in the 1930s and 1940s. Hopf [one of the experts from whom Drucker requested a list of management thought leaders] did not leave her off his reading list because of ignorance. He left her off because in 1941 he did not consider her work to be “of the slightest importance.” What she had to say, the 1930s and 1940s simply did not hear, and, equally important, did not *want* to hear. (1995, p. 2)

But as Drucker states, “Follet, however, had been the brightest star in the management firmament. And—to change the metaphor—she had struck every single chord in what now constitutes the ‘management symphony’” (Follett & Graham, 1995, p. 2). The four central postulates of her work represent the chords in this management symphony:

1. Conflict is constructive. Follet saw conflict as unavoidable, so “we should, I think, use it to work for us” (1995, p. 4). The first step is to use it for understanding. Instead of asking *who* or *what* is right in a conflict, assume that both sides are right and try to see how the other person’s perspective might be seen as rational and correct. The second step is to use that mutual understanding to find a different answer that comprises what both parties deem right. As Follet says, “The end result of conflict management—indeed, the only way to resolve a conflict—is not ‘victory,’ not ‘compromise.’ It is integration of interests” (1995, p. 4). Drucker points out that this concept was unintelligible to the corporate mavens of the time. “They did not believe in conflict resolution; they believed in unconditional surrender” (1995, p. 4).
2. Organizations are social institutions. Follet espoused that management was not reserved just for corporations, but was a generic function of all organizations, even government agencies, which at the time were seen as incompatible with business. “To Follet it was obvious—she said so many times—that business was a *social* institution. In the all-but-universal

opinion of those years, however, business was nothing but an *economic* institution” (1995, p. 6).

3. Management is a function. To Follet, management was necessary for an organization’s life, not just a medicinal tonic quaffed to treat particular maladies of the organizational body. This, according to Drucker, was an equally strange idea to the management people of the 1930s and 1940s:

To her, management was a *function*. To them, it was a *tool box*. Those decades saw a good deal of work on management, but it was work on procedures, techniques, methods, and practices. It was work on organizational rules such as the span of control, on specific behavior, on problems of personnel management such as compensation, and so forth. No one asked *what* they were doing, let alone *why* they were doing it. The question was always “*How* do we do it?” (1995, p. 6)

Follet felt that management was a discipline—an occupation on the same level of professions such as doctor, lawyer, or engineer. She suggested that treating it as a profession would mean that business management would be: (1) exercised as a necessary function of society, not one purely for private gain; (2) be an application of a proven and systematic body of knowledge based on science and reciprocal service; and (3) entail a love of the work, shown by a willingness to go through strenuous training and having satisfaction in work done well. (1995)

4. Restoring citizenship is a crucial challenge. The most penetrating insight into Follet and her work, restoring citizenship was counter to the political and economic thinking at the time, which was shifting to “how to make *government* more controlling, bigger, and more powerful” (1995, p. 7). Politics seemed to be defined “as nothing but a fight for the spoils,

[meaning] there are only special interests and pressure groups. There are voters to be wooed and taxpayers to be milked. But citizens existed only as a rhetorical flourish" (1995, p. 7). Follet's view that management should play a role in "reinventing the citizen" (1995, p. 7) was antithetical to the prevailing political perspective and contributed to her voice's becoming diminished and forgotten. But as Drucker points out:

If one lesson was taught by the collapse of the ultimate mega-state, totalitarian communism, it is that nothing can work unless it is based on a functioning civil society—that is, on citizens and citizenship. In other words, we know that Mary Parker Follet was not only right but superbly relevant, and her relevance persists today. (1995, p. 8)

Even today, many of Follet's messages resonate with people who would rather be engaged at work than disengaged or indifferent—people who want to make a difference and be a contribution to something bigger than them. They would prefer to strive to work beyond the rule and have those efforts recognized and appreciated rather than suffer the abuse of a boss who would bleed them dry.

Though I claim that the leadership models prevalent in the workplace today are still stuck in the Industrial Age, it is not for the lack of people trying to change management practices for the better. Like Follet, others have suggested leadership perspectives that recognize the value of the workers and promote more humane and respectful treatment of them. Some of the other pioneers of more enlightened leadership ideas include Kurt Lewin, a social psychology professor who founded the National Training Laboratories in 1947 to help improve organizations from within. His belief was that "people have something

innately valuable to offer the world” (Kleiner, 2008, p. 21). Then, in the 1960s, there was Eric Trist, who came up with the idea of democratic teams; and Chris Argyris in the 1970s, who introduced the practice of double-loop learning. Argyris’s idea was that “You can learn to reduce the unfortunate, unintended consequences of your actions by becoming hyperaware of your own impulses and thoughts, particularly those that drive your behavior toward results you don’t intend” (2008, p. 219). Also in the 1970s, Warren Bennis famously stated that “Managers were people who do things right, while leaders do the right thing” (2008, p. 224). He promoted participative management and was responsible for the then-innovative “open door policy” (2008, p. 221). Tom Peters and W. Edwards Deming came to prominence in the 1980s. Peters started asking leaders, “What do you do to promote excellence at your company?” and turned the answers he received into the best-selling book, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America’s Best-run Companies* (2008, p. 283). Deming, the force behind Japan’s emergence as a world power in manufacturing after World War II, had the idea that, “If they could train everyone to steadily improve the quality of their processes, making the work flow more effectively and less wastefully every day, then it would naturally lead to dramatic improvements in products and considerable cost reductions” (2008, p. 289). His Total Quality movement has evolved into today’s *lean manufacturing* school of practice.

All of the great thinkers through these decades made their mark in the annals of organizational development, but nothing has reached the level of a management revolution. Even some of today’s highly acclaimed leadership and

management gurus seem to be making only a small dent in how leaders behave: Ken Blanchard with his Situational Leadership Theory, Daniel Goleman with Emotional Intelligence and Primal Leadership, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee with their Resonant Leader, Peter Senge with his Fifth Discipline, just to name a few. My intention is not to in any way disparage this hallowed list of management and leadership icons, their ideas, or their efforts—in fact, to paraphrase the words of Sir Isaac Newton, they are the giants upon whose shoulders I am standing to support my leadership catalyst model. The point I am trying to make, however, is that the state of affairs of today's management and leadership practices, when you look at the Gallup and Global Workforce Study numbers on disengaged employees and the \$300 billion in lost productivity, leaves something to be desired. There is room to go to work, and there are openings for innovation. Even Hamel, in his call for management innovation, shares his desire for something better:

I dream of organizations that are capable of spontaneous renewal, where the drama of change is unaccompanied by the wrenching trauma of a turnaround. I dream of businesses where an electric current of innovation pulses through every activity, where the renegades always trump the reactionaries. I dream of companies that actually deserve the passion and creativity of the folks who work there, and naturally elicit the very best that people have to give. Of course, these are more than dreams; they are imperatives. They are do-or-die challenges for any company that hopes to thrive in the tumultuous times ahead—and they can be surmounted only with inspired management innovation. (2007, p. xi)

I dream of the same thing. Since stepping into the leadership classroom that first day as an instructor, sharing my experiences leading teams in the Fleet and trying to instill a more conscientious and proactive approach to leadership in the students, I have been committed to helping people become better leaders—

better people, even. As I once remarked to a military colleague, after we had been regaling each other with stories of the poor leaders and work environments we had experienced, “It shouldn’t have to be so hard to find good leadership!”

Treating others with the common decency and respect every human being deserves, helping to remove the barriers—either personal or organizational—that hold people back from being great, and generating engagement and excitement about getting results should be commonplace leadership behaviors. People deserve to wake up every morning eager to go to work because they are making a difference. People deserve to have a challenging yet supportive, empowering, and nurturing environment. People deserve to have chances to succeed and grow and develop skills that enable them to pass on their expertise and fortunes to others. This model is my effort to help that possibility come true.

Chapter summary

According to research, dissatisfied workers are the norm in the workplace. Four out of five workers worldwide are not engaged at work: They do not actively participate in helping their organizations succeed. In the United States alone, the result is \$300 billion in lost productivity each year. Most people, however, want to give more to their company. So what is getting in the way? Bosses. Bosses are unable to engage their people and create fulfilling environments—and they are not getting better in spite of new, more humanistic approaches to leadership. There are three main reasons for this: (1) organizations are not conscious of the hidden costs of bad leaders and do not hold them accountable; (2) organizations do not provide leadership development to their personnel, instead leaving people

to rely on ineffective, conditioned behaviors; (3) and when organizations do provide leadership development, they use techniques that are fine for technical skills but not appropriate for the necessary behavior change that true leadership development requires. Something better is needed, and I believe my leadership catalyst model is that something better.

CHAPTER 2

THE LEADERSHIP CATALYST

Filling in the gaps

In my opinion, the leadership courses we taught at USNA while I was an instructor were quite valuable for preparing new officers to serve in the Fleet. They were certainly an improvement over the courses I had taken six years earlier. For some reason, however, the model we used seemed to be missing something. Although I finished out my naval service with a better sense of what good leadership entailed, thanks to those courses and the good leadership examples of some of the senior officers I worked with, a part of my brain continued to mull over what that something might be.

In my first civilian job, I became keenly aware that some of the positive, functional behaviors that seem to be second nature to military service members were not well developed in the corporate world. These behaviors include respect for the chain of command, pride of workmanship, and the concept of “A Message to Garcia” (Hubbard, 1899)—a fundamental lesson taught during Plebe Summer at the Academy (and posted on the NATO website⁶) about taking initiative and getting the job done under any circumstance. Alternatively, I was surprised to see how many “leadership” behaviors in my first corporate organization were similar to those of the military culture—particularly the “do-it-because-I-said-so” style of leadership I saw many managers use, as well as a tendency to treat people as expendable means to an end.

A leadership development methodology I first began to employ as an independent consultant filled in some of the gaps that existed in my leadership model by addressing it as creating positive behavior change to get improved results. I do not think I was even conscious that I was trying to form a model at the time. I just know that I had a difficult time framing my approach to leadership development into a cogent, impactful, and inspiring value statement that could help sell my services—even though I had no doubt in my mind that I could provide value to individuals and organizations that wanted to be more successful. In retrospect, I can only describe it as a general feeling of incompleteness as I marketed the importance of developing people to become better leaders and performers. There was nothing solid to grab onto whenever my brain reached for words to describe those aspects. It was that longing to fill in the gaps, and solidify those amorphous thoughts, that eventually influenced my search for a graduate school.

I decided on the University of Pennsylvania's Organizational Dynamics program. Its focus on the dynamics of organizations and people filled in the missing pieces for me to create an innovative model that addresses the heart of leadership as well as the peripheral habits and processes that other models seemed to have placed their emphasis during the past century.

To finally form a useful model for myself, I had to resolve three areas that I feel organizations have yet to embrace fully:

1. Leadership is more about the intention of the leader than it is about doing any specific tasks or techniques. If a leader is centered on a powerful

- intention, appropriate and authentic leadership behaviors will flow more naturally.
2. Leadership is more about raising the performance of the team than it is about being a star. Leaders should be what the Navy calls “force multipliers.” In the Fleet, certain ship designs are considered force multipliers because when they join a battle group, they enhance the capabilities of all of the other vessels in the group by virtue of their own capabilities.
 3. Organizations that invest in leadership development at all levels—what I call creating “leadership in depth”—and that incorporate the first two areas in this list into their development mindset cannot help improving their bottom line.

With some added support from quantum physics, neuroscience, and my own trials-by-fire, I have designed a model I believe helps people not only become better leaders in their own right, but also better at developing other leaders around them. People who—by virtue of their participation on teams, their presence in organizations, and their interactions with the people around them—create clearings in which leadership can blossom in others. As John Quincy Adams said, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader” (Institute, 2011).

Through the years, I have had a lot of experience with both good leaders and bad leaders, under very trying conditions. I want to be able to give people a model that will help them gain a perspective that allows them to be better leaders

and be so more naturally. I have seen many models that sound good, but they require a lot of tracking of steps and techniques or matching the perceived level of competence of a person to a particular type of intervention. To me, that makes it tougher to be great in the moment. It also means that it is harder to be authentic, because leaders are trying to do things that are not in their bailiwick or are just not the way they operate. I think we have all experienced the well-meaning leader who tries out the latest leadership “best practices” without understanding the underlying concepts of why or when the techniques should be used.

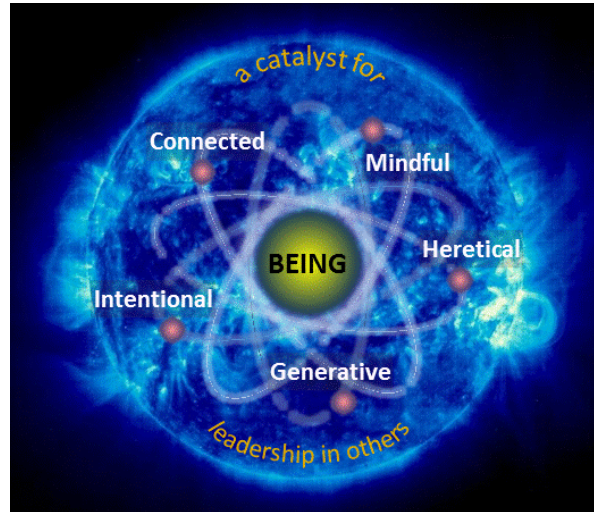
A mental model

Instead of specifying any particular tips, techniques, or checklists, my model starts with the mindset, or perspective, of the leader. It takes into account—or has leaders determine individually, ahead of time—who it is they want to be as a leader. Once they determine that, their behaviors will flow more naturally out of who they are being as a person and a leader, allowing them to be real with their people.

The rest of the model comprises components of “being” that make someone not just a good leader but also a leader who causes other leaders to emerge—someone I call a “leadership catalyst.” Just as two chemicals in a solution suddenly become more than they were with the addition of a catalytic substance or as a magnetic field can evoke electrons to gather and flow in such a way that electricity is created, a leadership catalyst is someone who creates openings or invitations for leadership to appear in others. Improved leadership ability in others

is a byproduct of a leadership catalyst's involvement on the team or in the organization. This model is represented in Figure 3:⁷

Figure 3. The Leadership Catalyst model



The five components of a leadership catalyst are ingrained states of being for a leader that promote, encourage, or elicit leadership behaviors in others. Like electron particle-wave shells surrounding the nucleus of an atom, these components provide a vantage point, or perspective, from which to consider the core of the paradigm:

Mindful. Being mindful has to do with being aware. Not only of yourself but also of how human beings are wired and of how the world interacts. The more mindful leaders are, the more they are able to act from a powerful purpose and strong values, rather than be entrapped or constricted by reactions, assumptions, or competing commitments.

Connected. Leadership catalysts work to create a connection with the people around them—colleagues, peers, and direct reports. This is where the power of

collaboration comes in, working in concert with others. The leadership catalyst concentrates on relationships. Being connected also means that leaders pay attention to their relationships with the larger organization and the community.

Intentional. Being intentional means that leaders make an effort to consider how every action they take will be perceived by those around them, particularly their direct reports. Leaders need to know that their people are assessing their actions: for meaning, for implications to their lives, and for clues as to how to act. It also has to do with being self-activated. This means continually diagnosing the status and “weather report” of the team and designing interactions that address issues, build better rapport, and help the team move to a higher level of effectiveness.

Generative. Being generative means that leaders are generating—not wholly by themselves, but in concert with the team—a purpose, or vision, or mission for the team that gets people engaged and contributing. A leader needs to find ways to inspire people to go “above and beyond the call of duty.” This partly deals with motivation, but has more to do with engaging others in the effort at hand. The leader also generates action that leads to results.

Heretical.⁸ Being heretical means not letting assumptions, habits, or political dynamics get in the way of seeing opportunities for innovation. It also involves being a champion for other people, even if it means bucking organizational norms. Being heretical means that leaders are for the organization, and efforts are in service of the organization’s success. These pathfinders do not fall into the rut of doing things just because “that’s the way they are always done.”

Though these five components are identified as distinct parts of being a leadership catalyst, there may be times when the concepts seem to overlap. For example, talking with someone with whom you have a conflict can have aspects of being mindful (of one's own reactions), being connected (by trying to see the situation from the other person's perspective), or being intentional (by wanting to create a win-win outcome). While a blurring of boundaries would be problematic in a Newtonian physics framework⁹, any overlap or blending of boundaries is consistent with quantum theory¹⁰, on which this model is based. The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, one of the principles in quantum mechanics, states that it is impossible to know both the position and the momentum of an electron or any other particle, simultaneously, with any degree of accuracy or certainty (Robertson, 1929). In this leadership catalyst model, all five components are in action simultaneously and seamlessly while a person is being a leadership catalyst. There is no internal checklist being used moment by moment to make sure each component is being covered. It is a quantum whole. It is only when we break the model down for educational purposes or to reflect on a particular aspect of being a leadership catalyst for further development and mastery that we can pinpoint a particular component. Even then, it is not meant to be considered with the same kind of discrete distinction inherent in a Newtonian view of the world. The lesson here, for leaders, is not to be too concerned that their behavior reflects being connected, while someone else considers the same behavior as being mindful or another relates to it as being intentional. The components exist only to assist the leader in gaining a well-rounded perspective

of the many elements that contribute to being a better leadership catalyst. In the previous example, a leadership catalyst could try to resolve the conflict by being more mindful about interrupting their negative automatic behaviors that get triggered by the other person's demeanor, more connected with the other person by finding common ground on which to build consensus, or more intentional by including a third person in the conversation who might be able to facilitate a compromise.

I believe that leaders who put being these five components into practice will create environments where the people around them are more likely to step into their own leadership abilities and, ultimately, become even better performers for the organization. With constant attention to who they are being in the moment, consistent with the five components of this model, leaders will set a good example and be able to help others examine who they are being, setting off a chain reaction that will provide the organization with a strong succession of performers and other leadership catalysts. Tom Peters states:

Leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders. Too many old-fashioned leaders measure their influence by the number of followers that they can claim. But the greatest leaders are those who don't look for followers. Think of Martin Luther King Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, or Nelson Mandela. They were looking for more leaders in order to empower others to find and create their own destinies. (2001, p. 124)

To add another dimension to Peter's quote, I declare that great leaders create other leaders—by who they are being.

Chapter summary

My model offers a unique perspective on the practice of leadership because it addresses a number of areas I feel organizations are overlooking: (a) leadership is more about the intention of the leader than it is about completing a checklist or using particular techniques, (b) leadership is more about being a force-multiplier, raising the performance of the team and producing other leaders, than it is about being a shining star and seeking the spotlight, and (c) organizations that invest in developing leadership in depth—developing leadership behaviors in people at all levels of the organization—cannot help improving their bottom line.

Another unique aspect of this model is that it incorporates lessons learned from neuroscience, cognitive behavioral psychology, ontology, and quantum physics. It focuses on who leaders are being and what higher purpose is at the source of their behaviors.

The model provides five different perspectives from which to look at and reflect on how to be a better leader—one who helps other people emerge into their own leadership abilities. The five perspectives—or components, as I refer to them—are:

Being Mindful—being aware of how our brains are wired, noticing the source of our behaviors, and practicing choosing more positive, effective behaviors in the moment that are consistent with who we want to be in the world

Being Connected—concentrating on establishing deeper, more trusting relationships that respects the promise inside the other person and allows for better communication and collaboration

Being Intentional—being considerate of how every action is perceived by others and being purposeful about developing a high-performing team, which means diagnosing the team’s level of performance and designing appropriate activities that move the team to the next level

Being Generative—identifying, for yourself and your team, powerful visions or purposes that create more engagement and the willingness to put forth best efforts or even to stretch and accomplish achievements previously thought out of reach

Being Heretical—being for the success of the organization, while also being open to new ideas and having the organization live up to its ideals

Lao Tsu, a 6th century B.C. Chinese sage and author of *Tao Te Ching* captures the essence of being a leadership catalyst in the following passage:

With the best of leaders,
When the work is done,
The project completed,
The people all say,
“We did it ourselves.” (Dreher, 1996, p. 122)

CHAPTER 3

BEING

The concept of being has been a focus of philosophy since at least Aristotle's time (1993) and became an even more popular topic of study after René Descartes—a 17th century French philosopher, mathematician, scientist, and writer—made the claim, “Je pense, donc je suis. [I think, therefore I am.]” (2008, p. 18). Because who we are as a person is influenced by and revealed through our thoughts, which beget our actions, Being is the fundamental element—or nucleus—of the leadership catalyst model. Everything else is derived from Being. Joseph Kaiyapil, Professor of Philosophy at Jeevalaya Institute of Philosophy, Bangalore, emphasizes its importance:

Can we humans avoid the question of being? No, we cannot. Not because we are fascinated by this exotic stuff, but because it pops up as soon as we start to think. So we cannot avoid the question of being. If we avoid it, we will be avoiding our own being; self-avoidance is impossible. Also, if we avoid it, we will be avoiding the object of our thought and action; we cannot think or act without some being as the object of our thinking and doing. We exist, we think and we act on account of being. So the question of being will always be with us. (2009, pp. 55-56)

Our actions are “on account of our being,” thus to have our actions be consistent with being a leadership catalyst, we need to pay attention to who we are being.

Brain science

In his book *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges*, Dr. C. Otto Scharmer, a Senior Lecturer at MIT and the founding chair of ELIAS (Emerging

Leaders for Innovation Across Sectors), suggests looking at the work of leaders in the same way we look at the work of an artist:

...we can look at the work of art *after* it has been created (the thing), *during* its creation (the process), or *before* creation begins (the blank canvas or source dimension).

If we apply this artist analogy to leadership, we can look at the leader's work from three different angles. First, we can look at what leaders do. Tons of books have been written from that point of view. Second, we can look at the *how*, the process leaders use. That's the perspective we've used in management and leadership research over the past fifteen or twenty years. We have analyzed all aspects and functional areas of managers' and leaders' work from the process point of view. Yet we have never systematically looked at the leaders' work from the third, or blank-canvas, perspective. The question we have left unasked is: "What sources are leaders actually operating from?" (2009, pp. 6-7)

Taking Scharmer's perspective, the foundation of being a leadership catalyst involves people discovering, identifying, or choosing the "source" from which their perspective, attitudes, and behaviors will be generated. I like to ask Scharmer's question this way: "Who are you BEING as a leader?" In my experience, most people do not even consider their behaviors have a source, let alone being able to choose one. We go through our day employing whatever behaviors our conditioning dictates. Once we understand the concept of Being, however, and consciously decide to BE a leadership catalyst, we can then practice choosing that as a source, moment by moment, to generate our behaviors. In this way, we start conditioning our brain to make being a leadership catalyst the automatic source of our behaviors.

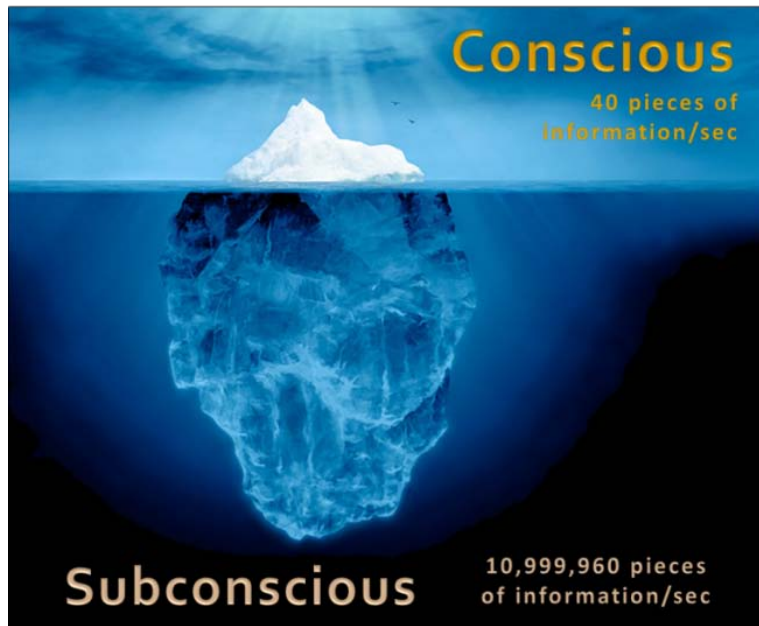
First, it is helpful to understand how our brain is wired and how it influences our thoughts and behaviors—especially the subconscious part. With 85 billion

neurons and 100 trillion connections among them (Williams & Herrup, 1988), the brain remains the most powerful computing object there is. Just like a computer or a car, the better we know how the brain operates, the better we are able to take advantage of the powerful capabilities it provides.

That we only use 10% of our brain is still a common misperception. It would be more accurate to say that we use 100% of our brain but are only conscious of a small part of its workings (Boyd, 2008). Based on the number of receptor cells used by our five sense organs, and the nerves that go from these cells to our brain, scientists have figured out that the brain receives more than 11 million pieces of information per second—10 million are from our eyes, alone (Wilson, 2002). Obviously, we are not consciously managing all of that sensory information—let alone all of the operational instructions to the various parts of our body as we dress, drive, walk around, and live out a typical day. By looking at how quickly people can read, consciously detect flashes of light, and differentiate smells, research shows that people can process only about 40 pieces of information per second. The rest of the brain's processing is handled below the conscious level (Wilson, 2002).

Our brain is very similar to the iceberg in Figure 4—our conscious mind is the tip that rises above the water and the subconscious mind is the vast majority that is submerged.¹¹ One definition of the subconscious is “mental processes that are inaccessible to consciousness but that influence judgments, feelings, or behavior” (Wilson, 2002, p. 23). These influences can have positive or negative effects on how leaders interact with the world and the people around them.

Figure 4. Brain-iceberg metaphor



Here is an example of subconscious conditioning influencing our actions:

Imagine yourself waking up in the morning, after a great night's sleep. You are rested and alert and actually wake up a few minutes before your alarm typically sounds. You take a leisurely shower, get dressed, and then wander down to breakfast with your family. After eating a well-balanced meal, and reading the morning paper (instead of needing to take it with you), you get in your car and start for work. It is a warm, sunny morning. The birds are singing, and it is quiet on the road because you left earlier than usual. You are driving about 45–50 mph with the windows open, singing along with some great tunes thumping over the speakers. As you ease around the next bend...you suddenly see a State Trooper by the side of the road pointing a radar gun at you! Most people imagine quickly lifting their foot off the accelerator, even though the scenario has them driving

below the speed limit. They also recognize feeling a split-second of panic—the worry that comes from doing something wrong. This demonstrates how much our subconscious conditioning can source our behaviors before our conscious reasoning is able to engage.

In their book, *Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard*, Chip and Dan Heath describe the relationship between our subconscious and conscious minds through a useful analogy developed by Jonathan Haidt—that of the relationship between an elephant and its rider:

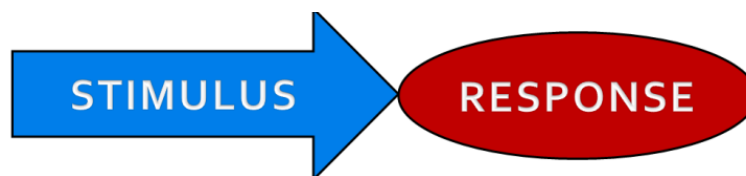
...the duo's tension is captured best by an analogy used by University of Virginia psychologist Jonathan Haidt in his wonderful book *The Happiness Hypothesis* [(2006)]. Haidt says that our emotional side is an Elephant and our rational side is its Rider. Perched atop the Elephant, the Rider holds the reins and seems to be the leader. But the Rider's control is precarious because the Rider is so small relative to the Elephant. Anytime the six-ton Elephant and the Rider disagree about which direction to go, the Rider is going to lose. He's completely overmatched.

Most of us are all too familiar with situations in which our Elephant overpowers our Rider. You've experienced this if you've ever slept in, overeaten, dialed up your ex at midnight, procrastinated, tried to quit smoking and failed, skipped the gym, gotten angry and said something you regretted, abandoned your Spanish or piano lessons, refused to speak up in a meeting because you were scared, and so on. Good thing no one is keeping score. (2010, p. 7)

Adapting the Heaths' description of the emotional and thinking sides of our brain to parallel the subconscious and conscious parts of our brain, The Elephant that is our conditioning has a lot of weight to throw around in determining our behaviors. When things are going well, the Elephant is happy to go in the direction the Rider indicates. But occasionally something runs across the Elephants path and spooks it, setting it off on a rampage.

In his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, Stephen Covey points out that, “The reflection of the current social paradigm tells us we are largely determined by conditioning and conditions” (1989, p. 67). Whether we claim our behavior is due to our genetic disposition, family of origin and upbringing, or environment, we tend to follow Pavlov’s stimulus-response model: Our senses take in a stimulus, and we react with a response (see Figure 5¹²)(1989, pp. 67-68). Most of the time, this is a good thing: If you see a snake, you jump out of the way to protect yourself. In the earlier example, you might save yourself a ticket if you happened to be speeding and slowed down immediately upon seeing the police officer. Sometimes, however, an event occurs—usually some kind of adversity—and we react without thinking. Often, our reaction is something we later regret.

Figure 5. Stimulus-Response model

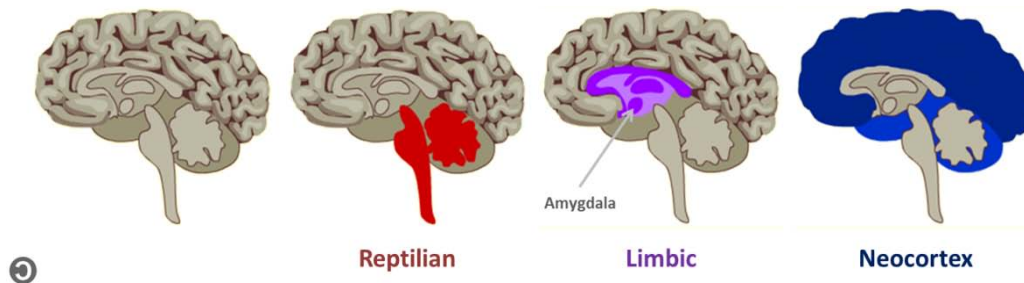


Discoveries in neuroscience explain how this happens: According to the Triune Brain Theory developed by Paul MacLean, the human brain can be divided into three general parts based on their functions (MacLean, 1990) (See Figure 6):¹³

1. Reptilian—controls the automatic functions of the body

2. Limbic—the emotional center and the home of our subconscious conditioning
3. Neocortex—the conscious, thinking, rational part of our brain

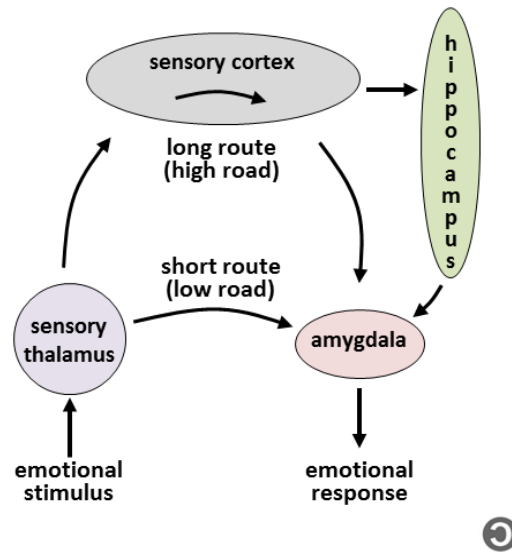
Figure 6. The Triune Brain Theory



The amygdala, which is part of the limbic system and directs signals in the brain when danger lurks, receives quick but imprecise information directly from the thalamus in a route that neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux named “the low road.” (1996, p. 164) This shortcut allows the brain to start responding to a perceived threat within a few milliseconds. The amygdala also receives information via a longer path (the high road) from the visual cortex. Although the high road encodes much more detailed and specific information, the extra step takes at least twice as long (LeDoux, 1996). Figure 7 shows these paths:¹⁴

Thus, it is not uncommon for us to react inappropriately, according to our basic conditioning, when our amygdala has been hijacked¹⁵ by misread sensory clues. We can all recognize a time when this has happened in our personal life or at work. After reacting badly to a situation, we think, “I have no idea why I did that!” or “What was I thinking?” These internal sentiments by the rational prefrontal lobe are a clue that the subconscious was driving the bus at the time of

Figure 7. Amygdala information paths



the event, and the conscious brain was just a reluctant passenger strapped into a seat, simply along for the ride.

Our subconscious still reacts to perceived dangers, but instead of a fear of being eaten by bears, bitten by snakes, or caught in a flash flood, danger is now perceived in such “mundane” things as looking bad in front of other people, or not being liked, or not being good enough. Our subconscious limbic programming perceives these conditions as things to be feared, even though they might only be “social dangers” or threats to our psyche, thus triggering reactive behaviors—our fight, flight, or freeze responses. The subconscious programming kick starts our emotions and defensive mechanisms into high gear and can cause us to act in ways that are contrary to how we usually see ourselves or who we are striving to become.

Goleman et al address this very dilemma:

While emotions have guided human survival through evolution, a neural dilemma for leadership has emerged in the last 10,000 years or so. In today's advanced civilization, we face complex social realities (say, the sense someone isn't treating us fairly) with a brain designed for surviving physical emergencies. And so we can find ourselves hijacked—swept away by anxiety or anger better suited for handling bodily threats than the subtleties of office politics. (*Just who the hell does this guy think he is! I'm so mad I could punch him!*)

Fortunately, such emotional impulses follow extensive circuitry that goes from the amygdala to the prefrontal area, just behind the forehead, which is the brain's executive center. The prefrontal area receives and analyzes information from all parts of the brain and then makes a decision about what to do. The prefrontal area can veto an emotional impulse—and so ensure that our response will be more effective. (*Remember, he's giving your annual review—just relax and see what else he says before you do something you might regret.*) Without that veto, the result would be an emotional hijack, where the amygdala's impulse is acted upon. This happens when the prefrontal circuitry fails in its task of keeping emotional impulses in check.

The dialogue between neurons in the emotional centers and the prefrontal areas operates through what amounts to a neurological superhighway that helps to orchestrate thought and feeling. The emotional intelligence competencies, so crucial for leadership, hinge on the smooth operation of this prefrontal–limbic circuitry. (2004, pp. 28-29)

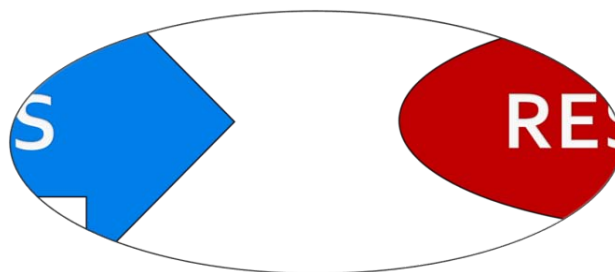
The good news is that because our subconscious “programming” is not written in stone—due to a newly discovered capability of our brains called plasticity, the ability to create new neurons and new connections between neurons (Kolb, Gibb, & Robinson, 2003, p. 1)—our attitudes and behaviors can be changed and even improved. We need not resign ourselves to reacting the same way to our environment. We can change who we are being, we can change our behaviors, and we can create different and more successful outcomes for ourselves—and by extension, for others.

The power of choice

The key to this transformation is revealed in the teachings of Viktor Frankl, a neuroscientist, psychiatrist, and holocaust survivor who chronicled his experience at Auschwitz in the seminal classic *Man's Search for Meaning* (1963). Covey highlights this crucial distinction in the forward to a book about Frankl's principles for finding meaning in life and work: "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom" (Pattakos, 2010, p. viii). This powerful insight is the cornerstone to being a leadership catalyst and can be a significant paradigm shift for leaders that opens up possibilities for being more of a positive influence in people's lives.

The concept can be demonstrated by looking at the stimulus-response model again. Figure 5 showed the default method most people use to interact with their world: Something happens, and they react. Sometimes the reaction is positive, but sometimes it causes regret. Figure 8 illustrates Frankl's insight by zooming in on the intersection of the stimulus arrow and the response marker and revealing the space that exists between the two.

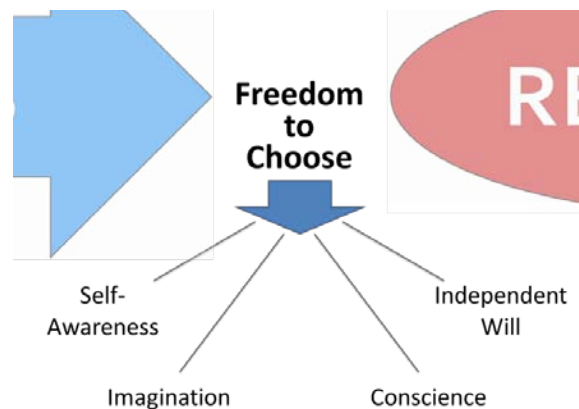
Figure 8. The space between stimulus and response



For someone who aspires to become a leadership catalyst, that space represents the time between the experience of a situation and the resultant behavior. Unthinking reactions can no longer be the norm once leaders understand they have a choice. That could literally mean that there is a space—or a pause—between some event and our reaction to it.

For most of us, our conditioning fills that space, including all of our behaviors, values, and attitudes—all of the messages we incorporated about the world and ourselves as we were growing up, both positive and negative. This is what our subconscious normally draws on to react to our environment. But shifting our paradigm and being able to recognize that a space exists, gives us what Covey calls the “freedom to choose” (1989, p. 70). Figure 9¹⁶ offers my adaptation of Covey’s Proactive Model, illustrating a number of vantages that can create a deliberate response within that space (1989, p. 71).

Figure 9. Covey’s Proactive Model



Now, let us assume that we have taken Frankl's teaching to heart and can recognize that space in the moment of reaction. As an event unfolds, imagine the

advantage we could gain in choosing from any number of positive possibilities rather than automatically reacting from our subconscious with behaviors that may or may not serve us well. For leadership catalysts, understanding the influence of subconscious behaviors and visualizing the space available for more high-road analysis offers the ability to produce different results than would have been previously possible. Covey states:

The space between what happens to us and our response, our freedom to choose that response and the impact it can have upon our lives, beautifully illustrate that we can become a product of our decisions, not our conditions. They illustrate the three values that Frankl continually taught: the creative value, the experiential value, and the attitudinal value. We have the power to choose our response to our circumstances. We have the power to shape our circumstance; indeed, we have the responsibility, and if we ignore this space, this freedom, this responsibility, the essence of our life and our legacy could be frustrated. (Pattakos, 2010, p. viv)

The first time I learned this lesson was soon after my wife and I moved to Annapolis to teach at the Naval Academy, as junior officers. We were quite overwhelmed: We had a new house, new jobs teaching full time, and a new baby. My wife was taking graduate school classes, 50 miles away, two nights each week, and I had taken over as the Assistant Chairman of our academic department in addition to my teaching duties.

One morning, we were walking down the hall into our kitchen, talking about something mundane, when my wife saw the kitchen floor and remarked how dirty it was. She said, clearly upset, "This floor is disgusting!" I, however, did not think the floor was all that bad—and certainly not enough to warrant her getting so worked up about it—so I replied something to the effect of, "The floor is fine.

Don't be so uptight." I can remember thinking to myself, "Uh-oh, I shouldn't have said that!" But it was too late. There was no un-ringing that bell.

Of course, my wife did not find my comment to be constructive, and our conversation suddenly turned into a big fight. She lodged general complaints with me along the order of, "You never think things are dirty; I have to be the one to initiate chores, and you don't do enough around the house anyway...yada yada yada." In my conditioned fight-flight-or-freeze response, I reacted with Option A and defended myself, telling her: "You are too sensitive about the cleanliness of the house," and "Things don't need to be done as often as you pretend they need to be done—especially when we are so busy with other work. And I most certainly do my fair share around the house! Blah, blah, blah." Needless to say, it took us a while to cool down and talk to one another again. Afterward, I regretted the incident and wished I had done something different in the moment.

The weekend after our spat, I happened to attend a Landmark Education Corporation (LEC) seminar—I was assigned to participate as part of my job—and was introduced to the concepts that there is a space between stimulus and response and that we have the freedom to choose ("LEC," 1994). One of the exercises called for us to apply the concept to a recent upset with someone. I replayed the argument with my wife, this time on the lookout for any conditioning that may have influenced my behavior. I realized that my wife was overextended and overwhelmed and was simply asking me for help. She had not been blaming me for something I had failed to do, which I discovered is one of my conditioned triggers. Rather, she was telling me she was not able to keep up with her share

and was asking me for help. When I was able to pause in hindsight and listen to the real words she had been saying, instead of reacting from my conditioning, I recognized the faulty logic I had been using. Certainly, I could take on more of the share of chores to help her out! If only I had heard that in the moment.

Fast-forward to a week later....My wife and I were walking down the hall into our kitchen, talking about something mundane, when she looked at the kitchen floor and remarked how dirty it was. She said, "We need to mop this floor!" (Here we go again!) Well, I did not think the floor was awful, and certainly not enough to warrant her getting worked up about it, so I said, "...mmbllmph...uh...I don't think the floor is as bad as you do, but I would be happy to mop it for you. Do you mind if I do it after lunch?"

My wife squinted at me suspiciously and asked, "That isn't what you were going to say, was it?"

"No," I laughed, "but it's what I really wanted to say."

Imagine how differently our day went this time! Because I was able to pause in the space between the stimuli of her comment and emotions and choose a different response than my conditioning would have gladly provided, I achieved a result that would not have been possible before.

Although this is a personal example, it is reminiscent enough of office interactions to demonstrate the difference this paradigm shift can make for a leader. Again, a comment from Covey:

I have found in my teaching that the single most exhilarating, thrilling, and motivating idea that people have ever really seriously contemplated is the idea of the power of choice—the idea that the best way to predict their future is to create it. It is basically the idea of personal freedom, of learning

to ask Viktor Frankl's question: What is life asking of me? What is the situation asking of me? It's more freedom *to* than freedom *from*. It's definitely an inside-out rather than an outside-in approach.

I have found that when people get caught up in this awareness, this kind of mindfulness, and if they genuinely ask such questions and consult their conscience, almost always the purposes and values they come up with are transcendent—that is, they deal with meaning that is larger than their own life, one that truly adds value and contributes to other people's lives—the kinds of things that Viktor Frankl did in the death camps of Nazi Germany. They break cycles; they establish new cycles, new positive energies. They become what I like to call “transition figures”—people who break with past cultural mindless patterns of behavior and attitude. (Pattakos, 2010, p. ix)

Finding out about the power of choice is fine, but if there is not any positive conditioning to choose from, coming up with new behaviors that lead to better results will have little effect. Leadership catalysts need to figure out what to put in the space between stimulus and response that will be a powerful source for their subsequent behaviors. This is the key distinction in Scharmer's question, “What sources are leaders actually operating from?”

The source of behaviors

While I was teaching leadership development at the Naval Academy, I was faced with considering what those sources were for me. I attended the LEC seminar because I was assigned to evaluate whether it would be valuable for other instructors to attend as the department prepared to roll out its first standalone ethics curriculum. As I sat among the participants the first morning of the three-day seminar, I observed the proceedings with a critical eye. I hate to admit it now, but I was feeling slightly smug because I had taken some psychology courses in college and was fairly well read on sociological topics.

Moreover, I felt I was doing pretty well in my life: I was a successful junior naval officer and a member of the faculty at the U. S. Naval Academy. I had an accomplished wife, who was also a successful naval officer. We had a new child, a new house, and secure jobs. I was sure there was nothing for me to learn—but I could definitely see how the other instructors would benefit.

As the morning progressed, however, I began to feel less smug and certain. From the lessons, I was gaining new insights into human behavior. I learned more about the implications of how our brains are wired and how to maximize our outcomes despite the flaws and idiosyncrasies inherent in that wiring. A specific idiosyncrasy we have is the penchant to dragging our past into our future—a tendency we human beings have to believe that we can predict the future by looking at our past. Wherever we go, we drag along luggage packed with all of our stuff (that is the polite term for it)—pretending we have no choice but to bring it along when we go somewhere new. Too many times we let our past experience and conditioning constrain us in the present and hold us back from creating a more successful future. The past offers important life lessons, to be sure, but it does not directly correlate to what we can accomplish in the future. I learned that we can choose to leave the baggage in the past, where it belongs, and embark on a future of exploring new behaviors that help us achieve new results ("LEC," 1994).

Howard Falco, the author of *I Am: The Power of Discovering Who You Really Are* recalls Abraham Lincoln's journey to become the sixteenth president of the United States (2010, p. 300), which serves as a great example of this concept

(See Table 1). Between the ages of 22 and 49, Lincoln had two businesses fail, ran for political positions 10 times but only won election twice, lost his first love to typhoid, and dealt with depression. At the age of 51, however, he was elected President of the United States.

Table 1. Abraham Lincoln's journey to being president

Age	Event
22	He failed in business.
23	He was defeated for a seat in the House of Representatives.
24	He failed in business again.
25	He was elected to the Congress.
26	His sweetheart died.
27	He had a nervous breakdown.
29	He was defeated for Speaker of the House.
31	He was defeated for Elector in the U. S. Electoral College.
34	He was defeated for reelection to the Congress.
37	He was elected to the Congress.
39	He was defeated for reelection to the Congress.
46	He was defeated for a seat in the Senate.
47	He was defeated for Vice President.
49	He was defeated for a seat in the Senate.
51	He was elected President.

In spite of many hardships and failures in his early life, Lincoln greatly influenced the course of history for our country. From the “Emancipation Proclamation” and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which abolished slavery, to keeping the country united by the end of the Civil War, it is

easy to imagine he was someone who did not let his past dictate his future success (Falco, 2010, p. 300).

The concept of the space between stimulus and response was perhaps the most memorable lesson for me during that initial training seminar. That we actually have the freedom to choose how we will behave in a situation was a very powerful insight. Before, I was constrained by my circumstances. I felt that I had very little control over what happened to me and even joked that, while growing up, my family's motto had been, "Well, that's the Zachery luck for you! S**t happens!" (Said with a shrug of the shoulders.)

It is not hard to imagine the difficulty in being confident, ambitious, or daring for someone growing up with the mindset that the decks of the universe seem to be stacked against him. Sitting in the audience that day, however, I realized that mindset was not "reality." It was just part of my conditioning. I became aware of how many of my beliefs were just stories my subconscious had created early on, in an attempt to protect my psyche.

In the last hour of the course, the seminar leader walked us through a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of the world and how human beings relate to it. He started by asking questions about everything we had learned since the first morning. As we followed his progression of questions, we worked our way to the conclusion that human beings create stories and attach meaning to everything in the world, even though no inherent meaning exists. For example, a chair has no inherent meaning. We attach good or bad meanings to it depending on whether we are gratefully relaxing in it after a long day, or perhaps we stubbed our toe on

it in spite of having plenty of room to walk around it, or maybe it was our late father's favorite chair. The final, grand lesson for the group that day: there is no meaning to anything—and the fact that there is no meaning to anything is meaningless, too. Deep stuff, but the seminar leader asked us to consider the implication of embracing that distinction and being “okay” with it. What are we left with, if this is the case? It took a few minutes of contemplation for us to come to it, but the final answer was: anything is possible (“LEC,” 1994).

I actually rocked back in my seat with an epiphany. I was suddenly aware of the power this concept gave me to be different in the world. There was a feeling of a weight lifting from my shoulders. Instead of being limited by a self-inflicted story that bad things happening to me was more of “the Zachery luck,” I had access to a power that was there all along—the power to determine meaning for my life and reframe “reality” in a way that allowed me to be more effective and proactive. I now understood Frankl's message that we have the power to decide what we think about our situation—and that gives us freedom and allows us to grow. Falco further describes the power to make new choices of being:

The greatest gift we have as human beings is the capacity to self-reflect and then choose how to express who we are. This is an ability that we are graced with in every moment. Each experience we have offers us an opportunity to use this power in our words and actions, thereby declaring and defining for that moment who we are in the universe...

If you desire to produce a different experience than you've had in any area of your life, who you choose to be right now has to be different from who you were up until now. Each belief you have will need to match your intentions, rather than work against them. New choices and actions can only come from a new identity. Otherwise there will be no change, as you will make the same choices in perfect harmony with who you still are. (Falco, 2010, pp. 269-270)

The lessons I learned in the seminar allowed me to be intentional in the world and dictate how things would be, rather than feeling like life was just happening to me. I had exchanged a self-limiting worldview for one of infinite possibility. I returned to my Naval Academy classroom with a different perspective on facilitating discussions with the midshipmen about integrity and conducting inquiries into what it meant to be a leader, to be responsible for the lives of others, and to develop people to become better leaders themselves. I was energized by helping the students create new distinctions for their own lives, triggering paradigm shifts that had them seeing the world through new eyes and helping them discover new possibilities that had not existed before. That is when something clicked for me, and I knew I wanted to make this my career: helping people learn things about themselves that they did not previously know so they could tap into the potential that they had not yet accessed and explore possibilities in their lives that they did not know were available. Doug Silsbee—a thought leader in the field of presence-based leadership development, coaching, and resilience—opens *The Mindful Coach: Seven Roles for Facilitating Leader Development* with a call for leaders to establish a worthwhile purpose that defines the direction for moving forward:

Our lives develop meaning through the pursuit of worthwhile commitments. Leading, either in the context of an organizational role or in our own lives, implies a direction. We establish this direction through making commitments to certain business results, effective relationships, completing projects, or making some contribution important to us. The direction and nature of our leadership is shaped and revealed through these commitments. (2010, p. 1)

I am suggesting that people who want to take their performance to the next level and be force multipliers in their organizations have to choose to be a leadership catalyst. They have to choose to be someone who is in service to others and to their organizations. They have to choose to be someone who wants to help unleash the greatness of the people around them. That is what it takes to BE a leadership catalyst. Just as we would pay close attention to a map and our surroundings to stay on course in unfamiliar territory, we must also pay close attention to how we think, how we interact with others, and how we react to our circumstances to stay on course with our chosen purpose.

Chapter summary

The nucleus of the leadership catalyst model is the concept of being, which is the active expression of our personal character or the innate person with whom we identify ourselves. Because most daily behaviors occur below the conscious level of the brain, who people are being and how they behave is not a conscious consideration. Only a small percentage of our behaviors are a result of pure conscious decisions. Therefore, the more we understand how our brain works, the better we will be able to choose effective and productive behaviors for ourselves. For people who decide to be leadership catalysts, knowing how the brain is wired and the influence the subconscious has on their reactions will help them choose behaviors that are consistent with actively expressing themselves as such. The more we integrate who we want to be into our physiological selves—in the form of new neurons and new connections between neurons—the more effective and successful we will be in bringing about that reality.

CHAPTER 4

BEING MINDFUL

Internal observation

Even though a strong commitment to something important can initially provide momentum and focus, it takes a habit of being mindful to make sure we remain consistent in our behaviors. If Being is the nucleus of the leadership catalyst model and represents what sources our behaviors (like a battery provides the source of an electric current), being mindful is the orbiting electron that provides a vantage point from which to pay attention to that source¹⁷. It means being aware of our thoughts, our filters, the stories we create about our circumstances, and those things that trigger the amygdala to hijack the thinking portion of our brain. Silsbee recognizes the importance of creating this kind of self-awareness discipline:

I've come to believe that what it takes to become better at anything is fundamentally pretty simple. All it requires is paying attention. More specifically, it requires bringing rigorous attention to the habits of mind, beliefs, assumptions, and embodied behaviors that shape who we are in the world, suspending them, and committing ourselves to new possibilities that we were previously unable to see or act on. At bottom, that's really all that's required. (2010, p. 2)

This suggests that we become observers of our internal thinking processes. We have to be able to “watch ourselves” being “us” as we go about our day interacting with others, making decisions, and reacting to our environment—all the while observing what is going on in the background. In his second book, *Presence-Based Coaching: Cultivating Self-Generative Leaders Through Mind*,

Body, and Heart, Silsbee discusses how we build our self-awareness through practice:

Self-observation results from an artificial splitting of our awareness into two parts: the acting mind and the observing mind. The acting mind is the mind that is running us. It manages our thinking, speech, movements, and behaviors. Everything that we do is an action taken by our acting self. The other is the observing mind, or the observer. When we are self-aware, the observer is watching the acting mind in practice. We cultivate the observer through practice. Self-awareness is the product of this self-observation. (2008, p. 135)

Leadership catalysts practice self-observation and conduct self-inquiries into what is sourcing their thoughts—especially ones that occur at the boundary of the conscious and subconscious; their behaviors—under normal and adverse conditions; and their triggers—internal and external.

Metacognition—thinking about thinking

Becoming more aware of our thoughts—especially ones produced by our conditioning—can help us identify what causes unproductive behaviors and provide insights into how we can become better leadership catalysts. How much we are able to pay attention to our thinking is the focus of metacognition, a field within cognitive psychology that studies the higher thinking aspects of our brains. Metacognition refers to “an individual’s awareness of personal cognitive performance and the use of that awareness to alter that performance” (Lundsteen, 1993, p. 106). Or said another way, it is thinking about thinking.

It was once thought that “much of our ordinary thinking is conducted in internal monologue or silent soliloquy, usually accompanied by an internal cinematograph-show of visual imagery” (Ryle, 1949, p. 27). But now, the belief is

that our brains have two different thinking processes—one verbal and one nonverbal—and that these processes work quite a bit faster than the speed at which we take in information. “Verbal conceptualization means thinking with the *sounds* of words. Nonverbal conceptualization means thinking with mental *pictures* of concepts or ideas” (Davis & Braun, 2010, pp. 8-9). The difference in how fast people talk and how fast we think—or the “speech-thought differential” (Carroll, 2005, p. 62)—can vary in amount, depending on which process we are considering. For example, verbal conceptualization is related to language, and the speed at which it processes information roughly corresponds to the speed of speech, making it linear in time (Davis & Braun, 2010). According to research on listening comprehension, the average person speaks approximately 130–150 words per minute (wpm) in regular conversation, yet we can listen to and understand approximately 600–700 wpm. A good auctioneer can only talk coherently at about 200–250 wpm, and most presenters or lecturers speak approximately 100–110 wpm (Carroll, 2005; Davis & Braun, 2010; Nichols, 1962; Wallace, University of Nevada, & Education, 1983).

Nonverbal conceptualization is an evolutionary process, meaning it rapidly changes moment by moment. Pictures—or even the “cinematograph-show of visual imagery” with sensory details—keep evolving as more concepts are added in response to the information coming in. The processing speed of this part of our thinking more than outpaces verbal conceptualization:

Nonverbal thought is much faster, possibly thousands of times faster. In fact, it’s difficult to understand the nonverbal thinking process because it happens so fast you aren’t aware of it when you do it. Usually nonverbal

thinking is subliminal, or below conscious awareness. (Davis & Braun, 2010, p. 9)

Some say that if we could turn our thoughts into words, they would be anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 wpm (Wolvin & Coakley, 1996). If we measure the speed-thought differential using only the lower end of that range, it would mean our brains have at least 10 times more capacity for listening and thinking than the speed at which people talk. This leaves a lot of “leftover thinking space” (Lundsteen, 1993, p. 112).

That much leftover thinking space gives the brain unused horsepower to direct toward other activities not directly involved in processing the information relayed by the senses—unless you are completely immersed in what you are doing. Mihály Csíkszentmihályi (1991) calls this experience, *flow*. This means that when we are in a state of flow, there is no unused thinking space left for distractions. When we are not in flow, however, part of our brain is working on other activities that could (and do) influence the interpretations we create of our experiences and our responses to them. According to Aaron T. Beck, M.D., one of the founders of cognitive behavioral therapy, these activities include, “self-evaluation, thinking about what other people think of you, self-monitoring, self-predictions, and so on” (1997, p. 277). We are all familiar with the experience of half-listening to someone talk while we consider what we are going to say next or losing track of a conversation because something the person said reminded us of something important we needed to do.

One way to identify how much our conscious self is being affected by our conditioning is to become aware of the little voice in our head—and to pay

attention to the kind of messages it is broadcasting. This often-unnoticed voice—and we all have one—has been the subject of quite a bit of study. It often goes by the name “internal monologue” and “silent soliloquy” (from Ryle), “self-talk” (Ellis, 1962), “internal dialogue” (Meichenbaum, 1977), “internal communication system” (A. Beck, 1997), “automatic thoughts” (A. T. Beck, 1976), and “background conversation” and “already always listening” (“LEC,” 1994). Argyris introduces this concept to executives in his Left- and Right-hand Column Case Method, in which executives analyze an interaction with another person by writing what was said out loud in the right-hand column and their unshared thoughts that accompany the dialogue in the left-hand column. (1999, p. 61) I like to call that little voice “The Commentator” because it sits in the background of our minds, providing a running commentary on everything we sense. While we are interacting with our surroundings, the commentator is assessing, judging, appraising, filtering, or doing any number of other activities—because the subconscious is comparing what we are experiencing to any patterns, beliefs, or assumptions that have been stored in the neural pathways and connections created over time (See Figure 10).¹⁸

If you pause in your reading, close your eyes, and pay attention to your thoughts for 30 seconds you can identify your own Commentator. Any number of monologues—or even a two-sided conversation—might occur in your thoughts in that time, from thinking about an approaching appointment to reminding yourself to take your clothes to the dry cleaners or discussing whether you agree with my theory about the Commentator.

Figure 10. Activities of *The Commentator*

Learning this distinction and practicing it will enable a leader to monitor the sometimes-below-conscious thinking that precedes behavior—especially the conditioned reactions we experience in the moment. This means not only recognizing that there is a space between a stimulus and response, but also noticing which subconscious intention is trying to fill that space. As the experience with my wife illustrates, this can be a valuable tool if employed in the moment of a situation. Instead of repeating an unproductive interaction between my wife and me, I was able to interrupt my automatic thoughts and choose a more empowering and effective behavior than I had selected in a previous situation. Being mindful allowed me to be a kind, loving husband who wants to be there for his wife when she needs help and understanding—rather than being a

defensive antagonist reacting out of some wrongly perceived slight to my worth as a person.

Edgar Schein, an expert in the field of organizational development, emphasizes that unnoticed cognitive processes drive our interactions with the world and others unless we pay attention to them:

As we become more reflective, we begin to realize how much our initial perceptions can be colored by expectations based on our cultural learning and our past experiences. We do not always perceive what is “accurately” out there. What we perceive is often based on our needs, our expectations, our projections, and, most of all, our culturally learned assumptions and categories of thought. It is this process of becoming reflective that makes us realize that the first problem of listening to others is to identify the distortions and biases that filter our own cognitive processes. We have to learn to listen to ourselves before we can really understand others, and such internal listening is, of course, especially difficult if one is in the midst of an active task-oriented discussion. Furthermore, there may be nothing in our cultural learning to support such introspection. (1993, p. 46)

Being mindful means consistently assessing your internal dialogue, looking for any underlying distortions, biases, assumptions, or expectations that might be filling that space between stimulus and response and causing you to act in ways that are inconsistent with being your higher purpose. Donald Schön (1983), a contemporary of Chris Argyris and author of *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, considers this capacity to reflect on our experience and actions—both in the moment and in hindsight—an integral part of continuous learning and improvement.

Behavioral insights

Being mindful also entails knowing about the behaviors—positive and negative—that we use and that make up who we are as a person. It is difficult, if

not impossible, to take advantage of capabilities you do not know you possess, or change behaviors that are not working for you, when you do not even realize you have them. Behavioral assessments can be a valuable tool for becoming more self-aware. They can give you insights into how you take in and use information, the approaches you prefer to take when interacting with others, or how you prefer to plan and work. The more you know about yourself, the more you will be able to take advantage of your strengths, as well as better develop, or compensate for, areas of needed improvement.

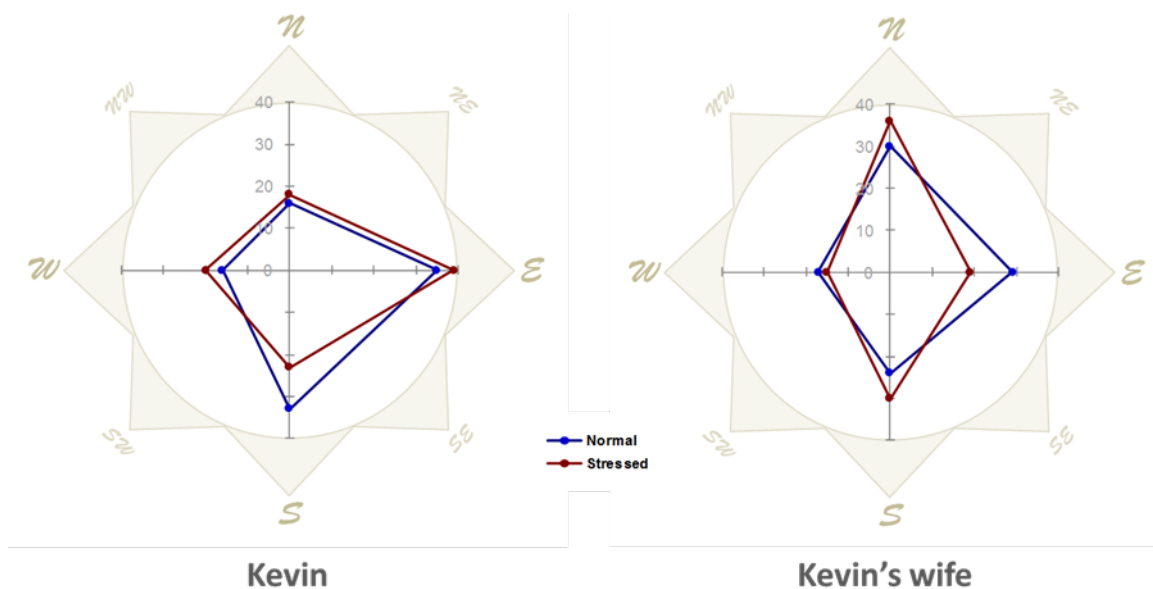
There are quite a number of assessment tools from which to choose, and there is nothing wrong with trying all of them. You can gain valuable insights about yourself from each of them. Seeing your behaviors reported back to you in a number of ways just means you get a more complete understanding of yourself.

I prefer to use the “Leadership Wheel Styles Assessment” developed by Rod Napier, Julie Roberts, and Patrick Sanaghan. This assessment is a four-quadrant profile, like many others, but was developed using tenets of Native American philosophy. It maps leadership behaviors to the attributes of the Medicine Wheel, which is used by indigenous populations as a metaphor for understanding the world. I particularly like this diagnostic instrument because of the imagery that accompanies the medicine wheel characteristics of the four quadrants and, having grown up in Alaska, I feel an affinity with anything related to the North American indigenous people. The Leadership Wheel assesses a person’s leadership behaviors and tendencies during normal, everyday conditions as well

as under stressful or adverse conditions—just as some of the other instruments do, such as MBTI and the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument®, which are explained further in Appendix B. Learning how our behaviors change—sometimes drastically—when we are operating under stressful conditions can provide valuable insights that can aid us in changing our behaviors.

Figure 11 represents the Leadership Wheel assessment results for my wife and me.¹⁹ The blue lines connect the behavior scores associated with each of the four cardinal directions under normal conditions; the red lines connect the scores for the behaviors used when under stress (that is, the behaviors we might display during an amygdala hijack).

Figure 11. Leadership Wheel scores for Kevin and his wife



My scores, as represented by the blue line, show that East and South are my two highest scores and, therefore, are the behaviors I use the most. Although the

North and West scores are my lower ones, I have enough ability to use those behaviors effectively, but they are not necessarily ones I would enjoy using a lot. My blue scores, overall, show that I am creative, hate routine, like to start projects but do not necessarily finish them, like to work on teams and care about the feelings of others. I prefer to look for what is possible and like to consider how best to do something before moving to action. Because I am good at keeping the big picture, I sometimes let details slip through the cracks.

Under stressful conditions, the scores in red show how my behaviors shift. My North, East, and West scores increase a couple of points, while my South score decreases by a much larger amount. When I first completed this assessment, it was easy for me to determine what the increased values signified about me when I am feeling stressed: I am prone to have choice paralysis—meaning if I have too many tasks or options to choose from, it is easier for me to do nothing rather than try to choose. This means procrastination is an issue that I have to guard against. Many people with scores as high as mine in the East, do quite well flying by the seat of their pants to get a project done at the last minute. The increases in the other cardinal directions mean that I also get a bit more stubborn and dictatorial when I am under stress, as well as possibly worrying too much about the details when having most of the information I need is good enough. The decrease in my South score indicates that I am more likely to concentrate on tasks rather than pay attention to processes. More importantly, it shows that I lose empathy for others when I am in a stressful condition. This means that I can be less sensitive to other people's feelings at that point, which could get in the

way of enlisting other's help and prevent me from being effective at energizing a team to tackle a challenge.

This was a beacon distinction for me! First, it was a blind spot in my self-awareness. Because I normally care about how other people are doing, I just accepted it as a given that I was that way all of the time; therefore, I must have good reason to be short with people, on occasion. I discovered, however, that my tendency under stress to become matter-of-fact in my speaking and cool in my demeanor is actually a result of my conditioning and not necessarily because others were incompetent, or lazy, or obtuse. The substantial shift in my behavior caused surprise, defensiveness, and resistance in others (as confirmed in other survey instruments that accompany the Leadership Wheel in a 360° review process) because that behavior is unlike me during normal circumstances.

The second, and more significant, understanding I received was about me in relationship to my wife. Looking at only the shift in behavior between the blue and red scores, my wife's North and South scores increase, while her East and West scores decrease. This means that, under stress, my wife reacts more from an emotional place than a logical one, is less open to looking for creative solutions, and just wants the problem fixed—Now!—even if it might not be an optimal solution...and just because she says so. My reaction to this is to become more logical and rational, wanting to go over the details, step-by-step, to try to identify an optimal solution. And I get obstinate about what I know and what should be done. At the start, all she wants is a hug, her feelings acknowledged, and reassurance that everything will be all right. But when my amygdala is hijacked,

what she gets is my certainty that she's worrying too much over nothing and an attitude that she should put on her big-girl pants and "suck it up." And there is absolutely no hugging allowed!

I can tell you right now, that is NOT who I want to be for my wife when she is feeling vulnerable and scared and worried. But until learning about these behaviors in the assessment, I had no access to seeing the significance of my conditioning. From my perspective, it was just simple logic for me to think that anyone in his or her right mind would react the way I did to my wife's upsets. Now that I have distinguished how my behaviors are different between normal and stressful conditions, I am more alert for those times when my amygdala gets triggered, so I can try to intercept those negative, conditioned behaviors in that space between stimulus and response.

Roy Rogers rode his Trigger...and had it stuffed

There are some people in our lives with whom we have what I call a jukebox relationship: they know how to push our buttons, and we play the same (discordant) music every time. We all have at least one person who, invariably, says or does something that sets us off. It might be an in-law, an annoying colleague, or a bratty younger sibling. That person, whether consciously or not, seems to have the ability to trigger a reaction from us that is routed straight through the low road to the amygdala. The reaction can be any one of the fight, flight, or freeze responses, but it is obvious that the behavior is sourced by conditioning and not through any rational consideration of the circumstances and a conscious choosing between many positive actions. Recognizing that these

occasions happen, there is an explanation for them, and that they usually have more to do with you and your amygdala than with the other person is the third aspect of being self-aware.

Again, the leftover thinking space in our brain is always at work interpreting our environment. When we are around these “troublesome” people, our sensory thalamus (refer back to Figure 7, on page 42, if necessary) interprets a stimulus provided by our nemesis—something they say or do—as a threat and sends a signal to the amygdala to go to general quarters (that is Navy-speak for battle stations). We then find ourselves reacting automatically, in a way that is predictable, based on previous episodes—a clear indication of a conditioned habit. The more we are alert to these occasions, the more mindful we can be in the moment and the better able we will be to choose behaviors that are positive, supportive, and conducive to a more effective relationship.

Jack Gibb, a pioneer in humanistic psychology and the originator of Trust Level Theory, believes such defensive reactions are common when our brains interpret some type of communication as being opposed to an already existing perspective or resonating with a negative already existing perspective that our “inner self” wants to deny—whether the perception is correct or incorrect (1961, p. 141):

One of the basic tasks of the human brain is to maintain order and consistency among all the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes it retains. A defensive attitude occurs within people when they encounter communication situations with which they feel uncomfortable or will not tolerate. Defensiveness causes a listener to resist both speaker and message. In addition, defensiveness seems to be highly contagious and causes a deteriorating cycle between those communicating.

Defensiveness can best be reduced by empathy, treatment of fellow communicators as equals, and genuineness. (Baker, 1980, p. 33)

Add “identifying the categories of behaviors that can elicit defensive responses” to Baker’s list for reducing defensiveness. According to Gibb, behaviors that have been proven to create a defensive climate in small groups are (1961):²⁰

Superiority. Status, background, education, position, attitude, and one’s behavior can result in a person being perceived as superior. Any time people give a signal—through their actions or roles—that they feel they are better than others, they generate defensiveness and resistance.

Strategy or Manipulation. When people feel others are running their own agendas or attempting to create strategies without input from those affected, defensiveness is likely to occur.

Control. Much of the time, people feel controlled by—and thus feel resentment toward—others (such as parents, bosses, school, military, church, or other authorities). Feeling controlled by someone dominating a conversation or a meeting often results in resistance, for example. People desire control in their lives and a status in solutions that influence them.

Neutrality. Rarely do people who reveal a neutral demeanor have zero feelings about what is happening. People will generally project a negative response onto individuals who fail to reveal feelings or ideas—especially when an issue is controversial. Thus, if a person knows you are often critical, and you respond neutrally to an idea, the person will probably assume you do not like him or her, or the idea.

Certainty. Acting with great certainty toward individuals who do not wish to get into a fight, to be embarrassed, or to lose face often results in those individuals giving in. This tends to reinforce the initiator's certain, or aggressive, behavior the next time. Over time, the person who is certain intimidates others.

Evaluation, Judgment, or Criticism. Being judged, cut down, or criticized by others is a common worst-scenario case for humans. People who judge themselves harshly also tend to be the toughest critics of others. Simply put, criticism and judgment generally make people defensive and can result in dependency, passivity, or acting out with aggressive or self-justifying behaviors.

Identifying the top two or three behaviors that you know will push your buttons is a good start to becoming more resistant to letting your conditioning hold you hostage. Although these triggers seem to be activated by someone else, we are the ones actually responsible for our defensive reactions. It is our conditioning that views our interactions with others through the defensive communication filters, coloring how we read the situation. Once we recognize that these filters are in place, we can train our neocortex to take a more active role and deactivate the filters, opening up the possibility of a new, more fulfilling relationship that would not have been possible before.

Another set of triggers that can sometimes take over and “drive the bus,” as I like to say, are the internal beliefs or decisions we have made about ourselves. They are so far below the conscious level that we very rarely hear them when we listen in on our self-talk. The nefarious aspect of these triggers, however, is that they will influence our behaviors and be so far under the radar that our neocortex

will invent seemingly “logical” reasons for the behaviors, so as to explain them to our conscious selves. One of the lessons to learn about being mindful is that human beings are meaning-making machines. We have already considered, in the defensive communication categories, the occasions when we might be making up intentions for others that are not accurate. The triggers listed in Table 2 cause our prefrontal cortex to make up stories to try to explain our own behavior. Rod Napier (2007) calls this list the *Self-Help Inventory Traits List* (S.H.I.T List). The acronym is a bit scatological, but completely appropriate: These are the nasty little traits that sometimes guide our reactions, although we would not care to admit to others—or even ourselves—that they exist. Most people don a wry smile as they recognize themselves in some of these:

Table 2. Napier’s Self-Help Inventory Traits List

Conditioned Traits	
1.	The need to be P-E-R-F-E-C-T.
2.	The need to be liked and cherished by every...living...human...being.
3.	The need to be certain...to be sure about everything.
4.	The need to win! Gain control. Have things MY way.
5.	The need to appear neutral, to hide feelings, to protect myself.
6.	The need to avoid conflict by almost any means—an inability to confront and work things through.
7.	The need to follow a routine, being too habitual or predictable—in other words booorr-iiiing!

Conditioned Traits

- | |
|--|
| 8. The need to defend oneself, being resistant to feedback; defensive. |
| 9. The need to project onto others what I don't want to see in myself. |
| 10. The need to judge myself and others—critical, non-accepting of self. |
| 11. Unable to really listen actively and attentively. |
| 12. Unable to be assertive, offer ideas, share true feelings, or take a stand. |
| 13. Unable to play, taking myself too seriously, having little spontaneity or humor. |
| 14. Unable to trust—needing to control or manipulate situations and people. |
| 15. Unwilling to take risks and be open to change. |
| 16. Unwilling to establish personal goals and commitments. |
| 17. Unwilling to be accountable, follow through, or take responsibility for my own behavior. |

Everyone who reviews the list will be able to see three or four items that most reflect that less enlightened—sometimes childish, or churlish, or temperamental—inner part of themselves. Admitting that we have them helps us become more aware of them in the moment and attune to when they are trying to call the shots with regard to our behavior. We will become more adept at seeing past the rationalizations that the neocortex invents as it attempts to explain the selection of those behaviors. Once named and owned, those traits have far less

hold on us. We are free to revisit the facts of the situation and see them without the nasty little filter.

Everyone has the same wiring

The last aspect of being mindful is to recognize that every single human being is subject to the same brain configuration. One wiring quirk many of us share is that we often fail to recognize that this is the case. We are quick to blame others' failings, deficiencies, or disappointing behaviors on a negative attribute or intrinsic lack of quality—while we claim to be a victim of circumstances or provide what we believe are valid reasons for the same actions in the same situations. At work, we may be upset at one of our direct reports because he is late. We are steamed because we feel he is being lazy or does not care enough. When we are late to work, however, we have a good explanation: there was an accident, we had a sick child, or we had the sincere intention of being in to work on time. This phenomenon is referred to as Fundamental Attribution Error:

Explaining the behavior of others is one of the most critical and demanding cognitive tasks people face in everyday social life.²¹ The fundamental attribution error (FAE), or correspondence bias, refers to a pervasive tendency by people to underestimate the impact of situational forces and overestimate the role of dispositional factors when making such judgments.²² (Forgas, 1998, p. 318)

George Carlin, the late comedian who often made fun of human foibles, provided a humorous example of this in one of his comedy bits about “stuff”: “Have you noticed that their stuff is sh-- and your sh-- is stuff? God! And you say, ‘Get that sh-- off of there and let me put my stuff down!’” (1981, p. Track 3)

The reason that joke gets so many laughs is because people recognize they think the same way when George points it out. Recognizing that we are susceptible to this behavior means we can work to prevent it from having as much influence on us as we react to others. Being mindful of any tendencies to commit FAEs will help us keep an open mind as to other people's intentions and true reasons for their mishaps or disappointing behavior. Two conclusions came out of a University of California study on how accountability—expecting to have to justify an interpretation of someone's behavior—can substantially decrease the likelihood a person will get caught up in FAEs:

- (a) accountability motivates subjects to process social information in more analytic and complex ways, and that can check judgmental biases such as belief perseverance and the fundamental attribute error;
- (b) the timing of accountability is a crucial variable in that accountability appears much more effective in *preventing* than reversing judgmental biases. Once subjects have assimilated or integrated information into their impression of a person or event, they have a hard time discounting that information. Accountability seems to have substantial impact on the initial impression-formation process (accountability can place subjects in a vigilant mental set that “protects” them from certain common inferential biases), but to have relatively little impact once that initial processing has occurred (accountability cannot “undo” biased processing at an earlier analytic stage). (Tetlock, 1985, p. 233)

It is easy to imagine that Being mindful of our own behaviors and the sources of those behaviors can go a long way to contributing to a positive, productive, and enriching environment at work. Recognizing that we can sometimes get in our own way of being great means we can do something about it: we can choose behaviors that are more beneficial. Likewise, recognizing that other people may also be getting in their own way of being great means we can do something to

help them. A leader who is being mindful understands that most people do not wake up in the morning excited to botch something at work or cause anyone stress. People want to do good work, make a difference, and feel appreciated and accepted. If this does not seem to be the case with someone, chances are, some circumstance or perspective is getting in the way of that person being great. John Buchan, a Scottish novelist and the Governor General of Canada from 1935 to 1940, remarked, “The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already” (Institute, 2011). Being a leadership catalyst means being mindful about letting the greatness inside ourselves be the source of our behaviors, as well as looking for—and connecting to—the greatness in others.

Chapter summary

Being mindful means paying attention to the source of our thoughts and behaviors, as well as being alert for those situations that trigger automatic reactions that do not serve us well. The first step in being mindful is to listen in on The Commentator that lives in the back of our minds and assesses everything we sense. Noticing the types of messages it shares gives us a sense of what might be sourcing our automatic behaviors. Sometimes it might sound like a parent, or coach, or teacher from childhood. Sometimes it shares messages that are not very helpful or beneficial, especially when we are trying to stretch ourselves or accomplish big goals. The goal is to begin changing our background conversations so that they are encouraging, and supportive of what we are up to in our lives. The second step is to learn more about how we behave. Behavioral

assessments can be valuable tools for learning more about our behavioral preferences. Some can even provide insights into how our behaviors change when we are under stress, which is when amygdala hijacks occur and we end up letting our conditioning dictate our behavior. The next step is to learn what behaviors from others make us defensive and admit to the negative internal traits that can also end up driving our behaviors. This allows leadership catalysts to become more practiced and effective at being mindful. The more we are aware of the sources of our thoughts and behaviors, the better we are able to choose those behaviors that allow us consistently to be the person we want to be, rather than that temperamental eight-year-old inside of us. The final step to being mindful is recognizing that others have the same wiring—meaning they also have behaviors that are guided by unhelpful conditioning at times. Leadership catalysts need to be alert for their Fundamental Attribution Errors, which is blaming the failure of others on shortcomings while we claim to be a victim of circumstances or to have valid reasons for the same actions in the same circumstances. When we automatically ascribe negative intentions to others or write them off as being less-than, we actually inhibit the ability to create a positive, productive, and enriching environment and lessen the likelihood the other person will stay engaged and try to step into a higher level of performance.

CHAPTER 5

BEING CONNECTED

People-conscious

I added being connected to my model to advocate that leadership should be less about leaders as stars and more about leaders as catalysts enhancing the performance of those around them. It is not about you. It is not about being the hero or getting people to do things so that you get the recognition. Leadership—at least for leadership catalysts—is about more than the personal trappings of success: It is about accomplishing big things and recognizing that you cannot accomplish them alone. Like science, it is less about people as interchangeable parts (in the Newtonian sense) and more about the web of relationships and connections making a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (as in quantum physics). James Kouzes and Barry Posner describe what they call a “crucial truth” about exemplary leadership in their book, *The Leadership*

Challenge:

In talking to leaders and reading their cases, there was a very clear message that wove itself throughout every situation and every action. The message was: *leadership is a relationship*. Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow. It's the quality of this relationship that matters most when we're engaged in getting extraordinary things done. A leader-constituent relationship that's characterized by fear and distrust will never, ever, produce anything of lasting value. A relationship characterized by mutual respect and confidence will overcome the greatest adversities and leave a legacy of significance. (2007, p. 24)

Originally, I called this component being community-minded because I was thinking that leaders who were tuned in to the “community”—whether the community was the team, the organization, the business industry, or even the world—would be more selfless and more about contribution than about adding another accolade to their trophy walls. But being community-minded did not seem to sufficiently capture the personal, caring nature I see as part of being a leadership catalyst. I wanted this component to include qualities such as being authentic, empathetic, and in tune with others. Being connected means creating connections with others, or developing relationships that transcend the superficial, and working with others to accomplish big things.

Consider most of the encounters we have with others throughout our day: We smile and nod at people in the elevator, we wave to our neighbors when we are working in the yard, we exchange pleasantries with our co-workers—but rarely do we truly connect with people. Rarely do we take the time to “see” the human being-ness of others. We can take a lesson from an indigenous population in Africa, as shared by Peter Senge in *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*:

Among the tribes of northern Natal in South Africa, the most common greeting, equivalent to “hello” in English, is the expression: *Sawu bona*. It literally means, “I see you.” If you are a member of the tribe, you might reply by saying *Sikhona*, “I am here.” The order of the exchange is important: until you see me, I do not exist. It’s as if, when you see me, you bring me into existence.

This meaning, implicit in the language, is part of the spirit of *ubuntu*, a frame of mind prevalent among native people in Africa below the Sahara. The word *ubuntu* stems from the folk saying *Umuntu ngumuntu nagabantu*, which, from Zulu, literally translates as: “A person is a person because of other people.”²³ If you grow up with this perspective, your

identity is based upon the fact that you are seen—that the people around you respect you and acknowledge you as a person. (1994, p. 3)

People raised in this tribal environment who have become corporate managers have difficulty adapting to the impersonal, superficial relationships that are the norm in most workplaces (Senge, 1994).

I propose that this desire for connectedness is not relegated just to people familiar with the spirit of Ubuntu. Whether we are conscious of it or not, we do better when we are connected with others. In fact, our brains are wired for creating social connections: Goleman suggests two dimensions recently discovered in neuroscience. One dimension ties together our emotional center and our ability to use the rational parts of our brain (as in being mindful) and the second one:

...has to do with the social circuitry of the brain, which is the neural basis for social intelligence; this is our circuitry for empathy, for connection, for reading other people, for communicating, for influencing, for persuading, for motivating, for inspiring. In other words, the active ingredients in highly effective leadership depend on this very circuitry. You can be superb as an individual performer because you have good self-mastery, you are motivated, you are persistent, you are disciplined, you are focused, and you are flexible. But no matter how good you are as an individual performer, if you lack social intelligence you will fail as a leader because it is your communication skills, it is your interpersonal interactions that determine how well other people will do under your leadership. So you put those two together and you have a highly effective leader. ("Interview with Daniel Goleman," 2009, p. 2)

For leadership catalysts, being connected is being mindful about who they are being so that they interact and connect with others in a real, authentic, caring way. When you are connected in this way, you create relationships that inspire trust, engagement, appreciation, and loyalty from others. I like to think of it as a

kind of mindfulness-in-action or even social mindfulness—applying the personal lessons of being mindful to our relationships with others, especially with the people on our teams.

Being connected is about being interested, not interesting. Being interesting means seeking the spotlight and making everything be about you—treating people as means to an end. Being *interested* means being real with people, allowing yourself to be vulnerable, being patient with the humanness of others, giving people the benefit of the doubt, and trying to get to know them in such a way that you can be of service to their becoming greater in the world.

While I was stationed at the Leadership, Ethics, and Law Department of the Naval Academy, we taught the midshipman that these qualities were inherent in a leader's role as Steward. As one of the roles of a good leader proposed by Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, being a Steward “requires tending the flock—‘washing their feet,’ as well as cracking the whip. It takes compassion to realize that all men are not of the same mold. Stewardship requires knowledge and character and heart to boost others and show them the way” (Stockdale, 1984, p. 121). Vice Admiral Stockdale was a 1947 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy who was shot down over North Vietnam in 1965 and spent the following eight years as a prisoner, suffering frequent torture. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1976. The newly implemented value- and principle-based leadership model I taught at the Academy was based on Stockdale's 1979 speech about duty given to the freshman class of West Point while he was President of the U. S. Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode

Island. At the end of his remarks, he listed five obligations that a good leader with a strong sense of duty must have: to be a moralist, jurist, teacher, steward, and philosopher (Stockdale, 1984, pp. 72-73). In the USNA Leadership Model, we taught that leaders in the role of steward “invest their lives in the lives of their followers” (Leadership and Law Department, 1994, pp. 4/5-12). More specifically, the midshipmen learned that:

Leaders view themselves as servants.

- They consider their followers a sacred trust for whose care they are answerable.
- They are committed to their followers’ development and well-being.

Leaders guard the fundamental dignity of their followers.

- They promote self-esteem in followers by respecting them and by holding them accountable for high standards.
- They suffer hardship along with their followers in meeting professional obligations.
- They are intolerant of formal or informal norms that diminish the dignity of their followers.

Leaders understand human nature and value individual differences.

- They understand individual differences as strengths that can enhance the overall functioning of the group.
- They understand the values of their followers and appeal to those values and associated needs to bring out the motivation that already exists in their followers.
- They know themselves—including vulnerabilities as well as strengths.
- They have significant involvement with their followers while maintaining appropriate rank distinctions. (1994, pp. 4/5-12, 13)

The Steward role drew upon Robert Greenleaf’s concept of Servant Leader, which he coined in his 1970 essay, “The Servant as Leader”:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first,

perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?" (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002, p. 27)

Covey, in his forward of Greenleaf's book, states that, "The deepest part of human nature is that which urges people—each one of us—to rise above our present circumstances and to transcend our nature. If you can appeal to it, you tap into a whole new source of human motivation" (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002, p. 1). Thus, a leader who is being connected is one who is appealing to that deepest part of human nature.

Keith Kent, an author and speaker who advises young adults on how to be better leaders, uses the term "people-consciousness." He makes the point that good leaders need to care about people, especially the ones they lead:

This book makes a pretty big assumption. It assumes that you care. I mean, really. Not just because it's fashionable to appear concerned for those who are "less fortunate." Not because you know that pretending to care is going to earn you the title of Mr. Nice. Not because the redhead in the next row loves charitable people. Not because it's a good way to get attention in the public spotlight. No. Something deep, something sincere and real. Being interested in what others think, how they feel, what's important to them, what they need. Being sensitive to the people around you; and when they need something, wanting to help. You might call it brotherly love, a concern for all, people-consciousness.

A lot of sentimental hocus-pocus? Maybe. Personally, I am convinced that unless you really care for the people you are going to lead, you'll never do anything meaningful—except by accident. People-consciousness is a

definite prerequisite for good leadership. If you aren't sensitive to the needs of the people you lead, how will you ever be able to answer those needs? Caring is a practical necessity. If you are going to do right by people, you have to be concerned with their welfare. (1969, p. 6)

Many relationship techniques, tips, and checklist items have been promulgated to help people demonstrate that they are good leaders (e.g. managing by walking around, remembering birthdays, sending handwritten notes of thanks and appreciation, praising in public-punishing in private, or learning about people's families and interests)—and these can all be good things to do in the right context—but to be a leadership catalyst, it is more than memorizing activities or following a checklist of To Do items. As mentioned before, it is about who you are being that sources your actions, rather than just going through the motions, that is going to help you become a force multiplier. It is about being connected *with* people rather than just connecting *to* people.

Empathy creates high-quality connections

In their book, *Lift: Becoming a Positive Force in Any Situation*, Robert E. and Ryan W. Quinn call this connectedness being *other-focused* and say that empathy is an essential element of an other-focused state, generating mutual rapport with, and an impulse to act for, others:

Empathy is an emotional experience, and emotions tend to prompt action responses.²⁴ For example, when people are afraid, they feel a desire to fight or flee. When people are curious, they want to explore. When people are disgusted, they want to recoil. When people feel love, they want to touch. When people feel empathy, they participate compassionately in other people's emotions. This means that the action response most commonly associated with empathy is the impulse to help, whether our help is intended to relieve suffering...or to contribute to other's success.²⁵ (2009, p. 151)

A connected team of co-workers has empathy for one another. They experience mutual rapport and contribute to each other's successes. These are people comfortable enough to be themselves, even to the point of sharing some of their quiriness (and we all know we have some). They feel secure enough to think out of the box and stretch themselves—knowing that the people on their team will be encouraging and will celebrate their success if they do well and reassure them should they fall short. They work gracefully through differences of opinion that invariably arise within a group of people, especially a group of people committed to achieving important goals. If members occasionally get upset with one another, they still recognize the worthiness of each teammate, and the connections are strong enough to weather a bit of strife. Organizational scholars Jane Dutton and Emily Heaphy (2003) call this kind of rapport a *high-quality connection* because, as Quinn and Quinn write:

...it allows people to express a wide range of emotions, it can withstand the strain of difficult circumstances, it is open to new ideas and influences, and it releases oxytocin and endorphins in the brains of people who participate.²⁶ Oxytocin and endorphins are chemicals that give people a sensation of relaxed pleasure, or calm energy. (2009, p. 153)

Not only can people experience a calm energy working on a team with high-quality connections, but a person's own performance improves, as well:

The energy that people experience when we empathize with them does more than make them feel good...those who energize others also tend to perform better than those who do not. When we energize others, they usually exert more effort on our behalf, are more open to learning, are more likely to share innovative ideas, and are more likely to share their resources with us.²⁷ In other words, when we focus on others, we often improve our own performance. (2009, p. 154)

Most people find that when they become other-focused, they do not lose themselves, they become their best selves. They like who they become when they care about others. This makes sense when we realize that our identities are actually tangled up in our relationships with others.²⁸ We are social creatures, biologically wired to empathize with each other. Becoming other-focused does not eliminate our unique characteristics; it draws on them to help us make the most out of our interactions. (2009, pp. 159-160)

In contrast, when mutual rapport and safety are not present, people's performance decreases. In *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*, Malcom Gladwell thinks that, under stressful situations, "we become temporarily autistic" (2005, p. 232): the emotional system takes over, complex motor skills are hindered, vision becomes restricted, cognitive processing is diminished (2005). This is like losing IQ points—people are obviously not able to do their best thinking under these conditions. Being connected, however, allows leadership catalysts to create environments that are emotionally safe and give people the space to be more mindful, choose their behaviors consciously, and come up with more creative solutions.

Finally, creating high-quality connections improves integrity and trust between the members of the team. When people strive to practice mutual rapport and empathy for one other, they create an environment that allows trust to develop:

The safety and security that other-focused people provide can also help people act with more integrity. Integrity can seem like a risk when there are pressures to compromise one's integrity. If people feel secure in their relationships with other people, though, then they are less likely to give in to these pressures²⁹....Safety and security can also be a foundation for trust.³⁰ (R. W. Quinn & Quinn, 2009, p. 156)

Trust is a key aspect of being connected, not only because it helps people share information, learn, and innovate more easily, but also because there is an

economic quality to it, as Stephen M. R. Covey, (the son of the 7 Habits' Stephen Covey) points out in his book, *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*. "Trust always affects two outcomes—speed and cost. When trust goes down, speed will also go down and costs will go up. When trust goes up, speed will also go up and costs will go down" (2006, p. 13). He shows this relationship in Figure 12.³¹

Figure 12. Covey's economics of trust

$$\begin{aligned}\downarrow \text{ Trust} &= \downarrow \text{ Speed } \uparrow \text{ Cost} \\ \uparrow \text{ Trust} &= \uparrow \text{ Speed } \downarrow \text{ Cost}\end{aligned}$$

The trust correlation has a direct effect on team interactions. When trust is low, teammates expend extra effort and time to make sure they are covered in case their colleague does not come through. Interactions take little effort between team members who trust one another. You ask your favor or state your request once and you can walk away knowing it will get done. That is the kind of high-quality connections leaders want to strive for in developing the people around them and creating a high-performing team.

An other-focused state can lift the person in that state and the people around that person. People become other-focused by asking and answering the question, "How do others feel in this situation?" This question can help us see others as human beings with legitimate feelings and needs, and feel empathy for them. When we are in an other-focused state, we energize people, inspire them to share resources and to invest effort into our projects and theirs, and help them feel secure. The security they feel can help them be resilient, find the strength to act with integrity in

the face of pressure, trust, learn, experiment, and innovate. (R. W. Quinn & Quinn, pp. 158-159)

To be connected and create mutual rapport and develop trust with others, leaders must:

- *Know their people*—learn more about who they are and how they interact with the world around them
- *Allow for the way their people are wired*—understand that mental wiring sometimes gets in the way of people being great
- *Be for them*—take on a context that enables leaders to be great with their people in the moment, regardless of their people's behaviors

To know them is to love them

To be connected, leadership catalysts have to know their people. The more you know what a person's proclivities are, how they process information, how they approach the world, and how they like to interact, the better you will be able to connect with them. We do not typically look at our relationships in the ways I have listed above—especially our work relationships. Unless a team tackles challenging work or weathers a significant emotional event together, chances are the relationships between members are superficial. People relate to each other as their personalities (schmoozer, two-faced, pleaser, nice guy), behavior (interrupter, arguer, pushover, organizer), stereotypes (Napoleon complex, male chauvinist, ball-buster, golden child), or roles (bean counter, HR, legal counsel, marketing rep., engineer). Rarely do people make the effort to get past these cardboard representations of others to get to know the real human beings on

their team—human beings who are more complex, talented, committed, and fun to work with than most people get to see. But it is that kind of effort that is required to build a high-performing team. Boyatzis and McKee discuss how compassion resonates in the relationships of leaders who are connected to the people around them:

Compassion is empathy and caring in action. Being open to others enables us to face tough times with creativity and resilience. Empathy enables us to connect with people. It helps us get things done, and to deal with power stress and the sacrifices inherent in leadership.

In order to be empathetic, we must begin with curiosity about other people and their experiences. Most people are born with curiosity—we only have to look at the bright eyes of a healthy four-year-old to see it in its pure form. At that age, the world is a miraculous place full of mysteries to explore. Sadly, as we age we often lose the ability to see things—and people—through a clear lens. We end up seeing the world through a filter of our own beliefs. Much miscommunication happens because people's ability to take in information from each other is seriously curtailed by their prejudgments. Carried to the extreme, a relationship can be ruled by prejudices and stereotypes, with very little real information passing between people, never mind actual connection and understanding.

It is impossible to be free of all prejudgment—we simply could not live in the world without some assumptions. However, effective leaders care enough to want to learn about other people without filters. Effective leaders care enough to want to learn about other people, to feel what they feel and see the world the way they do. And do something with what they've learned.³² (2005, pp. 178-179)

One way to learn about others is to step away from our own prejudging and consider a situation from the other person's eyes. Applying the insights of various personality or behavior assessments to another person can help us consider a situation from another person's perspective and open up new possibilities for dialogue and connection. Realizing that the other person may have a different preference than you for organizing or processing information, can give you room

to choose the best communication style to make a connection with them. To use the Leadership Wheel as an example, people who score high in the East want to know the context of what you are talking about before going into specific details. For them, information cannot be easily organized unless they first know the big picture. On the other side of the medicine wheel, people who score high in the West want the details first. They want to follow the trail of information until it reaches a conclusion, assessing the value of each step along the way. Much of the miscommunication within a team is of this nature: one person has a preferred method of communicating information while another person has a different method for receiving and organizing it. The result is that each person leaves the conversation frustrated, convinced that the other person just doesn't get it.

The better you know the people around you—how they think, what their learning preferences are, the particular skills they bring to the table, and how they process information—the better you will be able to connect with them. This means taking what you learned from whichever personality or behavioral assessment you participated in and considering how the people you interact with fall into those perspectives. Better yet, having the team complete the same assessments and conduct a workshop where everyone gets to learn about the others on the team goes a long way to providing a conversation vehicle for addressing differences of opinion and work preferences, as well as engaging the various skills that people can contribute to the success of the team's goals. This will also help everyone to see each other in a more personal—and personable—light because it will highlight how everyone is wired the same way and it is only

the way our behaviors manifest due to that wiring that changes. Different people have different peculiarities that sometimes drive their bus. Recognizing this helps us increase connectedness.

A person is just a human...being

Being connected is about being patient with the humanness of others. As we learned in being mindful, we have things that get in the way of our being great in the world. Being mindful that this occurs for others as well is the next level of being connected. Others can be caught in the stimulus-response-with-no-space trap just as we can. Some of the same issues can trigger their own defensive communications. They too have those secret little traits that sometimes take control of the bus and drive it into the bad parts of town that no rational, thinking person would want to be going—just like we do. The FAE condition sometimes blinds us to this, but leadership catalysts learn to decrease the effects of FAE so they can be more connected with the people around them.

For example, if we consider the defensive behaviors on page 70 again—but this time, choose two of the six items that we are most likely to evoke in *others*, we can become more conscious of the effect we have on the people around us and thereby increase our ability to allow our observer self to step in and carefully choose our words. At the very least, we can acknowledge that our words may trigger a particular reaction and assure the other person that this is not our intention. It is about being more authentic and transparent in our communications. Leaders who exercise greater transparency of thought can initiate that kind of cycle of trust and engender more connectedness with others.

We can even go a step further by discussing the categories of defensive communication with our teams and having people identify and share what triggers their own defensive communications, as well as their unflattering “bus-drivers” in the traits list. We can encourage discussion between the team members about what defensive-communication triggers they think they may cause in others. They will discover behaviors and traits that were previously invisible to them. This kind of dialogue can be a way to start instilling self-awareness and self-responsibility in the team, enabling people to forge closer connections because there will be more understanding of how differently people view the world. It will also provide a foundation for addressing conflicts in the future. Issues begin to be identified as miscommunication or misunderstandings rather than fundamental faults in people or purposeful acts of maliciousness or uncaring.

Leaders should be careful, however, not to fall into the trap of using these discoveries as a blunt instrument. Claiming, “I have no choice in how I act. That’s just the way I am. Deal with it!” is antithetical to creating a high-performing team. The idea is that once leaders and their people know more about the preferences of others, they can then tailor their conversations so that the points they are trying to communicate are more accessible to the other people on the team. Improved communications between people means less time spent talking around an issue. It is easier to catch the gist of the conversation. There is a reason we laugh at the sitcoms where two people are having a discussion about two very different things, yet the language fits both perspectives: it often occurs in normal

conversations. The more we can circumvent ambiguity, the better we will communicate. Being connected helps us to better tune in to others and catch any dissonances that may derail our conversations.

Being for them...anyway

Early in my career as a naval officer, a former commanding officer shared a memorable example of the power of 'being for' his people. A retired Navy Captain (Glenn Gottschalk, 1994), related a situation he encountered when he was the executive officer (XO, the officer who is second in command) of a ship. He had a particularly challenging discipline problem with a sailor. The 25-year-old enlisted man had a history of poor performance and was in trouble, again. The sailor's division officer (supervisor), a 23-year-old ensign, was frustrated and ready to throw in the towel. No amount of cajoling, pleading, or incentive had kept the enlisted man from causing problems. For this latest infraction, the ensign forwarded the case up the chain of command, recommending it be handled at Captain's Mast, in accordance with Navy regulations.

Captain's Mast is a shipboard trial where the Captain plays judge and jury and determines what punishment, if any, is to be meted out. For infractions of good order and discipline, the Captain has the authority to reduce a sailor's rank, impose a fine of half a month's pay for up to three months, and/or restrict the sailor to the confines of the ship for up to 45 days. During restriction, the sailor can also be assigned up to two hours of extra duty per day. If the sailor is a recurring disciplinary problem, the Captain can order separation from military

service. For more serious crimes, the Captain can send a sailor to the brig (jail)—and even prescribe bread and water for up to three days.

Prior to Captain's Mast, the Executive Officer (XO) reviews the disciplinary cases to make sure all of the administrative requirements are met, to assess the severity of the crime, and to determine what recommendations to make to the Captain for the adjudication of the case. In this particular instance, the XO noticed a pattern in the sailor's behavior. The enlisted man's periods of poor performance coincided with advancement opportunities, when the sailor failed to qualify for promotion. Intrigued, the XO brought the sailor in for an interview. In the course of their discussion, the XO discovered that the sailor could not read. After taking an advancement exam, and invariably failing, the sailor would become depressed and unmotivated and act out.

At Captain's Mast, based upon the XO's recommendations, the Captain found the sailor guilty as charged and assigned punishment, which included 45 days restriction and extra duty. The Captain then singled out the ensign for not doing enough to get to the source of the sailor's poor performance and instructed the ensign to teach the enlisted man how to read as the sailor's extra duty requirement. The ensign had not been connected enough to see the person behind the poor behavior.

For 45 days, the sailor remained restricted to the ship, and the ensign would sit with the sailor and tutor him for two hours at the end of each workday. After the sailor completed his punishment, his performance improved, and he began to set the example for other sailors. At the next advancement exam, the sailor was

better prepared and was able to become eligible for promotion. It was a great turnaround for someone who looked like he was going to end up separated from the Navy and left to fend for himself in the civilian world with a blemished record of military service. He became more engaged in his work and started performing more in the role of mentor and leader to junior sailors.

Whether the XO was conscious of it at the time, on some level he recognized that people are not always aware of what drives their behaviors. Being mindful is not a very common practice—not a distinction well in hand for most people. Nevertheless, a leadership catalyst recognizes the tendency for a person's conditioning to hold sway and makes allowances for it. By allowances, I do not mean shrugging off people's bad behavior or allowing yourself to be walked over. My point is that people sometimes have amygdala hijacks, become defensive in their communication, or allow a nasty little trait to drive their behavior—and leaders have to work to ensure that their own negative reactions do not cause the situation to escalate. It means taking opportunities, especially in the moment of interacting with people, to choose to be *for* them rather than responding with behaviors that serve the leader's own needs. A leadership catalyst first considers what would be in the spirit of being for the other person.

The sailor's poor record of performance and misconduct did not position him for leniency. Fortunately, in this case, the XO embodied the traits of a leadership catalyst, working to remove the shackles of unproductive conditioning and encourage others to step into their own greatness. The full extent of the change in the sailor's behaviors was not evident until a few weeks after his promotion,

when the XO received a letter from the man's seven-year-old daughter. She wrote to thank him for teaching her daddy to read, saying that he was much happier and things were better at home. This is the power of seeing people through the lens of ubuntu, connecting with their human being-ness, and being for them *anyway*. Sawu bona³³.

Being a catalyst leader is not about trying to get people to do things for your own aggrandizement; it is about helping them do great things for themselves that happen to align with the great things you and the organization are doing. This calls for an understanding of what makes people tick, what inspires them to get up in the morning—even before the alarm goes off—because they are so excited about their work day and how they get to make a contribution. Being connected means connecting to the essence of people—their inherent worthiness—rather than just interacting with them at a surface level. From a religious perspective, you could say it means connecting to that part of the person that is a reflection of God in all of us—the soul or the humanity of the person. People are not just a means to an end. Although we are sometimes prickly and difficult to work with, we are still worth connecting with, *anyway*. Deep down, we are all human beings who want to be a part of something. We want to contribute. We want to make a difference. That is why a leadership catalyst is for us *anyway*—a leadership catalyst has faith that the connection will somehow get through and resonate with our higher purpose.

Of course, there will be those times when a leadership catalyst tries to connect to a person whose receiver is just not tuning in to the message, and the

correct action that benefits everyone else involved on the team may be to let that person find a fit elsewhere. Nevertheless, until it gets to that point, a leadership catalyst works to reveal that person's greatness.

A creed for this kind of commitment, which Keith calls "The Paradoxical Commandments" (see Figure 13³⁴), has been printed, handed out, and posted around the world—in high school teacher's lounges, libraries, colleges, police stations, and Rotary Clubs. Mother Theresa even had them posted on a wall in the children's home of Calcutta, where she ministered (2004, pp. 16-17). When people recall the events that go really well in their lives, they are rarely conscious about what they are doing in those moments. They just feel lucky that things worked out nicely in the end. Until the behaviors of mindfulness or connectedness that contribute to success are *distinguished*, meaning that they are understood as distinct concepts, many people experience these positive events as happenstance—issues work out positively some times, but not others—much like how I felt my leadership successes occurred early in my naval career. It was not until I started learning about these concepts as a leadership and ethics instructor, and reflected on how they applied to my experience in the Fleet, that I was able to access them with purpose and be more proactive in my success. Once someone has chosen to be a leadership catalyst and has learned what it means to *be* one, that proactive behavior becomes the norm. That person can be intentional about being a leadership catalyst.

Figure 13. The Paradoxical Commandments

The Paradoxical Commandments

People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered.
Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.
Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.
Be honest and frank anyway.

The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds.
Think big anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.
Fight for a few underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.
Build anyway.

People really need help but may attack you if you do help them.
Help people anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.
Give the world the best you have anyway.

© Kent M. Keith 1968, renewed 2001

Chapter summary

Leadership catalysts recognize that they cannot do big things alone. Leadership is a relationship. Being connected means leadership catalysts work to develop high-quality connections with the people around them—engaging with people on a deeper, more personal level. It means being truly interested in others for the people they are rather than what they can do for you. Our brains are wired for empathy, connection, and motivating and inspiring others. The more leadership catalysts pay attention to being connected, the more they increase their social intelligence and the ability to create relationships that result in trust, engagement, and loyalty. High-quality connections enable people to communicate a wider range of emotions, better withstand the strain of difficult circumstances, and be more open to new ideas and influences. Leadership catalysts who are being connected know their people, allow for the way they are wired and how they are sometimes guided by their conditioning, and are *for* their people *anyway*.

Leadership catalysts know that, deep down, people want to make a difference and be seen for the human beings they are. They treat people as their commitment or higher purpose rather than being triggered by and mindlessly reacting to a person's negative, conditioned behavior

CHAPTER 6

BEING INTENTIONAL

On purpose

For this component, I have drawn upon Rod Napier's Intentional Leadership approach to creating high-performing teams and managing change. I determined that being intentional was a required element of the leadership catalyst model because leaders must have a guiding purpose. Until now, the components have concentrated on the internal reflections and considerations of a leader. Being intentional is the first component to address that which propels a leader into action. It still incorporates being mindful and connected, because it involves how a leader interacts with, leads, and develops the team. However, being intentional also means a leader has to be more rigorous in determining the team's current level of performance and identifying a path to take that performance to the next level.

Napier emphasizes that leaders should be intentional because of how the people around them scrutinize their every action and behavior:

There is no simplistic, one-size-fits-all kind of leadership. Still, for us, it begins with intention.

What we do know is that nearly everything a leader does has an impact and creates consequences that can determine success or failure in a meeting, within a team, or with another individual. Yet, most leaders run on the fumes of old habits, often moving from task to task with predictable actions and little thought. The more demands and pressures there are, the greater the likelihood that a leader's *predictability quotient* will go up—with little time or inclination to change what is comfortable to them in their behavior or in delivering their brand of leadership.

Many people might think that nearly all leadership is intentional, since it is most often goal directed....*Intentional* is a much more tough-minded view of leadership in which hard questions are asked and personal discipline demands a view of the consequences of their actions. It is something only rare leaders are willing to do. What's your action, your goal in the moment? Now, what's the consequence of that action? Is the result in alignment with your intention? Whether a larger goal is realized will, inevitably, be the result of many of these actions and reactions. That's what is meant by rigor and self-examination. Intention without the active pursuit of feedback and self-examination is worthless. (Rodney Napier, Halley, & Zachery, 2010)³⁵

Let us consider this from the aspect of a direct report: If your livelihood and job success is largely dependent on the whim of the person who supervises you—and can fire you—you are going to be hyper-vigilant of that person's moods and behaviors. You are going to be concerned with how that person relates to you. You will interpret every action your boss makes so you can make sure you are not missing any clues that could be important to your success.

As a leader, you need to be aware of this kind of focus on you; people interpret every action you take—and not always correctly. For example, imagine you step into a puddle on the way into work from the parking lot. You are fuming as you walk past the receptionist, snatch your messages from your assistant's hands, and soundly close the door to your office behind you, discomfited by your wet sock and shoe and embarrassed that your pant leg is soaked past the ankle. What do you suppose The Commentators are saying inside the head of every person who witnessed your behavior, however? *Wow, I wonder what that was about! Is there bad news about the company? About the team? Is someone in the office in trouble? Did I do something wrong? Is he going to be in a bad mood*

if I go talk to him? I was going to pass on some updates about a delay in our project but I had better lay low today—I don't want to deal with any conflict.

The stakes are even higher in the military, especially when troops on the battlefield are looking to the leader for clues about what they might be facing. In operational conditions, the mood and behavior of the leader greatly influences the morale and performance levels of the troops. Leaders must be sensitive to the effects of their look, demeanor, and even posture. They can instill confidence or bring despair without even being aware of how they are behaving. Because leadership catalysts know that this is how people's brains are wired, they have to be intentional in almost everything they do—or at least understand and accept responsibility for the consequences of their being reactive to a situation rather than behaving on purpose.

The more leaders understand the nature of interpersonal and group dynamics and the influence they have on the people around them—whether conscious of it or not—the better prepared and effective leaders will be in maintaining connectedness with their people and gauging the level of engagement in accomplishing team goals. If a leader is not able to determine the level at which a team is performing, it will be difficult to take appropriate actions that will move the team to the next higher level of ability and effectiveness. It is not necessarily an easy job, creating high-performing teams, but it is well worth doing—not just because high-performing teams, by definition, produce better results, but also because being a part of that kind of team is fulfilling and resonates with people's desire to be good at what they do and to make a difference. Napier and

Gershenfeld describe the effects of successful group experiences in their book,

Making Groups Work: A Guide for Group Leaders:

Most people remember the failures, the disasters, and the disappointments that can occur in a group. But group experiences can be exhilarating. There is the bond of working with others and being mutually involved in searching for possible solutions rather than feeling alone and overwhelmed. There is the caring and closeness that develops among members who know each other as they never did before. There is the insight of listening to someone and suddenly understanding yourself. There is the wonder of watching people decide to change and then really change. There is the joyousness of experiencing the “click” of finding the right solution. There is the laughter, joking, and fun of teasing, kidding, and sparking each other. Finally, there is the pleasure of shared, solid accomplishments. (1983, p. 4)

Now who would not want to be part of that? These are the kind of teams that leadership catalysts are meant to create. With that in mind, being intentional means: (1) being aware of, and taking responsibility for, how others perceive you; (2) understanding group dynamics to know what detracts from teams being great and people contributing a full and honest effort; and (3) diagnosing the temperament and efficacy of the team and using appropriate activities to take them to the next level of performance

Seeing yourself through the eyes of others

As I discuss in being mindful, the source of our behaviors is not always easy to pinpoint. Sometimes we react to a situation based on our conditioning or out of our need to satisfy a not-so-productive trait, instead of choosing to act in service of a specific, higher purpose. If we are sometimes at a loss for why we do some of the things we do, think about those around us who do not have access to the thoughts in our head. Being intentional means recognizing that the “you” you

know yourself to be is not necessarily the “you” that everyone else knows. Even when we mean well—or at least when we do not mean ill—our behaviors can still be misinterpreted by others for any number of reasons. Maybe we are not being mindful in the moment, or something else on our mind is coming through our communication. Perhaps the people we are interacting with are interpreting our behaviors in a way that triggers their own defensive communication strategy—or one of their nasty little traits is driving the bus for them. Regardless, it is important for leadership catalysts to recognize that the self they are “transmitting” may not be accurately “received” by others. People will only see a representation of us that they have created in their mind, based on any filters that may be in place. Covey describes why this might happen:

Each of us tends to think we see things as they are, that we are *objective*. But this is not the case. We see the world, not as *it is*, but as *we are*—or, as we are conditioned to see it. When we open our mouths to describe what we see, we in effect describe ourselves, our perceptions, our paradigms. When other people disagree with us, we immediately think something is wrong with them. But...sincere, clearheaded people see things differently, each looking through the unique lens of experience. (1989, pp. 28-29)

Ideally, people's interpretations of us will become closer to matching our true selves as we practice being mindful and being connected, but it is important for leadership catalysts to see themselves through the eyes of others and take responsibility for how they are perceived. They are being intentional in how they transmit when they interact with another person.

To gain insight into how they appear to others, leaders need to participate in a 360° review process to learn the things they do not know about themselves. Rod Napier was one of the creators of the 360° feedback process as part of the Athyn

Group, which called it *Executive Role Counseling* at the time (Rodney Napier & McDaniel, 2006, p. 219). He states that 360° reviews can be a powerful tool because “feedback is a gift”:

This sounds almost gratuitous because, for most of us, the idea of feedback is built on the notion of criticism, based on what we do that is wrong rather than right. To see it as a “gift” means reframing how we think about such information. For us, feedback gives us choices, direction, and a means of measuring progress in relation to our behavior and the way we live our lives in the eyes of the world. (Rodney Napier, 2010, p. 13)

[It focuses] on helping good leaders use their time more effectively, motivate others, conduct better meetings, deal with conflict, or handle specific troubling problems. (Rodney Napier & McDaniel, 2006, p. 219)

These 360° reviews are an integral part of my leadership catalyst development process, offering feedback from the people who can provide unique perspectives on how the leader occurs for others: supervisor, peers and colleagues, and direct reports, as well as family and friends. Feedback is gathered anonymously to make sure the participants feels safe providing candid and useful information. Once the data is compiled, the leaders analyze the information, identifying behaviors that work for them or get in the way of being effective, as well as any other trends or insights into their behavior that affect how they interact with others. Leaders identify behaviors that are working for them—perhaps even ones they may not have been conscious about using—but they also discover what was hidden to them about behaviors that have been hindering their relationships with others. The power of this process is knowledge: leaders cannot change or improve anything if they do not know there is an issue

or a gap, and they cannot use effective behaviors intentionally if they are not aware of them.

Once the process is complete, the leader identifies two or three behavioral areas for improvement. This is how they “walk the wheel,” to refer back to the leadership medicine wheel and the Native American focus on improving one’s abilities in each quadrant of the compass. The added benefit is that leaders gain insight into how others see them, making it possible to be more mindful about their behaviors, allowing them to take responsibility for how they come across to their people, and increasing their ability to be connected. Leadership catalysts can then be intentional about developing their teams.

Group *dynamics* or group *dynamite*?

Once leadership catalysts have distinguished how they occur to others, the next step is to be able to distinguish and influence how the individuals on the team occur to each of the other members and how they behave together as a team. Leadership catalysts need to be aware of the dynamics that occur among people who gather in a group—outside of just the personal traits and triggers of each participant—and understand how these dynamics influence the relationships and communication within the group. Napier’s leadership development processes ensure leaders are knowledgeable about the common pitfalls that occur on teams. Napier and Gershenfeld explain why team interactions do not often succeed:

At any given moment, every day, people come together at group meetings to communicate with each other—to share their experiences, opinions, skills, resources, and to work toward accomplishing their common goals.

The process sounds simple and straightforward enough, but in reality meanderings, bypasses, roadblocks, and detours obstruct the road to accomplishment at almost every turn.

Groups make many people uncomfortable. In a group you don't get your own way, you must defer to others at least some of the time, discussions can be confusing, individual differences can explode to produce heightened conflict. In addition, in a group there are fears—fears of appearing foolish or being regarded as low status, fears of being scapegoated or being “dumped on,” fears of not fitting in and being an “outcast,” and fears about outcomes. What will the outcomes be? A complete waste of time? A disaster? Sometimes things can be much worse after the meeting than before the meeting. The outcomes sometimes are not at all what was intended. (1983, p. 2)

The better we are at avoiding these pitfalls, the better we will be at making sure team members are connected and engaged. The better we are at reading these group dynamics, the better we will be able to inspire our people and harness their best efforts, creating a high-performing team. According to Goleman et al, teams of connected and mindful individuals are more powerful than the sum of their parts:

In the last few decades, much research has proven the superiority of group decision making over that of even the brightest individuals in the group.³⁶ There is one exception to this rule. If the group lacks harmony or the ability to cooperate, decision-making quality and speed suffer. Research at Cambridge University found that even groups comprising brilliant individuals will make bad decisions if the group disintegrates into bickering, interpersonal rivalry, or power plays.³⁷ (2004, pp. 173-174)

Covey's correlation concerning the speed of trust functions just as importantly in the group setting. The more leaders are able to distinguish a group's “conditioning” (in the same sense that *conditioning* is used to refer to the source of our personal subconscious behaviors), the more intentional they can be in

moving past roadblocks, toward a foundation of trust and, ultimately, better team performance.

Since teams or groups of all kinds are the predominant delivery system for the work in most large- and medium-sized organizations, understanding the fundamentals of how groups work becomes an essential aspect of leadership. It's a bit like knowing the basics of your automobile so that when issues arise you can know how to address them, or, at the very least, where to seek help. Being somewhat facile with the language and the resulting behaviors of groups provides you with some immediate choices, new ways of thinking and, hopefully, new ways of acting. (Rodney Napier et al., 2010, p. 7 [Ch. 3])

Stormin' norms

By *norms*, I am referring to a group's conditioning—the subculture, or underlying assumptions (Edgar H. Schein, 2004), of a team or meeting group and the kinds of functional and dysfunctional habits and behaviors that drive or detract from productivity (Rodney Napier et al., 2010). We often take norms for granted but, as Goleman et al explain, they are immensely powerful:

When all is said and done, the norms of a group help to determine whether it functions as a high-performing team or becomes simply a loose collection of people working together.³⁸ In some teams, contention and heated confrontation are the order of the day; in others, a charade of civility and interest barely veils everyone's boredom. In still other, more effective teams, people listen to and question each other with respect, support each other in word and deed, and work through disagreements with openness and humor. Whatever the ground rules, people automatically sense them and tend to adjust how they behave accordingly. In other words, norms dictate what “feels right” in a given situation, and so govern how people act. (2004, p. 175)

Despite the power of their influence, norms *can* be changed. It just takes a leader and team members willing to focus continually on what behaviors are working or not working in the life of the group. Establishing these elements lead to development of effective team norms:

Core values—the primary values that guide the behaviors and decisions of the individuals in the group that, once agreed upon, team members will live by *no matter what*. They describe how the team members treat each other and their customers and are behavioral and measurable—otherwise they become merely a sign on the wall that has no real meaning. (Rodney Napier et al., 2010)

Ground rules or rules of engagement—guidelines for working together that create a positive atmosphere and can be referred to when challenges emerge in the group. They should describe how people will act, make decisions, and resolve conflict so that everyone can have their say, believe they will be heard, and have an opportunity to contribute to the success of the team. (Rodney Napier et al., 2010; Rodney Napier & McDaniel, 2006; Rodney Napier, Sidle, & Sanaghan, 1998)

Feedback processes—practices for discussing what norms and actions work and which ones do not work. This can consist of a simple, five-minute session at the end of meetings where each participant has a chance to weigh in on what they thought went well in the interaction and what should be reconsidered or changed. (Rodney Napier et al., 2010)

Simply paying attention to these aspects of group dynamics can go a long way toward creating an effective, supportive, and highly collaborative working environment for the team. When given the choice, most people want to be a member of a well-oiled, tight-knit team rather than try to work in a group of people where it is every person for him- or herself.

Paying membership dues

Being intentional means paying attention to the things that get in the way of people being fully engaged and wholly participating on the team. Napier and Gershenfeld paraphrase Thelen (1954) when they define membership as “the perception by the individual of the quality of his or her relationship to the group” (1985, p. 76).

Membership is related to being connected and is a valuable dimension of group dynamics for a leadership catalyst to track because it is a good indicator of individual engagement. People who feel a high level of membership with the team are going to be more participative, collaborative, and considerate—and will give more of their best effort—than someone who is feeling very little membership.

Leadership catalysts need to be aware that membership is a dynamic element. It constantly fluctuates, depending on how people feel others on the team are treating them and how their ideas or contributions are being received. A person can go from feeling strong membership one moment by having an idea hailed as particularly insightful and valuable by other team members, for example, to suddenly feeling disconnected and uncaring the next moment because a particularly dominant person on the team has made a personal and derogatory comment. A leader needs to be aware of this kind of ebb and flow of engagement and be on the lookout for occasions when someone on the team may be less engaged and contributory.

Gauging membership in your team members is made more difficult because people will put on a good face and act the role, while on the inside they may seethe or withdraw, mentally sitting back, crossing their arms, and withholding their efforts. A leader who is being connected will be more attuned to this than one who is not.

I was participating in an intensive leadership development process provided by the Napier Group and acutely experienced the ebb and flow of feeling membership in the group. As part of the intention of the course, stressors were designed into the process to simulate the stresses and conflicts that can arise in any normal group dynamic. I was one of 14 individuals who had bonded during an intense, 48-hour group experience, and I was feeling a high level of membership. I felt like I was contributing to the discussions and the learning of the group—that my inputs were moving the ball down the field, so to speak.

During one of the sessions, another participant snapped at me in a very angry tone in response to something I had said, disagreeing that I had any relevant point to make. I was stunned by her reaction because I was truly trying to understand a particular aspect of the discussion. Needless to say, I was taken aback and abruptly became quiet, feeling chastised and dismissed. My face got hot. I felt shamed.

My internal commentator was livid! *Well, fine! If that's the way she feels, then I don't have to say anything. See if I try to participate and contribute if that's the way I am going to be treated. I don't need to put myself out there anymore if I am just going to get pounced on!*

Luckily, I was able to maintain a little perspective and let my prefrontal cortex examine what occurred: *So I got a testy reply to something I said. It doesn't mean that all of my participation to that point was dismissed or that I haven't made any valuable contributions. It just means that, for whatever reason, she was upset and made a comment in a particular tone of voice. Her comment just happened to be directed at me.*

In the next few moments, while the discussion continued among the other group members, I was able to mentally occupy the stimulus-response space and become mindful of the thoughts and physical reaction that were present. Granted, it was actually happening as the response was occurring, but I was able to consider why I was having such a strong reaction to what happened. It was just a few spoken words by someone I knew pretty well and had a warm relationship with under normal conditions. That was when I gained an insight into the conditioning that had taken over and recognized that one of my S.H.I.T. List traits had commandeered the mental bus. In this circumstance, my *need to be liked by every living thing on the planet* (see page 72) was triggered when my brain received the words and negative tone of voice directed at me. My thalamus interpreted these as a threat and caused my amygdala to hijack my system to protect my psyche—in this case to support my conditioned need to be liked.

Goleman et al describe this process:

John Gottman, a psychologist at the University of Washington, uses the term “flooding” to describe the intensity of the fight-or-flight reaction that such [messages] can trigger: Heart rate can leap 20 to 30 beats per minute in a single heartbeat, accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of distress. When flooded, a person can neither hear what is said without distortion, nor respond with clarity; thinking becomes muddled, and the

most ready responses are primitive ones—anything that will end the encounter quickly. As a result, people will often tune out (or “stonewall”) the other person by putting either an emotional or physical distance between them. (2004, p. 22)

My feeling of membership in the team plummeted because of this emotional (thoughts in turmoil, not really following what was being said) and physical (sitting back in my chair, crossing my arms, falling silent) distance I automatically put in place. From my amygdala’s point of view, I cannot be in danger of looking silly, being dismissed, or receiving contrary indications of being liked or valued if I do not participate.

Until I was able to work through all of that for myself, I was not very engaged in the discussion. I was not sharing in the discovery of insights that would benefit everyone else. I was not providing any of my own perspectives that might have made a difference for someone else. I also was not testing any of my own theories or beliefs or understandings for validity during that interval. In short, I shut down, withdrew, and was not getting the full benefit of the process. And though I was not hindering it, neither was I contributing to the success of the process for the others.

Membership is one of the aspects of group dynamics for which a leadership catalyst needs to be alert. The dynamic goes on all the time in teams—but because people are unaware of this, it usually results in more permanent disengagement by individuals, schisms between subgroups of the team, and other behaviors that are not conducive to creating high-performing teams. The good news is that as a team becomes higher performing, the members are able

to work these kinds of issues out on their own, rather than needing the team leader to intervene.

Unarmed conflict

Sometimes group *dynamics* can turn into group *dynamite* in the form of conflict—especially unresolved conflict. To avoid dealing with conflict between members, a team will push it underground where it ends up cooking in its own juices. Because it does not just magically evaporate, it simmers and boils over—causing discord and gossip, draining energy, and creating mistrust among members. (Rodney Napier & McDaniel, 2006)

Frequently, team leaders do not have adequate training in conflict management and do not have the time, skills, or inclination to deal with it; as a result, they avoid, deny, or mishandle conflicts. The consequences are hidden agendas, passive resistance, and frustration that bursts out in unbridled anger at unpredictable times. All of these impede communication and inhibit team progress. (Rodney Napier & McDaniel, 2006, p. 272)

Trying to ignore conflict, however, is a losing proposition. Anyone who has ever been on a team knows that conflict is an always-present aspect of working with other people. In fact, a seeming absence of conflict is a matter of concern to Napier and Gershenfeld:

The absence of conflict in organizations should cause nearly as much concern as its presence, since conflict arises from common organizational shortcomings, such as unclear goals; overlapping or ill-defined roles; differing expectations; arbitrary, overly demanding, or vague use of authority; irritating personal styles; and questionable use of personnel, materials, money, or other limited resources. The issue is not whether conflict exists but, rather, how to resolve conflict in the most constructive manner when it does arise. (1983, p. 176)

Unfortunately, most people do not handle conflict effectively. We avoid it because it makes us uncomfortable:

Most people seek to avoid pain and to attain some level of comfort and predictability in their lives. Since conflict usually brings pain, discomfort, instability, and often the need to change, it is not difficult to understand why people avoid, deny, or minimize the importance of conflict situations. Further, people see conflict itself as a problem rather than as a symptom that tends to accompany unresolved problems. (Rodney Napier & Gershenfeld, 1983, p. 176)

But conflict is part of the natural order. Because it is a symptom of unresolved issues, we can always expect to deal with some form of conflict in our lives.

Schein considers conflict to be a “generally understood term referring to any degree of disagreement between two or more people” (2004, p. 113). Has any significant relationship in our lives developed without even a small level of disagreement or conflict at some point? Sometimes our strongest relationships are forged by working through a strong conflict.

To develop high-performing teams, leadership catalysts and their team members need to seek out opportunities to address conflict head on, in a constructive, positive manner that recognizes it is a difficult process for people—but worthwhile for the development and effectiveness of the team. Napier and McDaniel provide some useful strategies:

The team does not hide from conflict but addresses it when it occurs in a timely manner. It actively attempts to reframe the conflicting issues and lend objectivity to the process by gathering relevant data. It maintains a belief among team members that conflict can and will be resolved fairly and equitably. Its members proactively communicate with one another individually and directly to work issues through before raising them in the group or depending on others to intervene. It clearly labels any behaviors such as gossip and backstabbing that undermine honest and open communication as unacceptable.

Resolving strong differences and moving forward can have a positive influence on a team as members begin to trust that such differences will not cause damage to the team as a whole or to individual members. Dealing effectively with conflict builds confidence. (2006, pp. 272-273)

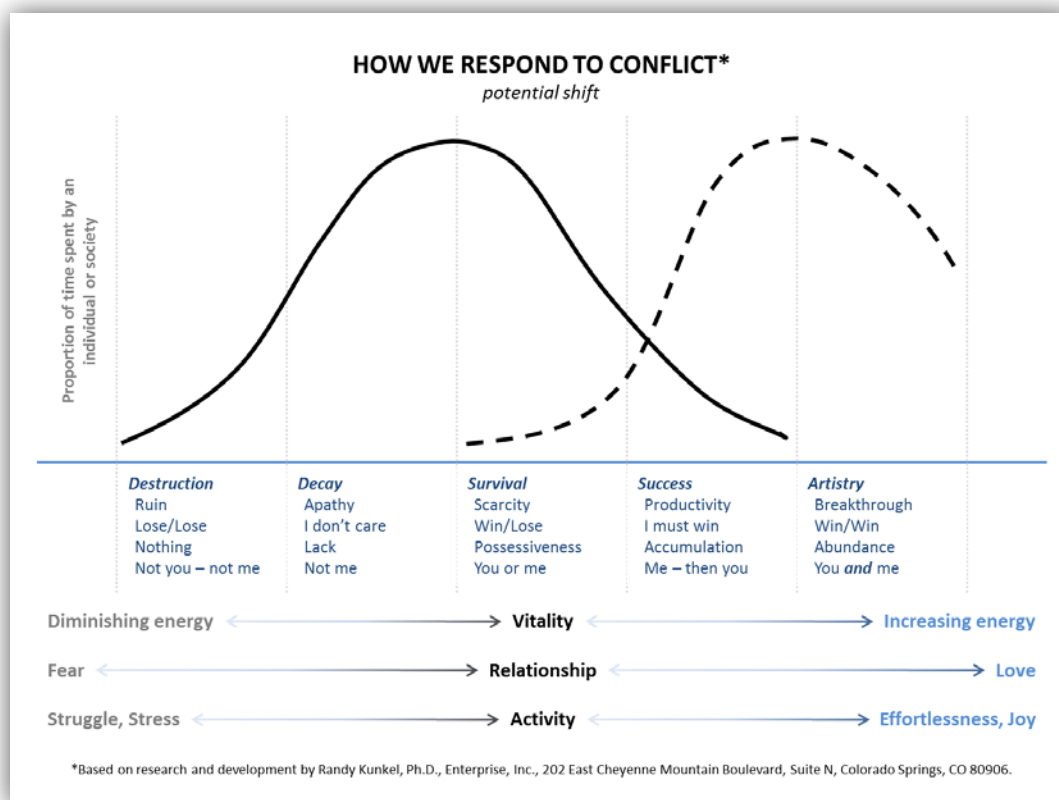
Thomas Crum, a martial artist, speaker, and author provides a unique perspective of conflict that I believe is valuable for leadership catalysts. It is based on his mastery of aikido, which is a highly sophisticated martial art: “Its readily observable purpose is to resolve physical conflict by making an attack harmless without doing harm even to the attacker” (Crum, 1987). In his book, *The Magic of Conflict: Turning a Life of Work into a Work of Art*, Crum shares how the principles of aikido can be applied to any conflict in our lives, not just the physical ones:

As we will see, they can be applied to daily conflicts in business, education, and the arts. As we begin to embrace conflict as a prime motivator for change in our lives, we begin to see it as an opportunity. We are able to use it effectively for nurturing growth in ourselves and in our relationships. (1987, p. 35)

Conflict as an opportunity for nurturing growth is a great perspective for leadership catalysts. Being intentional is more enriching and empowering if it is in service of taking your team to the next level of performance rather than simply being about fixing breakdowns and cleaning up messes. Instead of approaching conflict with typical reactions of survival or destruction, as shown in Figure 14,³⁹ leadership catalysts can begin to relate to conflict from a mindset of success—or even artistry. (Crum, 1987)

As Crum describes it, artistry is a mindset in which we move beyond success and make our lives into a work of art. We support and cooperate with others; we

Figure 14. Typical reactions to life's experiences (mindsets)

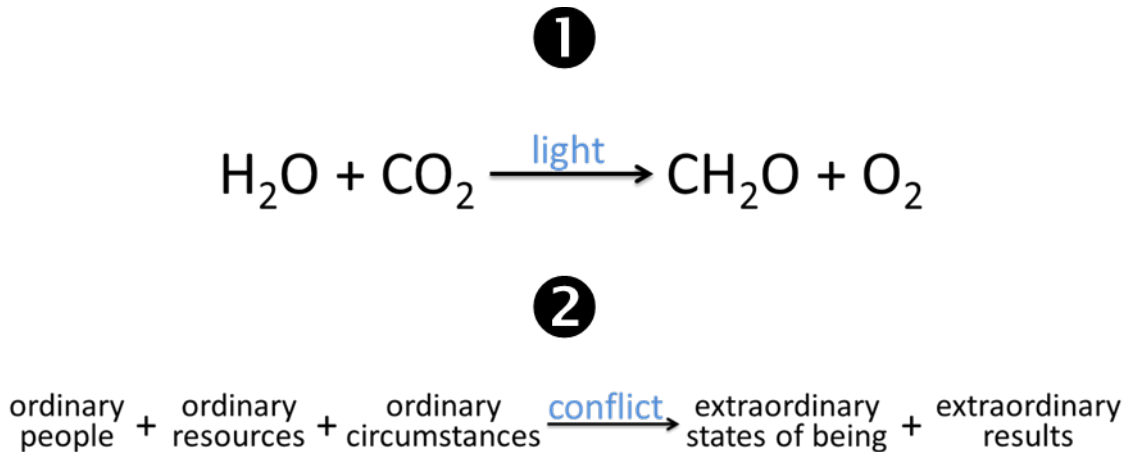


adopt an abundance mentality, rather than one of scarcity; and an “I win-you lose” approach to conflict becomes “we both win” (1987, p. 24). I share a personal anecdote about artistry in Appendix C.

In a similar fashion, I want leadership catalysts to enjoy the artistry of being intentional and resolving conflict with a “we both win” approach. I want them to recognize the opportunity for positive change that conflict represents. In equation 1 of Figure 15,⁴⁰ Crum shows the chemical process for photosynthesis. To convert water and carbon dioxide into food (sugar) and oxygen, a plant requires the activator and energy source of *light*. With a perspective of artistry, leadership catalysts can have a profound effect on individuals and teams by recognizing that

conflict is the activator and energy source for transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary, as Crum demonstrates in equation 2.

Figure 15. Activators for transformation



Crum informs us that aikido, by its very definition, represents *the way of blending energy*. “In this light, all of life, including a physical attack, is energy with which to dance” (1987, p. 41). By being intentional, leadership catalysts blend the energies of their people into a single, powerful, composite stream rather than allowing them to run amok, cause interference, and diminish each other. To develop a high-performing team, leadership catalysts need to be like an aikido master and ask, *How shall I choose to dance with this?*

Dancing with diagnosis and design

To be able to choose how to “dance” with a team—or to even know when dancing is necessary—leadership catalysts need to be able to determine the beat of the music and recognize a few of the steps before they can offer any insights into how to improve the dancing. Being intentional means leaders need

to be able to identify what is going on with a team and provide appropriate strategies for getting the team past a particularly hard bit of choreography. This is where the concept of *diagnosis and design* comes in. One of the hallmarks of Napier's developmental model, diagnosis-and-design is a powerful combination of practices available to a leader who wants to guide a team to be more productive and effective.

We are all familiar with those occasions when we have walked into a meeting and have sensed something “in the room.” Whether there was an argument or some other emotionally significant event, we can sense that something has happened. Other times, we have just gone through the motions of a meeting amid the distraction of avoiding an “elephant in the room”—maybe a schism between two people, a secret that has yet to be shared with everyone on the team, or a scandal that is interfering with people's focus on the business at hand. An adept leader will be able to sense these kinds of team undercurrents and address them head on, rather than ignoring them and hoping they will just go away. When Napier works with a group—especially one he is introduced to for the first time—he takes on a diagnostic mentality:

When we enter an organization, a team, a group, a meeting of any type, typically, we ask questions to take the pulse of the room. It's not foolproof, but with some keen observation and by framing these questions, we increase our ability to diagnose group effectiveness. Ultimately, it allows us to intervene in a manner that helps improve the functioning of the group. Thus, the more information leaders can generate about their teams, with the least amount of fuss, the better. It's all about expanding our “choices” so that we have increased opportunities to help the group become increasingly high-performing. If you don't know the questions, don't know what to observe, your choices are diminished and you place yourself in a position of having to be reactive instead of strategic. (2010, p. 7 [Ch. 3])

Unless issues are brought out into the open and constructively dealt with, the effectiveness and productivity of the team are significantly impaired, if not completely halted when the issue escalates to a breaking point. Even if the leader cannot quite put a finger on what is blocking the flow of the team, just being mindful and connected can enable a leader to know at least something is getting in the way of the group's cohesion and diminishing engagement in the members. And the leadership catalyst has the will to *do* something about it.

Napier and Gershenfeld describe what that diagnosis entails:

More than a procedure, it represents a way of viewing a group at any moment in time. It incorporates the belief that the group, just as any individual, is a continually evolving organism that can best be understood by knowing it thoroughly and realizing that change and development are a natural part of its being. (1983, p. 86)

Leadership catalysts should get in the habit of looking at their group from the perspective of it being an individual. Apply the same concepts of being mindful to its conditioning. Pause in the moment to check for any filters, interpretations, or assumptions that might be interfering with the smooth functioning of the team as a whole. Consider whether the group is using defensive communication strategies in response to an event. Try to determine if there are any S.H.I.T. List traits hijacking the amygdalae in the room. These are all examples of being in a diagnostic mentality when working with a team. Leaders are constantly checking in to see what the “weather” is like. Sometimes they can feel a cold front moving in. Other times it might be a short squall passing through. On occasion, a full-blown thunderstorm makes a mess of the neighborhood. Keeping an eye on the barometer of the team, however, will help leaders divert the nasty weather—or at

least lessen the severity of it—and recover quicker after it has dumped its energy on the group.

Leaders do not have to rely on guessing how the team is doing, either. While they can divine quite a bit about the group environment simply by mindfully observing the members in action, they can also take a more proactive role and collect data. It could be as simple as stopping a meeting and voicing their suspicion that there is something “in the room” that needs to be addressed, asking each member for a weather report, or opening it up for discussion about what is working or not working in the group. However, it could be as involved as anonymously polling the group, conducting in-depth interviews with each individual, or even bringing in an outside facilitator to help the group identify what is blocking it from achieving the next level of performance.

Assessing team effectiveness

Napier and McDaniel emphasize the importance of gathering information on the team:

The dilemma of any leader is to obtain the best information available when it is most needed. The reality is that at any given moment we only have the information that people are willing to provide us. With that information our choices will be expanded or diminished. Although we will rarely have all the information we need, seeking the information that matters most can spell the difference between success and failure. (Rodney Napier & McDaniel, 2006)

One method for determining how well the team is working together and identifying possible roadblocks to its effectiveness is to use an assessment instrument to collect data anonymously about the group. This can provide the leader—and the team—some powerful insights into where the team should focus

its developmental efforts. I use a diagnostic instrument developed by Napier, called the Group Management Questionnaire (GMQ), which evaluates a team's performance against 72 best practices of high-performing teams. It is one of the instruments that make up Napier's (and my) 360° review process.

This instrument provides the leader with a vehicle that will create the necessary template to ease the discomfort of team building. Here is an opportunity to improve the climate of the team over time while building team and individual skills through doing. This tool is not meant to be a panacea. However, it can bring order to what often feels like chaos. Somewhere along the way to becoming a truly effective team, we recommend training and the opportunity to take blocks of real time for the team to work on the issues that are bound to arise in the process of becoming a [better] team. In the meantime, our approach can be a useful beginning, as it maintains focus on aspects of team development crucial for success. (Rodney Napier & McDaniel, 2006)

For more on the GMQ and team assessment, see Appendix C.

Turn right at design

By being intentional in diagnosing their teams, leadership catalysts can then be intentional in developing their teams:

In theory, everything we do as a teacher, boss, and facilitator—as a leader of any kind—should be intentional. We would instantly consider the consequences of each action, and whether it would have the impact we desire. We would “design” our response to a situation so that we could help to ensure the best outcome possible. The less thoughtful we are, the more reactive and less skillful in our diagnosis of the situation, the more vulnerable we are to outcomes not beneficial to us or the group. Of course, it's impossible to anticipate all the hundreds of variables that can influence our chosen behavior or action. Nevertheless, the most effective leaders are those who can anticipate the best and, at the same time, are the most creative and adaptable in what they do. (R. Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003, p. 377)

Design is “a developmental activity a leader uses systematically to move a group toward preconceived goals in a manner that is consistent with the group's values”

(Rodney Napier et al., 1998, p. 101). Leaders may associate Napier's *design* activities with ones they have experienced in any number of training-game, icebreaker, meeting-opener, or other team-building activity books in the marketplace. From many perspectives, there is no difference: Any team-building activity, whether Napier's or someone else's, can be a powerful tool in the hands of leaders wanting to improve the performance of their teams—as long as they are used appropriately and accomplish a specific goal or distinguish a particular concept important to the development of the team. The distinguishing characteristic is to be Mindful and Intentional in their use.

Leaders learn that the diagnosis-and-design mentality applies to any interaction with the team, but it is particularly effective when applied to team meetings or team-development sessions:

Carefully assessing the goals of the meeting in light of the needs of the group is a seldom-discussed art form upon which the design of a meeting is built. These skills and commitments separate the most effective leaders from the rest.

This is where intentional leadership is established because if attention is paid to the answers to these questions, there is no reason every meeting should feel or look the same. In fact, every agenda item needs to be treated like a mini-meeting: comprised of a beginning and end and particular activities intended to drive both task and process aspects of that agenda item. Answering these tough questions in the affirmative by conducting your diagnosis and preparation will dramatically increase your likelihood of success. (Rodney Napier et al., 2010, pp. 3-4 [Ch. 3])

An *emergent design* refers to improvisation of an ad hoc activity because the team is not quite ready to accomplish the current goals or an issue emerges that interferes with the group's ability to continue effectively. Emergent design requires a leader to be adept with diagnosing the team in the moment and

switching gears to address whatever difficulty arises in a constructive and empowering way. Although the elements in Table 3 are diagnostic in nature, we should think of them as “atmospheric” design conditions that a leadership catalyst needs to track, moment by moment, to ensure the team’s activities and goals remain appropriate to the team’s climate (R. Napier & Gershenfeld, 2003, p. 338):

Table 3. Emergent design considerations

Diagnostic Barometers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the unresolved issues (unfinished business) of the group?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which members are “in” and which ones appear “out”? What influence does each member have on the climate of the group?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the physical setting (large table, same seats, predictable roles or behaviors of the participants) conducive to performing the work of the group? Would a change in the physical design be helpful?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the task-related goal of the group clear? How does it relate to the evolving group goals?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have certain norms evolved that are inhibiting the progress of the group that need to be altered?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the leader’s behaviors facilitating or blocking the group’s ability to do its work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the members able to express both feelings and ideas freely?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the time of day having an effect on the group? Does it need a change of pace to help energize it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there personal issues [defensive communication strategies, S.H.I.T. List traits, amygdalae being hijacked] blocking the group’s productivity that need to be dealt with?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Given this information, what type of intervention must occur to move the group forward in its ability to achieve its goals?</i>

My leadership catalyst development process uses design activities as part of the experiential learning process. This enhances the learning process, and participants become familiar with a handful of designs they can use right away. For greater proficiency with emergent design, however, they need to have a repertoire of practiced designs they can draw from so they can implement them at a moment's notice. A well-executed design allows a leadership catalyst to seize the opportunity for transformation that an emergent issue or conflict provides.

By being intentional, leadership catalysts can master this diagnosis-and-design dance, but even a simple introduction to intentional behaviors will make a difference in the team. Incorporating a diagnosis-and-design mentality by itself will cause the members of your team to sit up and take notice—especially if they are part of a well-established group that has been stumbling over the rocks of ineffective norms. Being intentional can improve the choreography and generate huge returns in engagement, communication, and improved productivity.

Chapter summary

For leadership catalysts, being intentional means being attuned to how they are perceived by others and taking responsibility for how their actions and behaviors affect others—specifically, their direct reports. Leadership catalysts make it a habit to seek feedback on their performance, usually in the form of a true 360° review process that allows participants to contribute to the leaders' improvement anonymously. Leadership catalysts are also intentional about the performance of their teams. This requires having a diagnosis-and-design

mentality, which is a powerful asset for a leader who wants to guide a team to continuous improvement. Diagnosis is assessing a team's performance—typically comparing it against the best practices of high-performing teams. It is also the practice of being alert for any undercurrents or conflicts between members that can cause collaboration and effectiveness to break down. Designs are developmental activities that leaders use to improve the group and help members build their collaborative muscles. Designs can be well thought out ahead of time, to accomplish particular goals such as problem-solving or decision-making, or they can be thought up and implemented on the spot to address a conflict or underlying issue that is getting in the way of full team-member participation and contribution. Being intentional is a perspective that keeps leadership catalysts focused on and actively working to accomplish the goals of the team and organization, as well as staying receptive to feedback about their own performance to ensure that their behaviors are consistent with who they want to be.

CHAPTER 7

BEING GENERATIVE

Aspire to inspire

The seeds of this component were planted during my time teaching at USNA by another of Vice Admiral Stockdale's obligations of a good leader—being a *Teacher*. For Stockdale, “Every great leader I've known has been a great teacher, able to give those around him a sense of perspective and to set the moral, social, and particularly the motivational climate among them” (1984, p. 72). In class, I taught the midshipmen that:

Leaders appeal to their followers' highest aspiration

- They provide the vision that inspires their followers to adopt as their own the goals of the unit.
- They inspire their followers to do more than they think they are capable of doing.
- They exercise the charisma that calls followers from “their everyday selves into their better selves.” (Leadership and Law Department, 1994, pp. 4/5-12)

As a naval officer, I had a personal relationship to participating in a “purpose bigger than myself”—it was not just a job to me. All through my school years and for the majority of my military service, the country was under the grip of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. While the level of personal danger and exposure to real violence then was in no way comparable to what our troops currently experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, there was a real danger that détente between the United States and the Soviet Union could devolve into an exchange of nuclear missiles—assuring the mutual destruction of both super powers, if not

a large part of the world. Being a naval officer in charge of many sailors' lives and livelihoods—as well as operating multimillion-dollar equipment—was a level of responsibility unlike any other job I have had before or since. There was a certain inspiration and motivation to being a military service member. I was moved by the thought that my people and my nation depended on me. The honor of serving and the desire to perform well in duties entrusted to me by the President of the United States and the American people sometimes served as the only antidote to the stress of long deployments away from home, long hours of difficult work, and the politics of a highly competitive work environment. The oath of office I took on the day of my commissioning functioned as an appeal to my higher aspiration and had me strive to do more than I thought I might be capable of doing. It is in this sense that being generative is included as a component of being a leadership catalyst. It means generating a meaning or purpose that appeals to the highest aspirations of people—that inspires you and others to do more than you think you are capable of doing. As Daft and Lengel write in their book *Fusion Leadership: Unlocking the Subtle Forces That Change People and Organizations*:

The greatest part of leadership is the impact we have on others. A leader has followers. In our experience, followers yearn to be inspired rather than controlled. Leaders develop others by showing the way to vision, courage, heart, communication, mindfulness, and integrity, and by enabling others to discover and act from their own subtle potentials...Leaders don't create anything new, they simply unlock the subtle yearnings and abilities that people already have. (1998, p. 56)

A routine experience on one of the ships I served on demonstrates how providing a different perspective on the purpose of a job can improve someone's

performance. On a Navy ship, junior enlisted sailors, usually fresh out of high school and basic military training, get saddled with drudge work like “swabbing the deck” (mopping the floor). One day, I heard a young sailor complaining about mopping a deck that would only be walked on and need re-mopping later. I paused to ask him if he knew that he held a very important job. He snickered as if I was pulling his leg and asked how it could be important—because it did not take particular skill and it certainly was not a prominent job like firing a weapon or operating radar or driving the ship.

I explained that, because of the importance of the role our ship plays in the defense of the country and the inherent danger of the environment we work and live in, many inspection teams throughout the year visit us, testing us on the readiness of our military and engineering systems, as well as the skill and performance of the sailors. The first thing the inspectors look at when they walk onto the pier and up the brow [gangway] is the cleanliness of the ship. They know that the more squared-away [presentable] a ship is, the better it will probably perform.

“So you swabbing the deck *is* important,” I told him. “Think about when you’re on the mess decks or in berthing when they’re clean and stowed away. Now imagine them being messy and smelling like a dank and musty locker room. You can actually feel a difference in your attitude, can’t you?”

I could see the wheels in his head were turning as he recognized what I was talking about. He nodded thoughtfully and said, “Yes, sir. I see what you mean. I

never thought about it like that. But, yeah, I do feel different when they're clean. Kind of like I have more energy or care a little more."

I then challenged him to pretend that our ship was his ship as he walked around during the day—as if he were the Captain and was anticipating an inspection team coming aboard—to see if he noticed things differently on the ship. Is equipment properly stowed? Are areas unclean? Are peers behaving unprofessionally? "How do you think we would perform if *everyone* took on that attitude?" I asked. As I talked, the sailor began to stand a little straighter and the beginnings of an abashed smile showed at the corners of his mouth.

"Okay, sir, I get it. I'll do a better job mopping the floor—and without bitching."

As I walked away, he was more conscientious of his work, and later, I even saw him admonishing one of his peers who had thrown a wrapper on the deck rather than in the trash, which was not a normal behavior for him before our talk.

Because I had connected him to a higher-level purpose—contributing directly to the military bearing and success of the ship versus keeping a well-traveled passageway [hallway] clean—and empowered him to pretend he was accountable for the ship, the sailor looked at his work environment with a new perspective. He saw possibilities for action that he had not noticed before. He was more engaged and aligned with the purpose of the ship and more attuned to opportunities to make a difference—even to the point of enlisting his peers to change their behavior.

Being generative means being someone who generates—for yourself and others—the energy, enthusiasm, engagement, inspiration, and motivation to be

in action and achieve results. While being intentional was about doing things *on purpose*, being generative is about *generating a purpose* that draws people into being more, calls to people's higher selves, inspires people to go above-and-beyond the call of duty—one that connects people to their hopes and dreams for the world. In *The Power of Story: Change Your Story, Change Your Destiny in Business and in Life*, Jim Loehr talks of such motivation:

Without purpose, our life story has no meaning. It has no coherence, no direction, no inexorable momentum. Without purpose, our life still “moves” along—whatever that means—but it lacks an organizing principle. A mother of four quoted in Dan McAdam's book, *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By*,⁴¹ may have captured it most eloquently and bittersweetly when she said, “I know what to do when I get up every day, but do I really know where I'm going?” Without purpose, it is all but impossible to be fully engaged. To be extraordinary.

With purpose, on the other hand, people do amazing things: good, smart, productive things, often heroic things, unprecedented things....

Purpose is the thing in your life you will fight for. It is the ground you will defend at any cost. Purpose is not the same as “incentive,” but rather the motor “behind” it, the end that drives why you have energy for some things and not for others....

Once you find your purpose, you have a chance to live a story that moves you and those around you. (2007, pp. 40-43)

Determining what you are called to do in life and connecting others to their own callings can be powerful motivators for accomplishing big things, for overcoming challenges and obstacles, for persevering against strong odds—because the result is just that important!

Men and women on a mission

I have come a long way in my own journey from “*the Zachery luck*,” where I was just going through the motions. Once I learned I could be the kind of person who makes a difference in the world, I found it a bit exhilarating. I felt more capable, energized, and optimistic about life knowing I did not have to sit back and learn to be content with whatever showed up. I could be intentional and proactive in designing the kind of life I wanted.

Soon after this change in perspective, I had an opportunity to examine my values and consider what it was I cared deeply about. It was similar to participating in the eulogy exercise, where you consider what it is that you want to be remembered for at your funeral. The idea is to identify what kind of difference you want to be recognized for making in the world so you can bring those future results to fruition. After reflecting on my life and those times that particularly moved me, I came up with my own personal mission statement: Who I am, as a possibility, is a world where people live powerful, playful, passionate lives and children experience joy, laughter, and love. Presently, the way I choose to realize this possible future is by helping people learn to live more powerful, playful, passionate lives by developing them into leadership catalysts. I can use this as a mantra to keep my eye on what I aspire to in the world. Loehr calls this our *ultimate mission in life*:

...a phrase I use largely interchangeably with “purpose”—as in *the* purpose, not just *a* purpose. Your Ultimate Mission is the thing that continually renews your spirit, the thing that *gets* you to stop and smell the roses. It is the indomitable force that moves you to action when nothing else can, yet it can ground you with a single whisper in your quieter moment; it is at once the bedrock of your soul and (as the phrase goes)

the wind beneath your wings. It spells out the most overarching goals you want and need to achieve in your time here, and the manner in which you feel you must do it (that is, you pursue these goals in accordance with your goals and beliefs). (2007, pp. 43-44)

Leadership catalysts develop their own Ultimate Missions to provide a beacon to light the way when life gets a little foggy and people are bogged in the mire of the everyday. I coach leaders to write an Ultimate Mission on 3x5 cards and post them on a mirror so they see it first thing when they wake up and as a reminder before they go to bed. They post it near a computer or on a desk at work. They put a copy of it in their wallets, purses, or anywhere they can be reminded during the day. Synthesizing an Ultimate Mission into the brain offers a source to draw from during those moments when leaders catch themselves in the space between stimulus and response, and helps them choose behaviors that are more productive, effective, and consistent with the kind people they want to be in the world.

The adage *a rising tide lifts all the boats*, first attributed to John F. Kennedy in a 1963 speech referencing how various government projects contributed to a “rising tide of prosperity throughout our entire country,” can serve to describe the role of the leadership catalyst. When they are centered on a powerful purpose, leadership catalysts are the rising tide that lifts the performance and leadership ability of those around them. Quinn and Quinn use the word *lift* from an aeronautical sense, but it serves the same purpose in illustrating the effect of the rising tide:

In this book, we use the word “lift” in two ways. First, lift is influence, an uplifting effect we have on others. Second, *lift* is a psychological state, a temporary pattern of thoughts and feelings in which we are (1) purpose-

centered (we have a purpose that is not weighed down by needless expectations); (2) internally-directed (we have a story of how our personal values will guide our actions); (3) other-focused (we feel empathy for the feelings and needs of others); and (4) externally-open (we believe that we can improve at whatever it is we are trying to do). When we experience these thoughts and feelings, we feel uplifted and lift the people around us.

We need to experience *lift* in order to lift others, but the pressures of daily living often drag us out of lift and into more normal states. Normal states are states in which we (1) seek comfort; (2) react automatically to the world around us; (3) focus on our own needs and feelings; and (4) believe that there is little we can do to improve. When this happens, our influence on others is nowhere near as positive as it is when we experience *lift*. (2009, p. 256)

Being generative means consistently pulling oneself out of a reactive, normal state by connecting with an Ultimate Mission or noble purpose and entering a lifted state to become more proactive, creative, and engaged. Robert E. Quinn (this time in his book *Building the Bridge as You Walk on It: A Guide for Leading Change*), considers this an aspect of being in the *fundamental state of leadership*:

In the fundamental state of leadership, we become less comfort-centered and more purpose-centered. We stop asking, What do I want? Since what we want is to be comfortable, this question keeps us in the reactive state. Instead we ask, What result do I want to create? (Fritz, 1989) An honest answer to this question tends to create an image or vision that may attract us outside our comfort zone and into the uncertain journey that is the creative state. As we begin to pursue purpose in the face of uncertainty, we gain hope and energy. As we move toward purpose, we experience meaning and become filled with more positive emotions. Yet becoming truly purpose-centered is an extraordinary thing to do....

When we are in the fundamental state of leadership, we are very different from when we are in the normal state. We begin to attract new flows of energy. We overcome entropy and slow death. We become more fully alive. Furthermore, we begin to attract others to the fundamental state of leadership. (2004, pp. 21-23)

By being purpose-centered and generative, leadership catalysts can be the lifting tide for others by generating an inspiring goal or vision that attracts them to a higher level of performance. Jerry Porras and Jim Collins (1994) call these types of throw-your-cap-over-the-wall goals BHAGs, or Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals. I provide more information on BHAGs in Appendix D.

Margaret Mead, the renowned cultural anthropologist, is attributed with saying, “Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has” (Krieger, 2002, p. 325). It is a vision or purpose worth committing to that a leadership catalyst must generate.

O say can you see...a Vision

Leadership catalysts help generate commitment to a vision that inspires people to move mountains. Covey says it well:

People want to contribute to the accomplishment of worthwhile objectives. They want to be part of a mission and enterprise that transcends their individual tasks. They don't want to work in a job that has little meaning, even though it may tap their mental capabilities. They want purposes and principles that lift them, ennoble them, inspire them, empower them, and encourage them to their best selves. (1991, pp. 179-180)

When I consult with teams to help them improve results, I often check to see if they have identified a powerful vision—one that has a pulse and provides a call to action rather than one that has no signs of life and gathers dust on a shelf in the back of the office. When it is clear that their vision is flat lining and needs resuscitation, I provide the equivalent of a vision crash cart by describing how a team's vision should be a powerful image of the group and should possess qualities that help propel the team to unprecedented results. I work with them to

make sure their Vision (now with a capital V) incorporates these key attributes (Rintzler & Brown, 2002):⁴²

Vivid. People should be able to see it in their minds, have a visceral feel of what it will be like once they live into it—have synapses firing in the brain just as athletes use vivid visions to imprint flawless routines into well-worn neural pathways that help train their bodies.

Generative [this was an additional impetus to including being generative as a component of the leadership catalyst model]. The vision should bring out the best ideas in people and generate buzz and communication and collaboration; it should promote out-of-the box thinking and the sharing of stories, lessons learned, and best practices as the team members wrestle with the obstacles and challenges that invariably come up when going after a worthy goal.

Energizing. The vision should energize its constituents. People should be excited to wake up in the morning and go to work. Around the office, they should have a bounce in their step, regardless of what challenges they are facing. Moreover, when a challenge does appear, they should grin enthusiastically and rub their hands together in anticipation of taking it on.

Inspires Action. A vision should generate activity on the part of people who have signed on to bring it about, causing independent actions and work that is outside the limits of job descriptions to help bring it about. A compelling vision should turn *business as usual* behaviors into *beyond the call of duty* behaviors.

Let us briefly consider one example of a small group of committed citizens that created a powerful vision that ultimately affected the whole world: our

Founding Fathers and the birth of a new government. Their commitment to the ideals that all men are created equal and have an unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is testimony to the value of an Ultimate Mission. At the end of the Declaration of Independence, they even state the level of their commitment: *“And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”* You cannot get much more out-of-the-box thinking than committing treason by refusing to follow a monarch’s dictates, declaring independence from a world superpower without an army or navy of your own, and designing a new government that is unlike any existing government at the time.

The purpose of this example is not to set a lofty expectation that a vision or ultimate mission has to be on the level of one that strives to create a new country, but to demonstrate the power that a vivid, purpose-centered vision can have to inspire commitment, action, and innovative thinking from others.

Chapter summary

In the words of Admiral James B. Stockdale, leadership catalysts who are being generative are appealing to people’s highest aspirations. They provide a vision that inspires people to adopt the goals of the organization or team as their own. Being generative means creating or sharing a vision or noble purpose that calls people into action and inspires them to do more than they think they can do. Being generative means causing people to step out of their everyday selves and into their better selves. To do this, leadership catalysts create an ultimate mission

or purpose for themselves that keep them motivated and in action—and can also be used as a guide post with which to measure actions to make sure they are remaining on track with what they are committed to. This type of larger-than-life goal can challenge a team to a degree that has the members stepping out of their comfort zones and accomplishing tasks that would not have been possible using business-as-usual behaviors. This kind of vision or purpose should be vivid, should energize, and should inspire actions. It should elicit the best work and thinking from people and create a camaraderie and team spirit that bonds the team together.

CHAPTER 8

BEING HERETICAL

Don't drink the Kool-Aid

At first blush, being heretical may seem like an unusual quality or perspective to have as a component of a leadership model. I presume that most people associate being heretical with something negative and unwelcome, but I believe this aspect of *being* a leadership catalyst can create openings for flexibility, adaptability, and innovation. In the context of the leadership catalyst model, being heretical means being able to look outside the limiting paradigm of the organization to identify and choose different opportunities for action that would not have been available by following the current organizational norms. By not being restricted by “the way things are always done,” a leader who practices being heretical will be more likely to find creative solutions to problems, invent more effective processes, and identify new opportunities for success.

I am guessing that most people know the word *heresy* in a biblical or theological sense, which is not a bad place to start. The philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and scientist Galileo Galilei is as well known for his heresy—in the Catholic Church’s view—as he is for being a hero of science. Although Galileo was a devout Catholic, the church condemned him for heresy and sentenced him to house arrest for the remainder of his life because he tried to get the church to change its orthodoxy in view of scientific evidence that the earth was not the center of the universe (Machamer, 2010).

Heresy may also be associated with disagreement in any group—whether it is a political, philosophical, or scientific one. You can have positions or ideas that clash with your family, your place of work, or even your bowling league. This aspect of being at odds with your organization is closer to my idea of being heretical. Leadership catalysts are aware of the conventions or norms of the groups in which they have membership—and avoid becoming trapped or constrained by them. Being heretical is maintaining a perspective of keeping an open mind and daring to be different—to be innovative, adaptable, and flexible. In Appendix E, I share my experiences as a heretic working to develop new leadership and ethics curriculum at the U.S. Naval Academy and as part of a company of technical innovators.

Art Kleiner's book, *The Age of Heretics: A History of the Radical Thinkers Who Reinvented Corporate Management* (2008), served as inspiration for this component of my model. Kleiner hails the work of the heretic as an essential function for moving society forward:

We live in an age of heretics: an age where unconventional ideas become conventional wisdom rapidly. And that's a good thing, because the future of industrial society depends on our ability to transcend the destructive management of the past and build a better kind of business.

That doesn't mean embracing every unconventional idea. Nor does heresy mean flouting authority. *A heretic is someone who sees a truth that contradicts the conventional wisdom of the institution to which he or she belongs and remains loyal to both entities—the institution and the new truth.* Heretics are not apostates; they do not leave the “church.” Instead, they try to influence the larger institution to change for its own sake, because they think that its survival, and their own role within it, depends on meeting truth halfway. (2008, p. 3)

For a leadership catalyst, being heretical means being open to different perspectives in the organization, seeing the contradicting truth, and trying to do something about it—while remaining loyal to the organization. It means trying to work within the existing framework of the organization to try to change things for the better. To do that effectively and constructively, however, leaders must first know what makes their organizations tick.

Knowing the organization

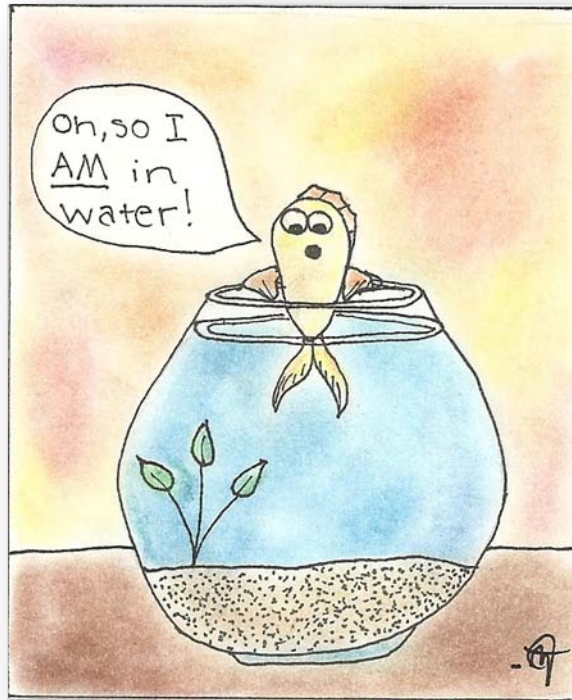
In the previous components of being a leadership catalyst, I discussed *knowing yourself* and *knowing your people*—aspects of being mindful and being connected, respectively. Being intentional requires you to *know your team*. By continuing this sequence, being heretical means you need to *know your organization*. (To make the metaphor complete, consider being generative as *knowing your direction or purpose*.)

Knowing the organization means being able to recognize the norms, routines, stories, habits, and underlying assumptions of the organization that inform solutions for stepping out of the cultural paradigm. It is in this “white space”—a term typically used to describe the blank area surrounding an organization chart (Rummler & Brache, p. 9), but one I use to refer to the unexamined culture of the organization—that you find access to different solutions and possibilities.

During a *DYNM 673: Stories in Organizations*’ class, Professor Janet Greco described a cartoon she had seen that I feel nicely illustrates this aspect of being heretical. She described a fish that hoists himself over the edge of his bowl, looks

down, and exclaims, “Oh, so I AM in water!”⁴³ (My daughter recreates the scene with creative license in Figure 16.)

Figure 16. A fish discovers water last.



As human beings, we spend much of our conscious time during the day relating to the world as if everything we experience is exactly what happened in the moment. We are fish not recognizing that we are swimming in water. But as I discussed in being mindful, when we learn about how our brains work and recognize that there is a space between stimulus and response, we can see how much interpretation and filtering our subconscious brains integrate with the data coming in through our senses. That is when we start becoming present to the water in which we swim.

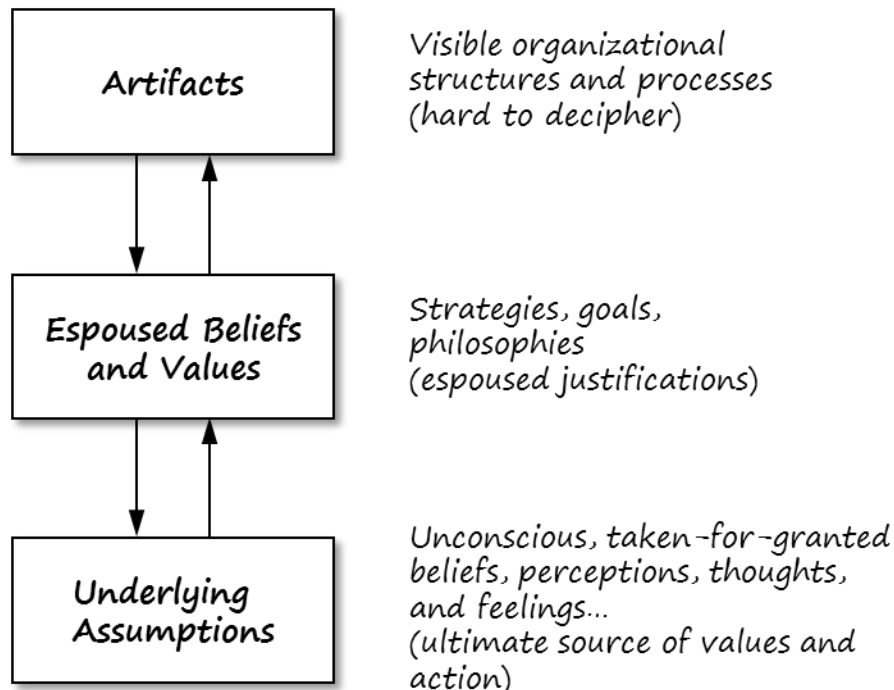
Shifting this perspective to the organization, I would say that most people spend their day swimming in what Edgar Schein, a leader in organizational development, calls *corporate culture* in his book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*:

The culture of a group can...be defined as *a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.* [Schein's emphasis] (2004, p. 17)

Figure 17 shows the different levels at which Schein analyzes culture.⁴⁴

(2004, p. 26)

Figure 17. Edgar Schein's Levels of Culture



Schein's underlying assumptions are what I was referring to when I mentioned *white space*, earlier. They are the common ways of being that everyone goes along with, without thinking about them. If you have ever heard comments such as, *We've always done it this way*, or *We don't do that here*, or even, *We've tried that before and it didn't last*, then you know you are testing the boundaries of the white space in the organization.

In analyzing cultures, it is important to recognize that artifacts are easy to observe but difficult to decipher and that espoused beliefs and values... may only reflect rationalizations or aspirations. To understand a group's culture, one must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions and one must understand the learning process by which such basic assumptions come to be....

The most central issue for leaders, therefore, is how to get at the deeper levels of a culture, how to assess the functionality of the assumptions made at that level, and how to deal with the anxiety that is unleashed when those levels are challenged. (Edgar H. Schein, 2004, pp. 36-37)

One way to get to the deeper levels of a culture is to look at the organization through different perspectives.

Choosing a lens

Too often, we act as if our interpretation of what we experience is the truth and that everyone around us relates to that experience the same way. However, if you have ever watched Siskel and Ebert disagree about the thumb-quality of a movie, you know that people can have widely differing reactions to the same experience. Leadership catalysts put this "property" of human consciousness to good use by being heretical and letting their observer minds apply various frameworks, perspectives, stories, or filters to their organizations to see what new insights can be gleaned.

The origin of the word heresy reveals its value to the leadership catalyst. It comes from the Latin word *haeresis*, meaning “school of thought” and from the early Greek word *haíresis*, the act of choosing; and it is a derivative of *haireîn*, to choose (Flexner, 1987, p. 845). In a leadership catalyst sense, being heretical means being mindful on an organizational scale and choosing different lenses from which to view the organization—just as being mindful involves choosing a personal response in a situation.

In being mindful, I discussed the unconscious filters we sometimes have in place when we interact with the world, which Dr. Greco remarked on when she shared a quote from the *Talmud* with me, “We see the world not as it is, but as we are” (“Talmud,” 2011).⁴⁵ These unconscious filters are our own underlying assumptions, à la Schein, and as I mentioned, these already-in-place assumptions, expectations, or beliefs can wreak havoc with how we react to a stimulus—often having us behave in ways inappropriate to what is truly happening or in a way that is inconsistent with who we know we want to be in the world. Being mindful is a perspective a leadership catalyst takes on to bypass or remove those filters to be able to choose a more appropriate, positive, or powerfully inspired behavior in that space between the stimulus and the response. Being heretical, however, means revisiting the use of lenses—but this time in a more purposeful, conscientious, and intentional manner. As a varsity rifle shooter in high school and college, I commonly saw shooters wear yellow-lensed glasses because they sharpened contrasts and aided in focusing on the target, especially outside. Likewise, while growing up in Alaska, polarized

sunglasses were an almost required item for salmon fishing—not only to protect the eyes from a wayward lure or hook, but also to help see the fish below the surface of the river. Both of these lenses enabled the wearer to see a different perspective of “reality.”

Being heretical involves looking at organizations through different lenses, or frameworks, in the same manner. Michael J. Arlen, an Armenian-American playwright, novelist, and political essayist who lived in the first half of the 20th century, remarked on the importance of this ability when he noticed that, “Surely one of the most visible lessons taught by the twentieth century has been the existence, not so much of a number of different realities, but of a number of different lenses with which to see the same reality” (1977, p. 9). To illustrate this point, Dr. Greco passes out eyeglasses to her *DYNM 501: Fundamentals of Organizational Dynamics* class as a physical metaphor for the ability to view—and choose to view—situations through different perspectives, or metaphors. Like the students removing the existing lenses from the glasses’ frames and replacing them with different colored lenses to objectify the notion of changing their own personal lenses, leadership catalysts can consciously try to see the organizational “realities” from different perspectives, step outside constrictive paradigms, and possibly discover different paths to success. After all, leadership catalysts are driving toward a meaningful vision that sparks the imagination and elicits unique solutions for getting around the wall to get the heretofore-mentioned and proverbial cap.

Being able to tap into the organization's culture using the concept of lenses, or metaphors, will help a leadership catalyst be more effective in creating a high-performing team and producing successful outcomes. As Schein emphasizes:

The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead. (2004, p. 23)

I worked for two years through an experience where an organizational culture managed me instead of me being more effective by tapping into its underlying assumptions and making them work for me.

In 2004, I was hired by the PBS Ready To Learn (RTL) program as Director of Professional Development. The Ready To Learn television service was a national effort to improve the school readiness of young children through the reach of public broadcasting. The organization comprised 14 staff members in the Washington, DC, headquarters and extended to 148 RTL Coordinators from PBS stations around the country that participated in the RTL program. My job was to train the RTL Coordinators, who provided outreach to the community by promoting the RTL service and teaching parents and educators how to use PBS broadcasting to prepare their children for school. The Senior Director of RTL hired me specifically to help bring in new technology and to innovate ways to improve the performance of the Coordinators in response to scrutiny by the Department of Education (ED), the provider of our grant funding.

Following my time at PBS, and as part of a class assignment in Dr. Virginia Vanderslice's *DYNM 661 Organizational Culture Change: Theory and Practice* course, I reflected on my PBS experience through the perspective that

organizations can have personalities just like individual people. I assessed the RTL organization through the lens of the MBTI—or, more specifically, the Organizational Character Index (OCI), developed by William Bridges, an organizational change consultant and author of *The Character of Organizations: Using Personality Type in Organization Development* (2000). In completing the assignment, I determined that the RTL headquarters was an ESTP organization (Extroverted, Sensing, Thinking, and Perceptive).

Extroverted organizations “during difficult times, will often bring in outsiders to provide new ideas or to help them evaluate or deal with whatever mess they are in.” (Bridges, 2000, p. 17) The Director’s hiring of me was an example of bringing in an outsider; I was more experienced in educational technology and leadership development than anyone else on her staff was at the time. However, when the next crisis came along, I had already been assimilated into the fold, so my inputs were not heeded until I brought in *another* outside consultant, who echoed the same recommendations and advice that I had been trying to institute. By that point, my “newness” in the organization had worn off, and I was simply another worker in the organization—one without the benefit of longevity in the organization to add weight to my inputs.

RTL was also a Sensing organization, “focused on the actualities of the situations encountered in their business...good with specifics and particulars...[and] innovation tends to be in the details rather than in the overall design” (Bridges, 2000, pp. 18-19). As a strong Intuitive (from the individual version of the MBTI), my nature is to come up with a number of ideas, present

them as possibilities, and then get a decision on which one to go after. My thinking is, *Why put in time working on an implementation plan, if it might not be selected as the project to go after?* At the time, I had not assessed the organization from a character perspective, so it did not occur to me that I should present my ideas in a way that resonated better with the Senior Director, whose behaviors greatly influenced the organization's characteristics. Numerous initiatives I had proposed—such as a leadership development process to improve Coordinators' results, promoting an increased sense of community through Web technology, using an online education and collaboration tool to help foster changes in the field, as well as other far-reaching suggestions—had been turned down. It was not until we discussed these issues at my outgoing performance review, that my Director and I finally realized she had been unable to see how the initiatives might work in the future, and I had not provided enough specifics when I presented them to her. Because she could not see a possible path to the results, she did not see them as viable projects—and certainly could not bring them up to ED as ideas for improving the program.

Had I been practicing being heretical, I would have been able to analyze the perspectives of the Department of Education, Ready To Learn, and PBS organizations and recognized their distinctly different “personalities.” I would have been able to consider additional possibilities for action, such as bringing the characteristics of the three organizations into the open so the conflicts could be dealt with consciously, rather than letting subconscious preferences interfere with the alignment of objectives. I would have also provided my Director more details

and a tentative plan of action for my proposals to help her get a better sense of what might be possible and to help her see how these innovations could be presented to ED for consideration. Because I did not have these insights, however, I was trying to swim against the current. I was unable to tap into the existing orthodoxy in a way that allowed my ideas to be heard. For a look at the broader cultural influences of the Department of Education on the PBS Ready to Learn group revealed in an assessment I performed, see Appendix E.

Had I known how to look at my organizations through different lenses, I would have had a better understanding of my role in the organization and how I could have identified different ways to present my ideas so that my messages would be better understood and accepted. Even if one method failed to connect, I would have had the ability to examine the organization for another possible path. Too many times, people give up trying to make a difference, become cynical, and disengage from the organization because they are unable to identify alternatives.

For a leadership catalyst, gaining the insight of being heretical means looking at the organization through numerous lenses to see not only the water you and everyone else in the organization are swimming in, but also the fishbowl. If you bump up against the “invisible” limitations often enough, you will get a clearer “map” of the boundaries. That is why being able to choose various lenses can be a valuable tool for the leadership catalyst. And it is something that can be learned, not an innate ability as many people might think. Gareth Morgan addresses this in his book, *Images of Organization*, where he discusses the use of metaphor (a more literary way to say lenses) to “generate deep

understandings of the nature of organizations and organizational life” (2006, p.

xi):

Effective managers and professionals in all walks of life have to become skilled in the art of “reading” the situations they are attempting to organize or manage.

This skill usually develops as an intuitive process, learned through experience and natural ability. Although at times a person may actually declare that he or she needs to “read what’s happening in a particular situation” or to “get a handle on a particular problem,” the process of reading and rereading often occurs at an almost subconscious level. For this reason it is often believed that effective managers and problem solvers are born rather than made and have a kind of magical power to understand and transform the situations they encounter.

If we take a closer look at the processes used, however, we find that this kind of mystique and power is often based on an ability to develop deep appreciation of the situations being addressed. Skilled leaders and managers develop the knack of reading situations with various scenarios in mind and of forging actions that seem appropriate to the understandings thus obtained.

They have a capacity to remain open and flexible, suspending immediate judgments whenever possible, until a more comprehensive view of the situation emerges. They are aware that new insights often arise as one approaches situations from “new angles” and that a wide and varied reading can create a wide and varied range of action possibilities. Less effective managers and problem solvers, however, seem to interpret everything from a fixed standpoint. As a result, they frequently hit blocks they cannot get around; their actions and behaviors are often rigid and inflexible. (2006, pp. 3-4)

One reason that being heretical is a powerful component of being a leadership catalyst is because of the power it provides to create different possibilities and openings for success. Morgan describes this organic process as taking effective readings of a situation:

Effective readings are *generative* [Morgan's emphasis]. They produce insights and actions that were not there before. They open new action opportunities. They make a difference.

The criteria for judging an effective reading are thus not objective. They are pragmatic...

Another important point that must be emphasized is that the process of reading a situation is always "two-way." In trying to discern the meaning of a situation, we create an interplay between the situation itself and the frames through which we are trying to tie it down...

In this sense the reader is also an author. He or she is not in a passive role. This is what makes the challenge of reading an organizational life so powerful. The manager truly does have an opportunity to shape how situations unfold. (2006, pp. 361-362)

Just as being mindful enables leadership catalysts to pause in the stimulus-response space and choose the source and direction of their subsequent actions—thus shifting from the automatic course that would have been preordained by a conditioned response—being heretical enables leadership catalysts to reflect on the interactions within their organizations and shape how the situation unfolds in a way that would not have been possible when following the original cultural "script."

Innovators 'R' Us

Being heretical means using out-of-the-box thinking. In my estimation, you cannot be a leadership catalyst if you are trapped by a "that's the way it's always been done" mentality. That kind of thinking inhibits creativity and innovation. Consider the Swiss watchmakers of the 1960s: They held about 68% of the world market for their highly accurate and finely made mechanical watches and enjoyed 90% of the profit in the watch trade. Then they invented the electronic

watch, but they did not patent or market it because they were convinced that the superiority of their mechanical watches made the electronic ones undesirable. As a result, the Swiss manufacturers ended up losing a large market share by the early 1980s, to the Japanese and others who capitalized on the innovation (Tajeddini & Trueman, 2008). If the Swiss manufacturers had more people being heretical, they might have maintained their dominance in the industry—with not only the mechanical watches but the electronic ones, as well.

In this way, being heretical can create openings for innovation, creativity, and flexibility. I believe that a leadership catalyst who is being heretical can create or discover opportunities for breakthrough, exponential, transformational changes, rather than relying on incremental changes that occur in an existing, business-as-usual orthodoxy. As Kleiner points out, this is the way that advancements are made:

“New truths,” wrote Thomas Huxley, “began as heresies.”⁴⁶ He was defending Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection. But the same principle is true today, in the world of management thinking. The most effective management ideas follow a life cycle—from heresy to outlier (championed by a small group of people) to ingrained practice to conventional wisdom. In the process, if they are genuinely powerful management ideas, they distinguish organizations that adopt them. (2008, p. 315)

Eat your Wheaties—the breakfast of champions

A final aspect of being heretical is being a champion for your people and your organization. Being heretical does not involve being contrary for contrariness’ sake or causing waves so as to be the center of attention or being obstructive just to foment hate and discontent. Being heretical means choosing—remembering the early Greek word *haíresis*, or the act of choosing, which *heresy*

is derived from—to use your power for good. It means being open to new possibilities and ideas as someone committed to creating a high-performing team, which enables leadership to flourish in others, and contributes to the success of the organization. Being heretical means taking a stand for people to be great and working to remove any obstacles or distractions that keep them from stepping in to their potential. It is tapping into and harnessing the power and talent of those around you and unleashing it for the common good of the team, the organization, and even the world.

The reason I include this in being heretical is that, in spite of Mary Parker Follet and Kleiner's heretics trying to change the world of management since the 1930s, it seems the concept of being a champion for your people is taking its time to sink into the consciousness of today's leaders. The fact that Robert Sutton, who followed up his 2007 best-selling book *The No Asshole Rule*, with another one in 2010 titled *Good Boss, Bad Boss: How to Be the Best...and Learn from the Worst* is evidence of the continued need. He states that:

The prevalence of asshole bosses is confirmed by careful studies. A 2007 Zogby survey of nearly eight thousand American adults found that, of those abused by workplace bullies (37% of respondents), 72% were bullied by superiors. Stories about the damage done by bully bosses are bolstered by systematic research. University of Florida researchers found that employees with abusive bosses were more likely than others to slow down or make errors on purpose (30% vs. 6%), hide from their bosses (27% vs. 4%), not put in maximum effort (33% vs. 9%), and take sick time when they weren't sick (29% vs. 4%). Abused employees were three times less likely to make suggestions or go out of their way to fix workplace problems. Abusive superiors also drive out employees: over 20 million Americans have left jobs to flee from workplace bullies, most of whom were bosses. (2010, p. 4)

Sutton does not say specifically that being a champion for your people is what good bosses do; that is my own way of summarizing the concept. He does suggest, however, a number of things good bosses do that are consistent with my intent. First, he says bosses “ought to be judged by what they and their people get done *and* by how their followers feel along the way...The best bosses balance performance and humanity, getting things done in ways that enhance rather than destroy dignity and pride” (2010, p. 38). In this way, leadership catalysts are still about achieving results, but achieving them in a positive, respectful, and empowering way with their people.

Another aspect is to make sure your people get the credit they deserve and more, for doing good work—and take the heat if they fall short.

Everyone wins if you can bring yourself to give your people as much credit as possible and take as little as possible. You get tons of credit anyway because you are the boss; your people will see you as more truthful, and you will be admired (especially by outsiders) for your modesty and generosity. (Sutton, 2010, p. 58)

While being a leadership catalyst is not necessarily about being admired “(especially by outsiders),” it is about appreciating, recognizing, and rewarding the people around you for their efforts toward a common—and hopefully inspiring—goal.

As for when people fail, leadership catalysts make sure that it is something to learn from rather than something with which to pummel people. A necessary ingredient for transformative change, Schein calls this *psychological safety*, “in the sense of being able to see a possibility of solving the problem and learning something new without loss of identity or integrity [or membership, as discussed

in being intentional]” (2004, p. 320). “Psychological safety is the key to creating a workplace where people can be confident enough to act without undue fear of being ridiculed, punished, or fired—and be humble enough to openly doubt what is believed and done” (Sutton, 2010, p. 74).

Sutton presents three kinds of reactions to failure (2010, pp. 77-78):

1. “Do it right the first time or don’t do it”—remember, blame, humiliate, and possibly get rid of the person
2. “Forgive and forget”—what benevolent but incompetent bosses do
3. “Forgive and remember”—what good bosses do who create safety and accountability

The last one, No. 3, is the way of the leadership catalyst. It combines being mindful, Connected, Intentional, and Heretical—*Mindful* because it requires remembering that people typically do not screw up on purpose, *Connected* because it honors the relationship between people, *Intentional* because remembering means it will be used as an opportunity for learning, and *Heretical* because forgiveness often runs counter to the established norms of the workplace.

The last aspect of being heretical by being a champion for your people is to be a safety screen for them. Do what you can to let your people do what they do best. Sutton says “serve as a human shield:”

The best bosses let the workers do their work. They protect their people from red tape, meddlesome executives, nosy visitors, unnecessary meetings, and a host of other insults, intrusions, and time wasters. The notion that management “buffers” the core work of the organization from uncertainty and external perturbations is an old theme in organization theory. A good boss takes pride in serving as a human shield, absorbing

and deflecting heat from superiors and customers, doing all manner of boring and silly tasks, and battling back against every idiot and slight that makes life unfair or harder than necessary on his or her charges. (2010, p. 154)

Although I did not step intentionally into such a role—because I had not yet made the distinction of being heretical and being a champion for my people—I did serve in this capacity while in my last sea tour as a naval officer. I was assigned to an Amphibious Squadron as an adjunct member of the Commodore's staff, in charge of the units that handled the logistics of moving marines and supplies from ships to shore during an amphibious assault. Although I was the officer in charge of the assets of four separate organizations spread out across the battle group, I coordinated their activities from the command ship. I was not permanently assigned to the Commodore, but I reported to him for the duration of the six-month cruise and for a number of weeks prior to deployment while we trained and completed our readiness to deploy.

This was to be my last tour in the Navy, so I was entering into it without the worry about how political fallout from my leadership choices would help or hurt my chances of promotion. As such, I found myself in a unique and very freeing situation: there was nothing I could do—short of breaking some very expensive equipment or getting someone hurt—that would be detrimental from a career perspective. Moreover, this was a temporary assignment for me because I would be reassigned back to my parent command after the deployment. This meant I had more freedom than my colleagues to speak my mind and to act as a devil's advocate against less-than-optimal policies and as a shield for some of my fellow

officers on the Commodore's staff who did not have the luxury of bucking the orthodoxy of the organization. I was free to be heretical.

Unless you are a leadership catalyst with a solid understanding of being heretical, you can only be in this position under two circumstances: you are the Golden Boy or Girl of the organization—and thus can do no wrong in the eyes of the boss—or you have nothing more to lose. I was in the latter situation. As I said, I did not become heretical with aforethought—it was a role I found myself in as I and my colleagues chafed under policies that were not ideal. I saw a better vision for the command, and I passed my ideas up the chain.

At first, the Commodore and Chief Staff Officer (CSO) saw me as somewhat of a thorn in their sides because I kept highlighting areas for improvement. I did not point out a problem, however, without also providing a possible solution. My ideas were well thought out, and I presented them properly and in a respectful manner—consistent with the existing rules of the organization. The effect of that work made a substantial difference in the way business was run during that six-month deployment. As an independent officer assigned by another command, I also had a bit more flexibility in my work than the other officers working directly for the Commodore. This meant I was able to help other officers on the staff when they got swamped or needed assistance dealing with a problem. I could play shortstop and help cover the other bases—to use a baseball analogy.

The first time I exercised my heretical powers was in the first week after leaving port. Typically, the time spent crossing the ocean is focused on training and making sure people are qualified for various watch stations (collateral jobs

that help run the operational activities of the squadron). The transit is supposed to have a relatively relaxed rotational schedule because once the ship arrives on station in the theater of operations, the crew is on a higher alert status and there are more positions to fill. That schedule is tough enough to sustain while on station that it does not make sense to fatigue your people before you even get over there.

In this case, the young officers on the staff were standing a three-section watch rotation—meaning that they spent eight hours in a 24-hour period at their collateral duty position *in addition to* their normal workday. To make matters worse, some of the senior enlisted crewmembers on the commodore's staff were joking about how easy they had it because they were not included on the watch rotation schedule—even though they should have been.

In looking at who was qualified for the various watch positions and who was available to get qualified quickly, I prepared a plan for a five-section watch rotation. This would mean that each watch stander would only have four hours of watch each day added to their normal duties. This would allow plenty of on-the-job training for them to qualify to stand their positions alone and to arrive on station ready and alert for a heightened threat level. I submitted my proposal to the CSO, who compromised to approve a four-section watch, and I was heralded by my colleagues as a hero for bucking the system.

On another occasion, one of the young officers on the staff requested a week of leave time to visit his girlfriend in Ireland. Taking leave while on deployment is rarely approved unless for an extreme emergency back home. Because I offered

to take on his duties in addition to mine while he was gone, however, the Commodore allowed him his leave. Now in the world of dog-eat-dog Surface Warfare, which is the community we belonged to, officers simply did not do this kind of thing for one another. There was too much chance for the Good Samaritan to get burned in this sort of situation, and it was common knowledge that NAVY stands for “never again volunteer yourself.” Nevertheless, I had adopted a heretical perspective at this point and was in a unique position to help because I had previously served in the same capacity as this officer. I volunteered to take on his duties and place myself under even more scrutiny of the temperamental and critical Commodore (who was definitely not a leadership catalyst).

While my relationship with the Commodore started out on rocky ground, by the end of the tour I had won him over, and he recognized me for standing up for the success of the command and all of the officers I worked with. Even though I would soon be leaving the service, and it was common for a commander not to “waste” any award quotas on a soon-to-be-civilian, the Commodore presented me with a Navy Achievement Medal for my commitment to excellence.

As a heretic, I was able to be loyal to a better way of doing business while still being loyal to the organization. Additionally, I was able to be a champion for the other officers by being a voice of reason on their behalf to the powers-that-be, in addition to being able to take some of the heat off them. Granted, I was in a nothing-to-lose position and could take actions I would not have considered taking before, but the lesson here is that just imagining yourself in the position of

having nothing to lose could open your eyes to new possibilities for action that would not have been visible otherwise. Once you have come up with those innovative ideas, then you can weigh whether the consequences of bucking organizational norms are worth the heresy. Being heretical is about making it a practice to look for different perspectives that can provide more choices of action.

Chapter summary

Being heretical means being able to see a truth that contradicts the conventional wisdom of the organization and remaining loyal to both that truth and the organization. It also means being a champion for your people and helping clear the way for them to be great, while still being able to give them hard truths about their performance and behaviors, when necessary. To be heretical, leadership catalysts need to know their organization at a deeper level than most people ever get to know an organization. Using different metaphors, or lenses, leadership catalysts learn how to critically assess the organization and reveal theretofore unseen patterns, relationships, and practices—aspects of corporate culture or norms that would not have otherwise been examined and distinguished. This allows leadership catalysts to manage the organizational culture rather than be unwittingly managed by the culture. By being a safety shield for their people—while still being able to provide negative performance feedback in a respectful and supportive manner—leadership catalysts can inspire in workers who were less engaged than they could be, a renewed vigor and determination to improve.. Being heretical helps leadership catalysts be more creative, innovative, and influential within the organization and with people.

CHAPTER 9

BEING A CAUSE FOR LEADERSHIP IN OTHERS

Catalytic conversion

The idea that a good leader is a catalyst for other leaders came to me early in my civilian career. I was reflecting on my experience of leaders in the Navy and playing around with the idea that they could be divided into three categories:

1. the charismatic leader who leads from the front and who capitalizes on the force of his personality, always making sure the torch he is holding aloft keeps the spotlight squarely on him, only caring about the next landmark on the horizon and unaware—or uncaring—of the people falling to the wayside behind him as they try to keep pace with the frequent course changes based on the leader's latest whims
2. the task-master who leads from the back, kicking and whipping the workers in front of him to keep them moving and producing, focused only on making the numbers at any cost and not seeing—or caring — about the toll he is taking on the workers as they drop to the ground in exhaustion or fear; essentially tossing them away and replacing them with more bodies, concerned only with whether they can fog a mirror with their breath
3. the leader from the middle, who is in the mix with the workers, experiencing what they experience, appreciating them for their hard work because they are all working toward a common goal,

encouraging others around him to step into being leaders too, sharing lessons and ideas and capitalizing on the exponential effect as each new leader creates more new leaders, all pulling in the same direction, moving faster and faster as a result of more efficient and productive behaviors, aware of and caring that everyone is brought along and are all benefitting from the success of the organization

I liked the idea of the leader behind Door #3⁴⁷. I had known a few leaders like that in the Navy, though they seemed rare. We needed leaders who were—and this is where my college chemistry course paid off—catalysts for creating other leaders. These leaders positively influence, inspire, or in some way help others become even better performers and leaders in turn. Thus, the name *leadership catalysts*.

In his book, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, Stephen Covey helps me make my case for a leader being a catalyst:

The goal of transformational leadership is to “transform” people and organizations in a literal sense—to change them in mind and heart; enlarge vision, insight, and understanding; clarify purposes; make behavior congruent with beliefs, principles, or values; and bring about changes that are permanent, self-perpetuating, and momentum-building.

I am personally convinced that one person can be a change catalyst, a “transformer,” in any situation, and organization. Such an individual is yeast that can leaven an entire loaf. It requires vision, initiative, patience, respect, persistence, courage, and faith to be a transforming leader. (1991, p. 287)

Covey states that a catalyst helps transform people and organizations. In my view, this is what good leaders should do—be catalysts who help transform the people around them into leaders and performers, whether it is by personally

mentoring and developing people or by setting the example or by creating an environment for leadership to flourish simply by being who they are being. Being a leadership catalyst means that you have a positive effect on the people and organizations you work with. Just like a national park, the idea is to leave them better off than you found them.

John Maxwell has his own take on the value of a catalyst. In his book, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork: Embrace Them and Empower Your Team*, he talks about how necessary it is to have leadership catalysts in an organization:

Most teams don't naturally get better on their own. Left alone, they don't grow, improve, and reach championship caliber. Instead, they tend to wind down. The road to the next level is always uphill, and if a team isn't intentionally fighting to move up, then it inevitably slides down. The team loses focus, gets out of rhythm, decreases in energy, breaks down in unity, and loses momentum. At some point, it also loses key players. And it's only a matter of time before it plateaus and ultimately declines into mediocrity. That's why a team that reaches its potential always possesses a catalyst. (2001, p. 73)

I do not necessarily agree with Maxwell that teams cannot get better on their own without a leadership catalyst, but I would suggest that the path to a championship-caliber team is longer and more arduous without one. Just as a chemical catalyst reduces the amount of energy needed to transform Material A into Material B, a leadership catalyst reduces the effort it takes for a person or team to transform from one having leadership-and-performance Ability A to one having leadership-and-performance Ability B. Figure 18 shows the potential-energy curve of a chemical reaction. As the reaction progresses, a certain amount of energy—activation energy—is needed to transform reactants into products:

The activation energy represents the minimum amount of energy required to transform reactants into products in a chemical reaction. The value of the activation energy is equivalent to the difference in potential energy between particles in an intermediate configuration (known as the transition state, or activated complex) and particles of reactants in their initial state. The activation energy thus can be visualized as a barrier that must be overcome by reactants before products can be formed. ("energy transition states," 2011)

Figure 18. Potential-energy curve of a chemical reaction

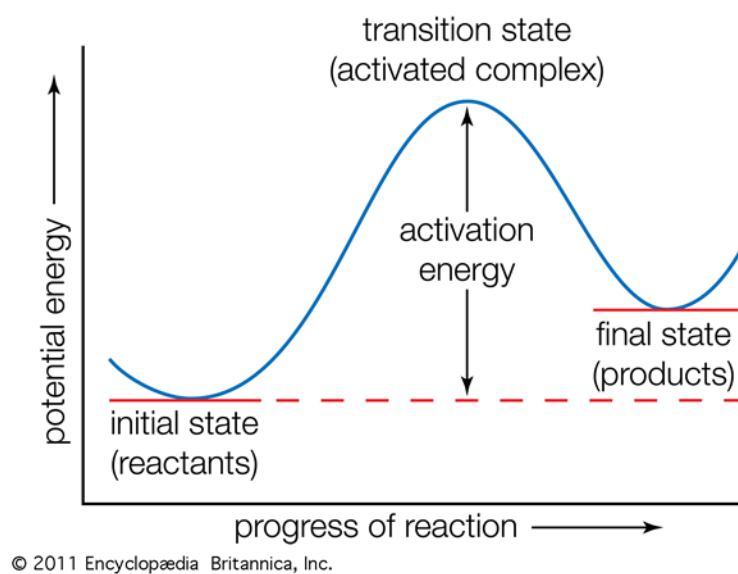
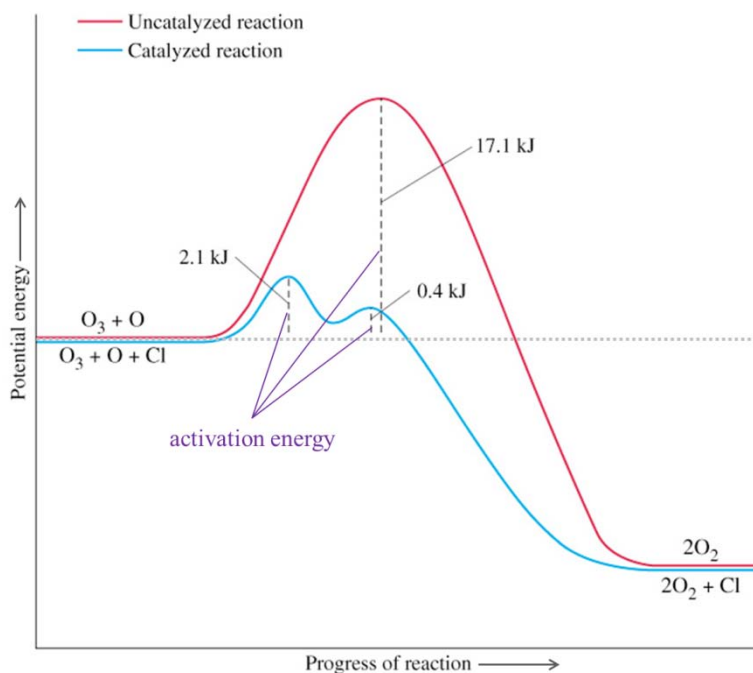


Figure 19 demonstrates the remarkable effect that a catalyst can achieve in a chemical reaction (Kent, 2011). In this example, ozone (O_3) reacts with a single oxygen atom (O) to form two molecules of regular oxygen molecules (2O_2), which takes 17.1 kJ (kilojoules) of energy to accomplish. When a catalyst such as chlorine (Cl) is introduced to the mix, the same two molecules of O_2 are produced (plus the original chlorine)—but with only 2.5 kJ of activation energy needed. This is an 85% decrease in the energy needed to create the same product, due to the presence of the catalyst.

Figure 19. The effect of a catalyst on a chemical reaction

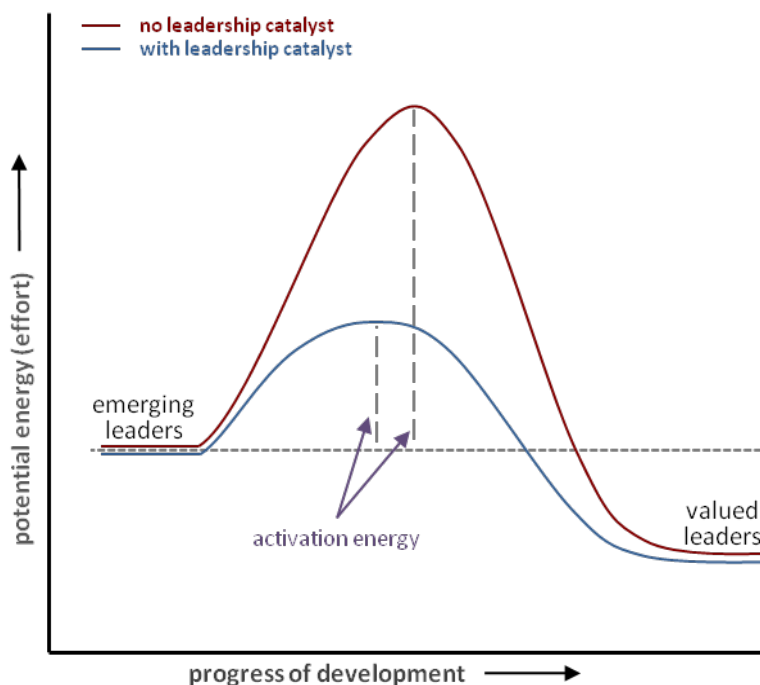


In a similar fashion, I propose that leadership catalysts create a shorter path—lowering the “barrier”—on the potential-energy “curve” of the leadership development process, as demonstrated in Figure 20. They do this by making it easier for people to take on more positive, effective, and productive behaviors. This facilitation can be active or passive, but the more active a leadership catalyst is in developing these abilities and behaviors in others—via personal mentoring, coaching, developing, teaching, etc.—the more the activation energy to create other leaders is reduced.

Tuning in to others

Even a less “active” leadership catalyst will decrease the activation energy for leadership to develop in others simply because of who they are being—just like

Figure 20. The effect of a catalyst on leadership development



the mere presence of chlorine lowers the activation energy of the ozone-to-oxygen process in Figure 15 on page 119. This occurs, albeit less dramatically than an active approach, perhaps because of how our brains are wired for social interaction and survival. In his paper, “Mirror Neurons, Embodied Simulation, and the Neural Basis of Social Identification,” Gallese describes the neural influence on how we relate to others through *embodied simulation* and *intentional attunement*:

Anytime we meet someone, we are implicitly aware of his or her similarity to us, because we literally embody it. The very same neural substrate activated when actions are executed or emotions and sensations are subjectively experienced, is also activated when the same actions, emotions, and sensations are executed or experienced by others. A common underlying functional mechanism—embodied simulation—mediates our capacity to share the meaning of actions, intentions,

feelings, and emotions with others, thus grounding our identification with and connectedness to others....

A direct form of understanding of others from within, as it were—intentional attunement—is achieved by the activation of neural systems underpinning what we and others do and feel. Parallel to the detached third-person sensory description of the observed social stimuli, internal nonlinguistic “representations” of the body-states associated with actions, emotions, and sensations are evoked in the observer, as if he or she were performing a similar action or experiencing a similar emotion or sensation. (2009, p. 524)

These mechanisms in the brain handle how we learn by watching and being around others. “Watching someone grasping a cup of coffee, biting an apple, or kicking a football activates the same neurons of our brain that would fire if we were doing the same” (Gallese, 2009, p. 522). Pretend you have never seen baseball being played, and you first watch someone pick up a bat and swing it at a pitched ball. Because of these neural structures, you will be able to recognize most of what you need to do to swing at a pitched ball, and the appropriate neurons will be firing in your brain as if you were doing it. This enables you to then pick up a bat yourself and have an understanding of what your muscles need to do to swing at the ball.

Various brain mechanisms also interpret the intentions of others by their actions, behaviors, and words. This part of the brain assigns motives, thoughts, and intentions to the people around us, allowing us to sense why they are doing what they are doing. This is one of the sources for being able to empathize with others. We can recognize what they must be going through, emotionally and physically, and actually feel a bit of the same emotions and sensations because our neurons are firing in a similar matter to the person we are observing. (This is

why all the men watching a baseball game cringe and reflexively protect themselves when they watch a player get hit in the jimmies by a ground ball that takes an unfortunate bounce.) Heatherton, in “Neuroscience of Self and Self-Regulation,” refers to this capacity for empathy and tuning in to others as *mentalizing*:

One of the most important attributes of the social brain is the ability to infer the mental states of others in order to predict their actions (Amodio & Frith 2006, Gallagher & Frith 2003, Mitchell 2006). In addition to recognizing our own mental states, living harmoniously in social groups requires that we be able to interpret the emotional and mental states of others (Heatherton & Krendl 2009). For example, social emotions require that we be able to draw inferences about the emotional states of others (even if those inferences are inaccurate). For instance, to feel guilty about hurting a loved one, people need to understand that other people have feelings (Baumeister et al. 1994b). Similarly, interpersonal distress results from knowing that people are evaluating you (thereby giving rise to emotions such as embarrassment), which at its core means recognizing that other people make evaluative judgments. The ability to infer the mental states of others is commonly referred to as mentalizing or having the capacity for theory of mind (ToM). ToM enables individuals to empathize and cooperate with others, accurately interpret other people’s behavior, and even deceive others when necessary. (Heatherton, 2011, pp. 370-371)

This neural functioning is why we can be positively—or even negatively—
influenced by another person simply by being in the same room. Think of a
person who was a positive influence in your life and the behaviors they modeled
or the “vibes” they put out. Anytime you picked up insights or adopted some of
their behaviors for yourself, based on the example they provided, you were
influenced simply by who that person was being. If that person took a more
active role in developing or teaching you, it probably had an even more
pronounced effect on your behavior and performance. Leadership catalysts can
have this same effect on the people around them. Because they are being

mindful, connected, intentional, generative, and heretical, they provide a new paradigm of behaviors for people to mentalize, causing a resultant change in behavior. Leadership catalysts, in who they are being, exemplify improved leadership and performance behaviors with which others begin to attune and resonate.

Force multipliers create leadership in depth

Leadership catalysts become force multipliers, increasing the abilities and performance of others simply by being a part of the group. Add to that the intentional development of others, and leadership catalysts can make a marked difference in the performance level of their teams and produce additional leaders who also become leadership catalysts in their own right. In this way, organizations that take on developing their people to become leadership catalysts can see exponential returns on their investment as each leadership catalyst generates the other people stepping into increased roles of leadership. David Day and Stanley Halpin, two researchers from the U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, noted in their review of leadership development best practices that:

There is an increasing awareness that leadership is not the sole property of those in top management positions. Leadership capacity is found everywhere and at all levels. For this reason, leadership development efforts should be orchestrated systemically throughout an organization. An important lesson learned...however, is that whereas leadership potential may be everywhere, not every person is prepared to take on formal leadership responsibilities. For this reason, greater efforts should be made to enhance informal leadership capacity through development processes. One means of bringing this about is to make individuals more aware of their role in the leadership process and better prepared to participate in leadership. This is a shift away from thinking about leadership as the

behavior of a solitary individual to an understanding of leadership as something people do together (Drath & Palus, 1994). This shift requires a very different way of thinking about leadership on the part of those responsible for bringing it about in organizations. (Day & Halpin, 2001, p. 48)

Even if a person is not in charge of other people, increased personal leadership translates into better performance. Creating leadership in depth is like having a strong bench on a sporting team—you have better performers at every level. Not only does this help the organization realize better results overall, but it also helps in the succession of organizational leadership as people move up or out of the organization.

In the words of Maxwell, this is how teams—and organizations—reach champion caliber.

Chapter summary

Most teams do not get better when left to their own devices. It takes the presence of some kind of transformative substance—in this case a leadership catalyst. Just as a catalyst in a chemical process reduces the amount of energy required for the original substances to react together and become something more than they were, a leadership catalyst reduces the “developmental” energy required for others to become better leaders and performers. Even if leadership catalysts are not in a position to directly and actively develop new leaders, they can still have a positive effect because of the behaviors they model. Not only do effective and productive behaviors get noticed and copied by the Rider (à la Chip and Dan Heath) of the person working with a leadership catalyst, but their Elephant finds it easier to walk alongside the leadership catalyst, as well. Looking

at the analogy from the perspective of the brain, leadership catalysts' behaviors and actions can cause mirror neurons to fire in the brains of the people around them, creating and strengthening new neural pathways that make using those same behaviors easier and increasingly intentional.

CHAPTER 10

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP CATALYSTS

Overview

Training and development is a \$53.6 billion-a-year industry in the United States according to *Training* magazine, which has published a report on the training industry every year for the last 29 years⁴⁸ ("2007 Training Industry Report," 2007; "2008 Training Industry Report," 2008; "2009 Training Industry Report," 2009; "2010 Training Industry Report,"). In 2007, the magazine highlighted the spending on leadership development, in particular:

Leadership development, which includes both management/supervisory training and executive development, is a \$12 billion industry, including internal and external spending....

Management and supervisory training receives a great deal of funding due, in part, to the aging of the workforce. With large numbers of retirements looming, companies are focused on succession planning. The combined leadership training and development category...captures 21 percent of training dollars, *the single largest category*. This underscores the critical nature of this program area, as organizations realize they must invest heavily to fuel their leadership pipelines....

Managers receive 26 percent of the resources. And although executives represent a tiny fraction of the overall workforce, they receive 10 percent of training dollars. This again illustrates that organizations are willing to spend an extraordinarily high proportion of their budgets on training their current and next generation of leaders. ("2007 Training Industry Report," 2007, pp. 11-12, 14)

Aside from the challenge of succession planning, organizations have plenty of incentive to invest in leadership development just in trying to recoup some of the \$300 billion in increased productivity available by fostering more engaged

employees (Wagner & Harter, 2006, p. 206 [location 2507 of 2883 on Kindle]).

These numbers certainly demonstrate that organizations are—and should be—interested in improving leadership performance, but leaders are still falling short and employees are still disengaged. Gallup researchers Wagner and Harter share anecdotes that illustrate how organizations are just not making the connection:

In a seminar Gallup conducted for a regional bank, the middle managers in attendance were asked to write a speech to a hypothetical group of honor students extolling the virtues of the company in hopes of attracting them to join. The speeches were what one would expect: boilerplate language about the prominence of the company, chances for advancement, and the generous benefits package. After the managers had delivered these addresses to their classmates, they were challenged with a question one of these honor students might ask: “If I join your bank, can you assure me I’ll have a really good manager?” The room fell silent. They looked around and shrugged. For all the grand oration they just completed, these leaders had to admit they could not guarantee this most basic benefit to a new recruit.

Casually ask “Who’s ripping off the company?” at an evening reception and you will get puzzled stares. “No one that I know of,” they respond. Ask “Who in this company is a lousy manager?” and the stories just keep coming. Just as people will admit to being bad at math much more than they will admit illiteracy, business tolerates interpersonal incompetence where it would never allow financial malfeasance. And yet, barring a few headline-making examples of high-level fraud, companies lose far more to employee disengagement than they lost to theft. (2006, pp. 205 [location 2498-2503 of 2883 on Kindle])

So what does it take to develop effective leaders? First, acknowledge that leaders in the organization have tremendous influence on the disenfranchisement of the organization’s employees. Turning a blind eye to poor leaders and ignoring the detrimental effect they have to the bottom line qualifies as one of those nasty little items that appear on the S.H.I.T Lists of numerous

organizations. Second, adopt a consistent leadership philosophy or model for the organization. This will allow the organization to rally behind a common message and vision for how employees are truly valued, provide a set of guiding principles for dealing with leadership challenges, and serve as a standard against which leaders can be held accountable. Finally, institute an effective leadership development strategy to create Leadership in Depth in the organization. Not only will developing the leadership abilities of employees at all levels of the organization foster more employee engagement and contribute to productivity, but it will also address the challenges of an aging workforce and succession planning. Like when a sports team has a deep bench of talent that they can bring to bear late in the game, an organization that has a deep leadership “bench” can bring more intention, innovation, and inspiration to bear on achieving the organization's goals.

My leadership catalyst model can provide a solution to the first two steps. It can be a vehicle for bringing into the open the conversation about what being a good leader means in the organization. It is also a framework that helps leaders address the myriad challenges that occur when an organization is taking on big goals. This leaves leadership development.

Goleman et al describes the challenge of improving leadership because of how we typically learn to be leaders:

For the most part, the brain masters the competencies of leadership—everything from self-confidence and emotional self-management to empathy and persuasion—through implicit learning. You'll recall that implicit learning occurs not in the topmost layers of the neocortex—the thinking brain—but rather toward the bottom of the brain in the basal ganglia. In the case of leadership, that learning occurs presumably

through connections to the prefrontal limbic circuits of emotional intelligence.⁴⁹ This primitive section of the brain picks up and masters the habits we constantly rely on, continually learning how to perform the basic tasks of our lives—everything from stringing a sentence together to running an effective meeting. (2004, p. 155)

Because of the automatic strengthening of these habits through implicit learning, it can take months—not days—to improve leadership abilities:

...because the emotional centers of the brain are involved—not just the neocortex, the thinking brain where technical skills and purely cognitive abilities are learned. As we've mentioned before, the neocortex learns very quickly, even on a first hearing. But the basal ganglia and its links to the emotional centers learn differently: To master a new skill, they need repetition and practice.⁵⁰

That's why it's hard to learn leadership abilities effectively in a classroom [meaning explicit learning]. A teacher can't instruct your brain circuits that carry old habits of leadership to relearn new habits. What's needed is practice: The more often a behavior's sequence repeats, the stronger the underlying brain circuits become. People thereby literally rewire their brains: Learning new habits strengthens pathways between neurons, and may even foster neurogenesis—growth of new neurons.⁵¹ (2004, p. 156)

It is clear that becoming a good leader rarely happens by accident. Very few people practice good leadership behaviors without having done some kind of reflection, observation, or study of what makes a good leader. As Goleman et al propose, some intentionality is required. Just reading the model, agreeing that it makes sense, and deciding it could work is not enough. It is a bit like the old riddle: *Six frogs sat on a lily pad. One decided to jump off. How many were left?*

John Assaraf and Murray Smith, authors of *The Answer: Grow Any Business, Achieve Financial Freedom, and Live an Extraordinary Life* share their answer to the riddle this way:

If you answered “five,” congratulations! Your capacity for analytical reasoning is in good shape. Unfortunately, that is not the correct answer. The correct answer is “six.”

That’s right: *All six* frogs are still sitting on that lily pad. Why? Because one only *decided* to jump off—he didn’t actually do any jumping.

This is exactly our grand fallacy. We think that because we have imagined something, understood something, figured something out, planned something, decided something, it’s a foregone conclusion that we are going to do that something. But in most cases, we don’t.

Because we so strongly tend to identify with our conscious thoughts, we naturally tend to think of our conscious thoughts as “me.” We assume it is our conscious mind that is calling the shots, the one that is at the controls, that is in charge of what we actually do. But it’s simply not true. In fact, the amazing thing is that we keep thinking this despite the wealth of evidence to the contrary! (2008, p. 45)

This is why an effective development process is integral to people becoming leadership catalysts. It ensures an understanding of the model on a conscious level but also integrates the concepts at a subconscious one so that the ideas for how to be a leadership catalyst become habits of thought and behaviors.

People have to put these concepts into practice to rewire their brains and create new solid neural pathways. They need to make the effort of *being* a leadership catalyst. That is where a good development process comes in: to clarify concepts for better understanding, help integrate the concepts with the learner’s own experiences, help them see how they can apply the concepts to their own lives, and guide them in changing and applying new behaviors to be consistent with what they learn. The goal is to give them new, positive, effective behaviors that they will continue to use on their own long after they have left the classroom.

I think we have all had the experience, too many times, of attending training sessions and workshops where we had a great time, learned some new ideas about how to be more effective, and left the course high-fiving our instructors and fellow participants, excited to return to our places of work and start applying them. Then we get back to our offices on Monday morning to find the inertia of business-as-usual impeding any positive changes. We may try to implement our new ideas in the way we work, but too often, we find that it is just easier to go along to get along and we return to our old ways of being. From an organizational perspective, this means the return on investment for the training is low to nil. From an individual perspective, this can introduce resignation, disengagement, and even cynicism—and there is a reason none of these dwarves were invited to Snow White’s party. Organizations and individuals need to look at development through a new lens.

KASH is the root of all...development

One of the distinctions I like to use to get organizations to change their perspective about leadership development is one I call the KASH box (Rintzler & Brown, 2002). As Figure 21⁵² shows, the left side of the box stands for *knowledge* and *skills*. These can be thought of as “knowing what to do” and “how to do it.” I propose that these two areas are where organizations spend most of their training and development money. Knowledge and skills are certainly the areas that most hiring is based on: a résumé simply represents the applicable skills and knowledge that a candidate possesses.

Figure 21. KASH model for performance improvement



The right side of the KASH box stands for *attitudes* and *habits*. These are “wanting and being willing to do it” and “doing it consistently.” As in the Gallup anecdotes earlier, organizations seem to be blind to the importance of this side of the box and do not spend very much time or resources here. But if you think about it, what qualities do most supervisors and managers spend their time addressing with the members of their teams? It is not usually knowledge and skills, because these are relatively easy to handle with some kind of training. It is a deficiency in a person’s attitudes and habits that usually takes up a leader’s time and efforts—and the reason most people are fired.

The ideal, then, for any developmental process, is to not only transfer knowledge and develop skills, but to also produce positive behavior change. Participants should come away from training ready to create practices that become self-sustaining and habits of thought. Their experience of the process should have them high-fiving the instructors and their fellow participants, excited to get back to work to start applying what they learned—and when returning to

the office, seeing their work and relationships through new eyes, able to behave in new ways. Their development experience should give them some practice in applying what they have learned to the situations in which they will find themselves. The experience should help them well on the way to internalizing what they learn so that they cannot help but start behaving in new ways. Not only should they have gained new knowledge and know where and when to apply it, but they should also be excited and intentional about how they are going to apply it.

A good developmental process covers all four quadrants of the KASH box. It facilitates learning, instigates behavior change, and assists in putting new practices into place. Appendix F provides the outline of my training process to develop leadership catalysts, incorporating these three key components:

- Experiential learning
- Spaced repetition
- Journaling, storytelling, and narratives

The best teacher? Prof. E.X. Perience

To make a difference and ensure that new information sticks, learning has to be experienced. This means that training and development should be experiential:

Strong leadership development processes are focused on emotional *and* intellectual learning, and they build on active, participatory work: action learning and coaching, where people use what they're learning to diagnose and solve real problems in their organizations. They rely on experiential learning and on team-based simulations, where people engage in structured activity that they can use to examine their own, and others' behaviors. Exemplary processes are multifaceted, using a bold

mixture of learning techniques; they are conducted over a period of time; and they take the culture head on. (Goleman et al., 2004, p. 234)

Research shows that experiential training is more in tune with the way our brains process and retain information—because it helps us focus our attention and internalize the concepts—resulting in learning that is more effective. In the 2010 *NeuroLeadership Journal*, Davachi, Kiefer, Rock, and Rock discuss the elements that lead to optimizing the formation of memory:

For the hippocampus to activate sufficiently for learning to occur, the learner needs to be paying full attention to the topic being learned....

In order to pay close attention to something, the brain needs just the right amount of two important neurochemicals called catecholamines—specifically dopamine and norepinephrine, placed at huge numbers of synapses (Vijayraghavan, Wang, Birnbaum, Williams, & Arnsten, 2007). Dopamine is involved in a feeling of reward, of relevance, and is also released through novelty. It is released in the “toward” state (Rock, 2008), when we are open, curious, in a goal-focused state, and/or working to gain something.

To increase dopamine levels in a learning situation the content needs to be relevant, i.e. the learner needs to see the value (e.g. potential reward) of focusing attention on the content. One way to do this is by making learning situations as “real” and “personal” as possible, such as with the use of advanced simulations....

Varying learning techniques provides additional novelty that can help raise dopamine levels to keep the learner’s attention in the learning environment. For example, the presentation of information can be mixed with group discussions, role-playing, or scenario planning....

We need good amounts, but not too much, of both these “chemistries” for good attention to be paid. Good learning states involve paying close attention to something relevant and interesting, with enough of a challenge to keep our attention. Both elements need to go hand-in-hand to allow the optimum level of attention. If an optimum attention level cannot be generated, the hippocampus will not fire sufficiently for memory encoding to occur. In short, making learning easy to digest, through chunking, visuals, and stories, and making it interesting and engaging are critical for optimizing retrieval of information. (2010, pp. 54-55)

The more active a role people take in their learning, the deeper the learning of the lessons. A brief example of an experiential learning activity is one I call “The Jukebox Exercise.” If you recall in Chapter 3: Being Mindful, I talk about having a jukebox relationship with someone. This is a relationship where the other person knows just how to push your buttons, and you play the same (discordant) song every time. In this activity, I give people a few minutes to reflect on a personal jukebox relationship. I then direct the participants to write down who that person is, what that person does to get their goat, and the behaviors that they typically exhibit when that person does what they invariably do. Next, I split the participants into pairs to each share with the other their jukebox person stories. Then I have the participants write down three different ways they can respond to the other person’s stimulus—ways that are positive and more consistent with their better selves—recommending that they enlist the help of their partner. Finally, I have the pairs practice “playing the jukebox.” One person acts out the antagonist’s part and the other person practices their new behaviors, repeating each one a few times to smooth their delivery before switching roles and letting the other person practice his or her new behaviors. This experiential exercise immediately starts creating new pathways in the participants’ brains, creating new neurons and pathways that tie the “stimulus-neurons” to the neurons of the new behaviors. The next time the participants interact with their jukebox partners, they will be more able to play a different “song” when the stimulus jukebox button is pushed—one that may very well change the dynamics of the relationship for the better.

Spaced repetition....I repeat, spaced repetition

Complete this phrase: *two all-beef patties, special sauce...*

If you are able to do it, then you have just experienced the power of spaced repetition. If you do not recognize it, it is probably because you are not old enough to have heard the start of this McDonald's Big Mac jingle that aired in TV and radio commercials from 1974 to 1976. The rest of the lyric is ...*lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun*. I typed all of that from memory because it is still hard-wired in my neurons from seeing and hearing the commercials when I was a kid. A few other good examples from my generation are the Mickey Mouse Club theme and the Oscar Meyer Weiner song. These jingles are evidence that advertising has been capitalizing on the benefits of spaced repetition for decades.

It has been known for some time that distributing learning over time is better than cramming learning into one long study session (Crowder, 1976). Massing, defined as large blocks of learning in short periods of time, increases short-term performance, which guides learners to rate the learning impact of massing as superior to spacing (Baddeley & Longman, 1978; Kornell & Bjork, 2008; Simon & Bjork, 2001; Zechmeister & Shaughnessy, 1980). However, distributing learning over time leads to better long-term memory, which is the ultimate aim of organizational learning.

Spacing information over time leads to higher retrieval rates of new information and seems to build stronger long-term memory (Litman & Davachi, 2008)....

In addition to the "active part" of the learning, spacing allows the brain to further digest new content and over time build and wire new connections, even when learners are at rest. (Spitzer, 2002; Tambini, Ketz, & Davachi, 2010) Spacing enhances memory performance and the rate of forgetting drops due to enhanced hippocampally mediated memory consolidation (Litman & Davachi, 2008). (Davachi et al., 2010, pp. 58-59)

I once stayed up all night studying for a “Probabilities and Statistics” final exam that I needed to get a C on to pass the class. I actually “learned” enough to score a B, but I do not remember much of the material—not even a few days later. When I was teaching leadership classes, however, I taught the same material to three different sections each week, after participating in my own experience of the class as part of my weekly instructor training. The learning format for our courses involved open discussions on the topics, video clips of movie scenes to illustrate various concepts, and exercises that enabled the midshipmen to put into practice what they learned. And there was a semester-long counseling project that walked each student through a leadership development process for their underclass fire team members, that was graded. Not only did the midshipmen learn about leadership in the classroom, via various experiential processes, they went back to their dormitory and practiced leadership every day. There was no cramming for tests—we were all living what we were learning (and teaching).

A good story is worth a lot of learning

One of the best ways to internalize new learning is to make it your own. When we mull over a new idea, compare it to what we already know, and talk about it with others, we generate more associations in the brain for that information. We learn it at a deeper level:

Information is not expressly stored in the hippocampus as discrete memories like in a hard drive. Instead, memories are made up of vast webs of data from across the brain all linked together (Davachi & Dobbins, 2008). The more associations (or in other words, entry points linked to the original information) connected to a memory, the thicker the web is, and,

therefore, the easier it is to find a memory later. The hippocampus activates when we create these associations....

Both psychological and neuroscientific research show that the key to optimizing learning and building long-term memory is to create “ownership” of learning content (Jensen, 2005; Poldrack et al., 2001). This ownership or “generation of own learning” occurs when an individual is motivated to understand, contextualize, retain, and apply knowledge in their own way. Therefore the learner should be encouraged to take in the presented information and personalize it by transforming it in a way that is meaningful for them. This act itself creates a rich set of associations, activating the hippocampus.

One way to generate association is to encourage the learner to evaluate the meaning of the information and compare it to their existing knowledge, or to think about the information in a “deep” as compared to a “shallow” way (Craig & Tulving, 1975; Davachi & Wagner, 2002)....

Learners may gain greater value if they are presented with data and then asked to formulate, organize, or add their personal experience to the learning content (Jensen, 2005). (Davachi et al., 2010, pp. 56-57)

Incorporating storytelling in the developmental process facilitates the learner in generating ownership of the learning content. Stories, which can take any number of forms—personal stories, introspective journaling, business narratives, ultimate mission statements, visualizations, behavior affirmations, or even simple discussions and conversations with others—can help learners connect more deeply with new information, making it easier for them to internalize it and create new habits of thought.

Stories help us learn better because they access both sides of our brain: the analytical, logical left hemisphere that pays attention to the facts and sequence of the story and the creative, relationship-oriented right hemisphere that tries to see the big picture. Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future*, shares how each hemisphere of our brains take

“significantly different approaches to guiding our actions, understanding the world, and reacting to events” (2005, p. 17). Table 4 lists the key differences between the two (2005, pp. 17-24):

Table 4. Contrasts between brain hemisphere effects

Left hemisphere	Right hemisphere
Controls the right side of the body	Controls the left side of the body
Sequential: a thousand words	Simultaneous: a picture
Specializes in text: <i>what</i> is said	Specializes in context: <i>how</i> it is said (nonverbal cues)
Analyzes the details: converges on a single answer	Synthesizes the big picture: diverges into a pattern, comprehends metaphors
Focuses on categories	Focuses on relationships

Stories, whether shared by someone else or ones we create for ourselves in journals or as powerful personal mission statements, capture our emotions.

Delivering facts and data can be useful, but when a person shares a personal story about their experience or insight, we tend to pay more attention and resonate more with that person. We actually try on their story for ourselves, to see how it applies, and many times the story can provide an insight into our own behavior. Researchers from Princeton University have learned more about how our brains have an affinity for stories:

The researchers found that when the two people communicate, neural activity over wide regions of their brains becomes almost synchronous, with the listener’s brain activity patterns mirroring those sweeping through the speaker’s brain, albeit with a short lag of about one second. If the

listener, however, fails to comprehend what the speaker is trying to communicate, their brain patterns decouple....

The better matched the listener's brain patterns were with the speaker's, the better the listener's comprehension, as shown by a test given afterward. (...When there is communication, large areas of brain activity become coupled between speaker and listener, including cortical areas involved in understanding the meaning and social aspects of the story.).

Interestingly, in part of the prefrontal cortex in the listener's brain, the researchers found that neural activity preceded the activity that was about to occur in the speaker's brain. This only happened when the speaker was fully comprehending the story and anticipating what the speaker would say next.

"Communication is a joint action, by which two brains become coupled ...It tells us that such coupling is extensive, [a property of the network seen across many brain areas]." (Fields, 2010)

The sharing of life experiences and the insights participants gain during a teaching session can have a significant effect on the retention and internalization of the lessons. We often see something for ourselves in another person's story, even if the details are not quite the same. Sharing stories, creating narratives, and journaling can create access to learning something about ourselves that we would not have access to learning any other way.

I incorporated many of my own stories in this thesis for the express purpose of aiding the reader's integration of the information. Sharing my thought processes leading to the development of my model and providing examples of the concepts in action not only aids the hippocampus in creating a context for the information but also helps the ideas resonate on an emotional level, forming a thicker web of connections in the brain. You may not be able to describe how the stimulus-response model relates to how the brain processes information, but you

can probably explain it by retelling the story of my wife and me in our kitchen—especially if that story reminded you of a similar personal experience or prompted you to imagine yourself in my place as I was telling it.

Chapter summary

There are challenges inherent in learning new leadership behaviors. In addition to learning new knowledge and skills, which the neocortex handles pretty readily, new behavioral patterns need to be created—and this kind of learning occurs in the emotional areas of the brain, which require longer periods of repetition and practice to change short term learning into long-term memory and conditioned behaviors. Most organizations only address leadership from the knowledge and skills perspective and are frustrated because they have a difficult time seeing a return on their development investment. To get the kind of behavior changes necessary to develop good leaders, specific approaches to learning can be used to overcome the challenges. Some of these approaches include spaced repetition, experiential learning practices, and using storytelling elements in the developmental process. Spaced repetition produces better retention of an idea over time. Experiential exercises help participants start practicing new behaviors, which is the first step in creating new habits. And storytelling—whether in the form of shared stories, self-reflective journals, or visualization—engages both hemispheres of the brain, as well as an emotional connection to what is being learned, making the lesson more personal and relevant to the learner.

CHAPTER 11

NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSION

More Validation Needed

The purpose of my thesis was to map out a model of leadership that has been gestating in my head for a number of years and was finally born here as The Leadership Catalyst.

Rather than provide a treatise on how the structure of my model is supported by business and leadership case studies, I decided, instead, to unveil the substance of my model by sharing the experiences and reflections that led to its formation. This is why so many of the supporting examples are of a personal nature. This model was shaped by my life.

Although I support my own experiences and thinking with solid references, I recognize that my model should be substantiated further by including leadership and business examples that reflect the tenets of being a leadership catalyst. To show that the Leadership Catalyst is a viable paradigm for improving leadership and performance, I plan to further validate my model by:

1. Revisiting this thesis as a case study, using examples of leaders and businesses that demonstrate the tenets of being a leadership catalyst
2. Expanding the justification for the structure and tenets of the leadership catalyst developmental process
3. Conducting developmental trials on three cohorts of at least 12 participants each, analyzing the effectiveness of leadership catalyst

training based on participant evaluations of the course, supervisor feedback on participant performance, and organizational return on investment

A Catalyst for the Catalysts⁵³

There is a magnet on the door of my refrigerator that has a quote by Thomas Edison, “If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.” I do not remember when we got the magnet or how long it has been there. I was only peripherally aware of it until recently—but for some reason, it caught my eye and struck a chord. My thalamus determined that the magnet was now noteworthy and brought it to my conscious attention. Reflecting on the message, I recognized that it speaks to why I do what I do. I provide performance improvement education and training because *I want to help people astound themselves*. I want to help people learn to live more powerful, playful, passionate lives. People deserve to wake up in the morning, excited about their day and how they can make a difference. People deserve to be delighted with themselves for being able to do more of what they are capable of doing.

I believe that my Leadership Catalyst model can help people astound themselves—whether they follow the concept for business or personal reasons. By focusing on the kind of person they want to be in the world and using that higher purpose as a bellwether for their actions, people can begin changing the course of their lives. They can start Being, differently.

By being mindful, people can identify when their behaviors are not working for them. Many times, our conditioned behaviors serve a useful purpose, but sometimes they make the situation worse. Yet we keep doing the same things over and over and expecting different results. “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it” has a reverse corollary: “You can’t fix it if you don’t know it’s broke.” By being mindful when an area of their life is not working, people can identify how they might be getting in their own way. Then they can do something about it.

By looking at how they are being connected, people can better establish and nurture their relationships. Nothing big and amazing has been accomplished by a solo person—even Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, Neil Armstrong, Warren Buffet, and President Obama had other people involved in their success. To quote Margaret Mead again, “Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has” (Krieger, 2002, p. 325). By being connected, people can build those teams of committed citizens that accomplish big things.

As I mentioned before, deciding is not doing and knowing is not doing. Doing takes action. It takes being intentional. People who are being intentional are purposeful in what they do. They are continuously diagnosing where they and their teams are with regard to what they are committed to doing—and then designing activities that not only get them past the roadblocks but also increase the cohesion, collaboration, and effectiveness of the group. By being intentional, people see conflict not as something to be avoided but as something constructive—as a step toward understanding others and finding a different

answer that comprises what both parties deem right. As Mary Parker Follet says, “The end result of conflict management—indeed, the only way to resolve a conflict—is not ‘victory,’ not ‘compromise.’ It is integration of interests” (1995, p. 4).

By taking on being generative, people find ways to breed enthusiasm, engagement, and commitment—for themselves as well as the people around them. When people are hesitant to act, they are often told, *Just throw your cap over the wall!* But this adage only works if the person thinks it is a damn fine cap, one worth going to great lengths to retrieve. In this way, leaders who are being generative help others see that damn fine cap in their mind’s eye; they speak to others’ noble purposes. They provide the vision of a better future to strive for and live into. Along with the committed citizens to change the world, there is a powerful vision or purpose that generates that kind of commitment.

Many changes for the better start with stepping out of the current paradigm: You cannot make scrambled eggs without breaking the eggshell paradigm, and, likewise, you cannot start Amazon.com without breaking the brick-and-mortar-bookstore paradigm. By being heretical, people pay attention to how things might be better for them and their organizations while staying loyal to their organizations. People who practice being heretical look at their organization through different lenses that have them see things in a new way. They do not let themselves be artificially constrained by organizational norms just because *We have always done it that way*. By being heretical, people can be proactive in

finding new opportunities for success that would not have been possible had they gone along with business-as-usual.

The way I see it, Being a Leadership Catalyst is a paradigm for self-improvement, but it is also a means of paying it forward. As leaders, we should want to make things better. We should want to make a difference—not only for the organizations we join but also for the people we work with. Here, again, is Hamel's vision, which helped inspire my model:

I dream of organizations that are capable of spontaneous renewal, where the drama of change is unaccompanied by the wrenching trauma of a turnaround. I dream of businesses where an electric current of innovation pulses through every activity, where the renegades always trump the reactionaries. I dream of companies that actually deserve the passion and creativity of the folks who work there, and naturally elicit the very best that people have to give. Of course, these are more than dreams; they are imperatives. They are do-or-die challenges for any company that hopes to thrive in the tumultuous times ahead—and they can be surmounted only with inspired management innovation. (2007, p. xi)

By Being Leadership Catalysts, we can contribute to the success of others by teaching them what they are capable of, and we can exponentially increase the effects of our efforts because we create leaders who create other leaders, and so on.

The Leadership Catalyst model now serves as my guide for helping people learn to astound themselves. It is my call to action for people to start doing something different so that they can start getting different results and inspire the same for others. It is my challenge to organizations to do something to “deserve the passion and creativity of the folks who work there, and naturally elicit the very best that people have to give.”

NOTES

- ¹ Ontology is a branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being and existence. Joseph Kaiyapil, Professor of Philosophy at Jeevalaya Institute of Philosophy, Bangalore, discusses ontology from the perspective of philosophy: “Philosophy comprises our most basic views about the objects we experience, and the objects of our experience and thought are always some kind of *being*, something that *is*. Then, philosophy, like any other cognitive enterprise, is ultimately our discourse on *being*. This calls for ontology, the theory of being, the task of which is to clarify the concept of being. Without an adequate understanding of what being is, it would be impossible for philosophy to make any rational and meaningful sense of the world we experience” (Kaipayil, 2008, p. 1).
- ² The authors—two of whom work for Towers Perrin, a professional services firm specializing in human resources and financial services consulting that merged with Watson Wyatt to form Towers Watson in January 2010—claim that its 2007–2008 *Global Workforce Study*, titled *Closing the Engagement Gap: A Roadmap for Driving Superior Business Performance*, offers the most complete view of workforce attitudes available today, establishing an undeniable link between employee engagement and business performance and providing a clear picture of the workplace attributes that drive engagement. The study draws on two sources of data that come directly from employees. The first is an online polling survey administered to a randomly chosen group of almost 90,000 employees working full-time for midsize to large organizations in 18 countries. The second source is the world’s largest employee normative database, which is updated annually from more than 2 million employees at a range of companies in more than 40 countries, including those with above- and below-average financial performance.
- ³ I created this graphic using Excel and PowerPoint.
- ⁴ From the journal: “Making sure that all employees have quality relationships with someone who can guide them is one of the 12 key discoveries from a multiyear research effort by The Gallup Organization. Our objective was to identify the consistent dimensions of workplaces with high levels of four critical outcomes: employee retention, customer metrics, productivity, and profitability. The research identified 12 dimensions that consistently correlate with these four outcomes—dimensions Gallup now uses to measure the health of a workplace. An associated research effort, in which Gallup studied more than 80,000 managers, focused on discovering what great managers do to create quality workplaces.”
- ⁵ I created this graphic in PowerPoint, based on a transparency slide provided at a training session in March 2002 by Resource Associates Corporation (RAC), of which I am an affiliate and have permission to use for my own purposes.
- ⁶ http://www.nato.int/nrdc-it/about/message_to_garcia.pdf

- ⁷ I designed this image using PowerPoint—except for image of the orb. The orb is actually a photo of the sun, copied from the website of the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), which is a project of international cooperation between the European Space Agency and NASA: <http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/gallery/>.
- ⁸ I am adopting the word as used by Art Kleiner in his book, *The Age of Heretics: A History of the Radical Thinkers Who Reinvented Corporate Management*, which was one of the texts used in my *DYNAM 501: Fundamentals of Organizational Dynamics* course, led by Dr. Janet Greco. Kleiner's concept of the heretics being loyal to the institutions with which they were involved, while still being true to higher ideals for how the institution behaves helped me solidify this aspect of my model.
- ⁹ To paraphrase Wheatley (2006), when considered through the lens of Newtonian, or classical, physics, the universe is very machine-like and predictable. Everything can be reduced to a common denominator, the atom, which can be replaced by any another atom of the same type without changing the characteristics of the object. About most organizations today, she says, "The machine imagery of the cosmos was translated into organizations as an emphasis on material structure and multiple parts. Responsibilities have been organized into functions. People have been organized into roles. Page after page of organizational charts depict the working of the machine: the number of pieces, what fits where, who the most important pieces are. The 1990s revealed these deeply embedded beliefs about organizations as machines when 'reengineering' became the dominant solution for organizational ills. Its costly failures were later acknowledged to have stemmed in large part from processes and beliefs that paid no attention to the human (or living) dimensions of organizational life" (p. 29)
- ¹⁰ Quantum theory refers to the equations that make up quantum physics, which is also known as quantum mechanics. While Newtonian physics describes the interaction between the big particles of the universe (stars, planets, airplanes, etc.), quantum theory describes the relationship between the smallest parts of the universe (subatomic particles). "In the quantum world, *relationship* is the key determiner of everything. Subatomic particles come into form and are observed only as they are in relationship to something else... These unseen *connections* between what were previously thought to be separate entities are the fundamental ingredient of all creation." (Wheatley, 2006, p. 11) Translated into organizational theory, this means that leaders are less drivers of the Newtonian machine and more connectors, collaborators, empowerers, and context setters. Organizations are whole systems instead of just a collection of parts—more fluid, organic, seamless, and without boundaries. Continuity and congruence are created less with controls and more from the invisible force fields created by organizational vision and values. (Wheatley, 2006)

- ¹¹ I created this image in PowerPoint, using a graphic of an iceberg copied from KeywordPicture.com: http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_RY-Z9WGZJHE/Rzfah2g1AJI/AAAAAAAAAAk/o9IQSWKyGmk/s400/iceberg2.jpg
- ¹² I created this graphic in PowerPoint to represent Pavlov's model for behavior.
- ¹³ I adapted this graphic from an image I found at a website called "The Brain from Top to Bottom," in the section, "The Evolutionary Layers of the Human Brain"—developed, researched, and written by neuroscientist Bruno Dubuc for McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The website was funded by, and the university is affiliated with, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (Institute of Neuroscience, Mental Health, and Addiction). Graphic design and animation by Denis Paquet. The *copyleft* symbol is included in the graphic in accordance with conditions set by the website developer. See the *copyleft* description and conditions here:
http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/pop/pop_copy/pop_copy.html. Website URL:
http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/d/d_05/d_05_cr/d_05_cr_her/d_05_cr_her.html.
- ¹⁴ I adapted this graphic from an image I found at the website, "The Brain from Top to Bottom," in the section, "The Two Pathways of Fear." Developed, researched, and written by neuroscientist Bruno Dubuc for McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. The website was funded by, and the university is affiliated with, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (Institute of Neuroscience, Mental Health, and Addiction). Graphic design and animation by Denis Paquet. The *copyleft* symbol is included in the graphic in accordance with conditions set by the website developer. See the *copyleft* description and conditions here: http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/pop/pop_copy/pop_copy.html. See the graphic I used here:
http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/flash/i/i_04/i_04_cr/i_04_cr_peu/i_04_cr_peu.html#2.
- ¹⁵ Daniel Goleman et al use the term "emotional hijack," in their book *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence*, to describe the same phenomenon. Although the terms *amygdala* and *emotional* can be used interchangeably with the word *hijack*, I am more accustomed to saying *amygdala hijack*.
- ¹⁶ I created this graphic in PowerPoint, incorporating Covey's representation of "Freedom of Choice" with my representation of Pavlov's model for behavior.
- ¹⁷ In the visual "atomic" model of the leadership catalyst, all five components create an electron cloud around the nucleus. Each one is represented by an electron wave-particle occupying a discrete electron orbit. This signifies that each component has a unique vantage point from which to consider, or perceive, the nucleus.
- ¹⁸ I created this graphic in PowerPoint, using royalty-free images of the man and the cartoon of the commentator.
- ¹⁹ I created this graphic using Excel and PowerPoint as a visual adaptation of the Leadership Wheel scores, which were originally represented by Napier in a table with only a number score for each compass direction: N, S, E, and W.

- ²⁰ Descriptions of the defensive categories were taken from a handout provided by Rod Napier, in his class, DYNM 620, "The Coach—Applying Tools and Skills in the Field," attended Summer 2008. His summary was created from the cited source.
- ²¹ Forgas' note: Heider, F. (1958). The psychology of interpersonal relations.; Jones, E. E. (1979). The rocky road from acts to dispositions. *Am Psychol*, 34(2), 107-117.
- ²² Forgas' note: Gilbert, D. T., & Malone, P. S. (1995). The correspondence bias. *Psychological bulletin*, 117, 21-21.; Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 10, 173-220.
- ²³ Footnote provided by Senge: "Our understanding of the meaning of *suwa bona* and *ubuntu* derives from conversations with Louis van der Merwe and his colleagues James Mkosi and Andrew Meriti."
- ²⁴ Quinns' note: N. H. Frijda, P. Kuipers, and E. Schure (1989), "Relations Among Emotion, Appraisal, and Emotional Action Readiness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57: 212-228.
- ²⁵ Quinns' note: See Batson, *The Altruism Question: Toward a Scientific Answer*, and Krebs, "Altruism—An Examination of the Concept and a Review of the Literature." Also, Adam Grant finds that when people feel empathy for others, they exert more effort, persist longer, and engage in more helping behaviors (see Grant, "The Significance of Task Significance: Job Performance Effects, Relational Mechanisms, and Boundary Conditions," and Grant, "Employees Without a Cause: The Motivational Effects of Prosocial Impact in Public Service.").
- ²⁶ Quinns' note: For more on the physiological effects of a high-quality connection, see J. Panskepp, *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and S. E. Taylor, S. S. Dickerson, and L. C. Klein, "Toward a Biology of Social Support," in C. R. Snyder and S. L. Lopez (eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 556-572.
- ²⁷ Quinns' note: Baker, Cross, and Wooten, "Positive Organizational Network Analysis and Energizing Relationships," 328-342.
- ²⁸ Quinns' note: M. B. Brewer and W. Gardner (1996), "Who Is This 'We'? Levels of Collective Identity and Self-Representations," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71(1): 83-93.
- ²⁹ Quinns' note: C. R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).
- ³⁰ Quinns' note: A sense of security is often needed to trust others because we make ourselves vulnerable when we choose to trust. See D. M. Rousseau, S. B. Sitkin, R. S. Burt, and C. Camerer (1998), "Not So Different After All: A

Cross-Disciplinary View of Trust,” *Academy of Management Review* 23(3): 393-404.

- ³¹ I created this graphic in PowerPoint, reproducing the text used in Covey’s book on page 13.
- ³² Boyatzis’ and McKee’s note: Definition of compassion: *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (1963) defines compassion as, “Sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to alleviate it.” The *American Heritage Dictionary* (1969) defines it as, “The deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another in the inclination to give and or support, or show mercy.” The Buddhist definition, quoted by Matthieu Ricard, contrasts it with love, “The wish that others may be free from suffering and the causes of suffering, while love is defined as the wish that others be happy and find the causes for happiness” (in Daniel Goleman, *Destructive Emotions: How Can We Overcome Them? A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama* (New York: Bantam Books, 2003) 13). See also Peter Frost, *Toxic Emotions at Work: How Compassionate Managers Handle Pain and Conflict* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2003); Peter Frost, Jane Dutton, Monica Worline, and Annette Wilson, “Narratives of Compassion in Organizations,” in *Emotions in Organizations*, ed. Stephen Fineman (Beverly Hill, CA: Sage Publications, 2000), 25-45; Thomas Bateman and Chris Porath, “Transcendent Behavior,” in *Positive Organizational Scholarship: Foundations of a New Discipline*, ed. Kim Cameron, Jane E. Dutton, and Robert E. Quinn (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003), 122-137; Jason Kanov, Sally Maitlis, Monica Worline, Jane E. Dutton, Peter Frost, and Jacoba Lilius, “Compassion in Organizational Life,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 47, no. 6 (2004): 808-827.
- ³³ Another explanation of Sawubona, given by youth worker and community leader Orland Bishop, can be found at:
<http://www.globalonenessproject.org/videos/orlandbishopclip2>.
- ³⁴ I created this graphic using PowerPoint. The text was taken from Keith, 2004, pp. 16-17
- ³⁵ While this text is quoted from a book in the process of being written by Rod Napier, Sarah Halley, and me, the content is Rod Napier’s and is copied in part from Sanaghan & Napier, 2002
- ³⁶ Goleman et al note: Alan B. Krueger, “Economic Scene,” *The New York Times*, 7 December 2000, C2.
- ³⁷ Goleman et al note: R. Meredith Belbin, *Team Roles at Work* (London: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1996).
- ³⁸ Goleman et al note: Jon R. Katzenbach and Douglas K. Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000).
- ³⁹ I created this graphic, in PowerPoint, to replicate the image Crum uses on page 27 of his book.

- ⁴⁰ I created this graphic in PowerPoint, to replicate Crum's text on page 25 of his book.
- ⁴¹ Loehr's note: McAdams, D. P. (2006). *The redemptive self: stories Americans live by*. Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, p. 210.
- ⁴² The four points are from Resource Associates Corporation (RAC) but the descriptions are my own words. As an affiliate of RAC, I am allowed to use the material as if it is mine.
- ⁴³ Dr. Greco could not remember the reference but relayed the story about the cartoon.
- ⁴⁴ I created this graphic, in PowerPoint, to replicate actual image in the book as closely as possible.
- ⁴⁵ Covey adapted this same Talmudic saying for his own purposes in a quote I used on page 95. Dr. Greco's sharing it with me led me to find the Covey quote, which I decided to add to that section.
- ⁴⁶ Kleiner's note: T. H. Huxley, "New Truths Begin as Heresies and End as Superstitions," *Collected Essays [1894]*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1968, p. 156.
- ⁴⁷ This is a reference taken from a game show from my childhood, called "Let's Make a Deal."
- ⁴⁸ Using an outside research firm, Bersin & Associates, *Training* magazine invited members from its database to participate in an online survey. Only U. S.-based corporations and educational institutions with greater than 100 employees were included in the analysis. Federal, state, and local government agencies were not included, however. The \$53.6B average amount was calculated using total values for training reported between 2002 and 2010.
- ⁴⁹ Goleman et al note: Matthew D. Lieberman, "Intuition: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Approach," *Psychological Bulletin* 126 (2000): 109-137; B. J. Knowlton, J. A. Mangels, and L. R. Squire, "A Neurostriatal Habit Learning System in Humans," *Science* 273 (1996): 1399-1402.
- ⁵⁰ Goleman et al note: Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon, *A General Theory of Love* (New York: Random House, 2000); and Matthew D. Lieberman, "Intuition: A Social Cognitive Neuroscience Approach," *Psychological Bulletin* 126 (2000): 109-137.
- ⁵¹ Goleman et al note: Richard J. Davidson, Daren C. Jackson, and Ned H. Kalin, "Emotion, Plasticity, Context, and Regulation: Perspectives from Affective Neuroscience," *Psychological Bulletin* 126, no. 6 (2000): 890-909.
- ⁵² I created this graphic in PowerPoint, based on a transparency slide provided at a training session in March 2002 by Resource Associates Corporation, of which I am an affiliate and have permission to use for my own purposes.
- ⁵³ Dr. Greco suggested this title during the review process of this thesis.

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APPENDIX A

LEADERSHIP CATALYST QUESTIONS

These questions were my original “brain map” as I tried to quantify for myself what it means to be a leadership catalyst. I include them here as a diagnostic, idea-generating tool to assist you in your own mastery of being a leadership catalyst. My hope is that they will spark ideas that help you in being mindful, connected, intentional, generative, and heretical.

The questions are by no means comprehensive. In fact, I encourage you to make them your own by editing them as you see fit. Add questions, move them around, or duplicate them in other sections—whatever makes sense to you. After all, you are the one who is *being* a leadership catalyst moment to moment and dancing with possibility.

Who are you BEING as a leadership catalyst?

Who are you BEING?

- What does it mean to you to “be” something?
- How can you be a catalyst for greatness in others?
- What is your source or noble purpose?
- Who are you being as a possibility?

Are you being MINDFUL?

- Are you self-reflective? Are you self-aware?
- Are you cognizant or aware of your own emotions, stories, and/or competing commitments?
- Are you developing or practicing a discipline of awareness?
- Are your actions aligned with your noble purpose?
- Are you keeping your own purpose or personal mission statement in mind?
- Are you tracking your internal commentator to detect interference?
- Are you “walking the wheel”?
- Are you affirming yourself as a possibility?
- Are you vigilant in noticing your filters or lenses?
- Are you maintaining balance in your life?
- Are you taking time to “stand in the chalk circle”?

Are you being CONNECTED?

- Are you developing relationships that transcend the superficial?
- Are you learning about your people?
- Are you creating membership in your team?
- Are you establishing an environment of trust?
- Are you fostering collaboration and teamwork?
- Are you building a network of connections in your organization?
- Does your personal mission statement align with that of the team? The organization? The community?
- Are you creating a culture that respects and appreciates diversity of thought?
- Are you creating a team that resolves conflict effectively?
- Are you developing your team’s ability to work more effectively together?
- Are you fostering engagement in your people?
- Are you creating trust among your team members?
- Are you creating a culture of integrity?
- Are you connected to your community?

Are you being INTENTIONAL?

- Are you providing a “direct line of sight” between your people’s actions or performance to the objectives or vision of the team and the organization?
- Are you providing additional choices for action? Are you keeping options open for your team?
- Are you focusing the efforts or actions of your people in the same direction?
- Are you helping align your people’s attitudes and goals with the objectives of the organization?
- Are you being “a cause in the matter”?
- Are you in action?
- Are you looking for opportunities to be in action? Are you self-actuated?
- Are you setting goals and objectives for you and your team?
- Are you helping your people get out of their own way? Are you removing obstacles and helping them be great?
- Are you facilitating behavior change, for yourself and your people?
- Are you creating BHAGs (Big Hairy Audacious Goals)?
- Are you paying attention to how your actions affect those around you?
- Are you diagnosing the team to see what might be getting in their way?
- Are you designing interactions that move your team to the next level of performance?

Are you being GENERATIVE?

- Are you generating a purpose or vision that inspires and motivates you?
- Are you generating a purpose or vision that inspires and motivates others around you?
- Are you generating enthusiasm, power, and engagement in others that has them in action?
- Are you generating new perspectives or contexts that give people new understandings, or choices, or possibilities?
- Are you generating yourself as a possibility?
- Are you providing the big picture?
- Are you generating Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals (BHAGs)?
- Are you generating connectedness and relationships between others?

Are you being HERETICAL?

- Are you keeping perspective on what is “important”?
- Are you looking at your organization through different lenses or metaphors?
- Are you championing the success of your people? Of your organization?
- Are you tracking what you are grateful for in your organization?
- Are you creating an environment for, and promoting, creativity and innovation?

- Are you causing paradigm shifts?
- Are you questioning the status quo, the way things are always done, business-as-usual?
- Are you asking the five whys?
- Are you asking questions?
- Are you taking time to “stand in the chalk circle”?
- Are you promoting the “possibility” for your organization?
- Are you an evangelist for your team’s or your organization’s success?
- Are you testing your assumptions? Assumptions of the team? Of the organization?

Are you CAUSING OTHER LEADERS?

- Are you being a steward of your team?
- Are you providing opportunities for growth?
- Are you providing your people the skills and knowledge?
- Are you providing leadership insights or distinctions?
- Are you asking questions?
- Are you delegating tasks?
- Are you sharing your leadership perspective?
- Are you coaching and mentoring?
- Are you creating a safe environment to practice—and even fail?
- Are you providing context?
- Are you facilitating behavior change?
- Are you holding people accountable?
- Are you providing encouragement?
- Are you assigning responsibility?
- Are you helping your people develop stretch goals?
- Are you learning about your people?
- Are you counseling them on their performance?
- Are you providing effective feedback?
- Are you a clearing for them as leaders?
- Are you a listening for them as leaders?
- Are you relating to them as leaders?

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: BEING MINDFUL

Additional Assessments

I have used all of these instruments and each one can be a valuable tool for providing insights into our and others' behavior:

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®)—"makes the theory of psychological types described by C. G. Jung understandable and useful in people's lives by demonstrating that much seemingly random variation in the behavior is actually quite orderly and consistent, due to basic differences in the ways individuals prefer to use their perception and judgment" ("My MBTI Personality Type—MBTI Basics," 2011). See Figure 22¹.

Figure 22. MBTI®

Sensing		Intuition		
Thinking	Feeling	Feeling	Thinking	
ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ	Introversi
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP	Perception
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP	Extraversi
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ	Judgment

Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument® (HBDI®)—"evaluates and describes the degree of preference individuals have for thinking in each of the four brain quadrants, as depicted by the Herrmann Whole Brain® Model, teaching you how to communicate with those who think the same as you and

¹ I created this graphic by adapting an image on the Myers & Briggs Foundation website. Graphic URL: <http://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/type-tables.asp>.

those who think differently than you” (“Overview of the HBDI,” 2011) See Figure 23.²

DiSC® Inventory—provides an understanding of people through awareness of temperament and behavioral styles, informing people about the degree to which they utilize each behavior style based on their personality and the situation they find themselves in. (Hagemann & Gronbach, 2010, p. 183) (See Figure 24).³

Figure 23. HBDI®

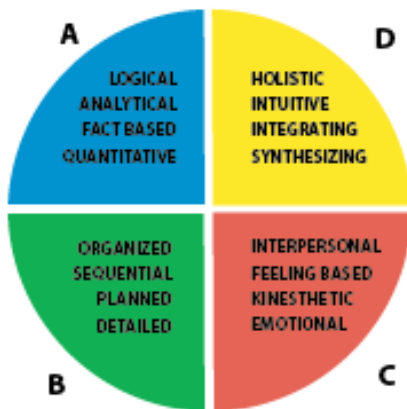
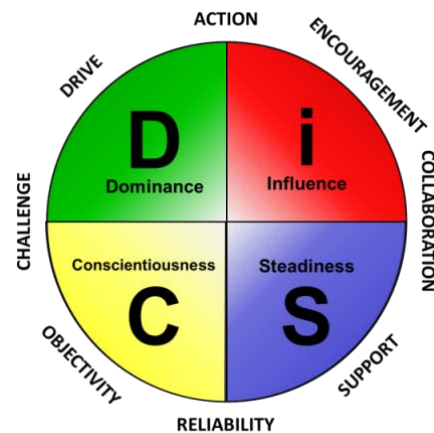


Figure 24. DiSC® Inventory



² Image was taken from the Herrmann International website. Graphic URL: <http://www.hbdi.com/WholeBrainProductsAndServices/thehbdi.cfm>.

³ I created this graphic, using PowerPoint, based on information included in my personal DiSC Inventory feedback report.

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: BEING INTENTIONAL

Victory in all of its forms

The Artistry mindset has resonated strongly with me throughout my life, though I have only recently related to it in those terms. As an example, I have never really enjoyed competitive sports because winning means someone else has to lose, which diminishes my enjoyment of winning. I do appreciate participating in sports for the challenge of the game and the mastery of the skills, but the thrill of victory holds no appeal for me (except for Navy football, perhaps, and especially when we play Army). Because of this, I found rifle shooting to be a sport that I enjoyed being a part of and became a varsity member of both high school and Naval Academy rifle teams. Although I did participate in competitions where the objective was to score more points than the other team by shooting more bull's-eyes in paper targets, to me it was less a competition against the other shooters and more a competition against my last best score. The way I saw it, my job was to shoot the most accurately that I could at every single target, improving my personal best rather than being about outshooting anyone else. Scores would be tallied at the end of the match, and the team with the best accuracy won.

Please do not misunderstand me, I was not opposed to winning! I enjoyed and celebrated whenever my team won. A particular highlight was being a

member of the Navy varsity team that beat Army for the first time in eight years. Nevertheless, I also enjoyed and celebrated those occasions when we lost to one of the top teams in the country by the smallest margin ever or lost but still broke a school record. Looking at it from Crum's perspective, I see now that I was enjoying the artistry of the sport more than a victory over conflict.

More on diagnosis

The eight categories—or aspects—of team development that the GMQ measures and that Napier and McDaniel deem crucial for success are listed in Table 5 (2006, pp. 270-278). A highly effective team is one that scores high in most of these eight categories. Using the data from the GMQ, a leader can identify the key areas of development necessary for the team to continue on its path to high performance. See Figure 25 for a snapshot of one of my client's GMQ results.⁴)

Table 5. Categories of best practices for high-performing teams

Category	Description
Goals, Purpose, and Direction	The effective team takes the time to build a solid foundation of by developing a clear and measurable set of values by which to operate. It has values that are reflected in its mission. It reviews team goals to determine measured progress regularly. It also measures whether the agreed-upon team values are being reflected in the members' actual behavior.

⁴ The graphic is my adaptation, in Excel and PowerPoint, of Napier's form, which I used in my final paper for his DYNM 653 course, *Coaching for Conflict Resolution*.

Category	Description
Team Climate	<p>The most difficult to define—but deals with how people feel about the team. The concept is a measure of the cohesion and camaraderie that exist in a team. An effective team has members who feel open, supported, and trusting of one another. They easily share ideas and feelings, and they give feedback and expect it from others. They feel heard and that their contributions are valued. As a result, members feel a strong commitment to one another and to the success of the team.</p>
Conflict	<p>The team does not hide from conflict but addresses it when it occurs. It actively attempts to reframe the conflicting issues and lend objectivity to the process by gathering relevant data. It maintains the belief that conflict can and will be resolved fairly and equitably. Its members communicate proactively, individually, and directly with one another to work issues through before raising them in the group or depending on others to intervene. It clearly labels behaviors that undermine honest and open communication as unacceptable.</p>
Rewards, Appreciation, and Recognition	<p>The effective team is one in which the team distributes rewards based on clearly established performance measures that are perceived as fair. Team members feel appreciated for their efforts and recognized for their achievements. The team celebrates accomplishments at both an individual and team levels.</p>
Communication	<p>Effective teams make information accessible to all team members and ensures that it flows easily through the group. They acknowledge issues and address them in a timely fashion. Their communications are characterized by a sense of candor and openness within the team. People feel heard, and feedback is a natural part of the communication process; the feedback look is normal, rather than extraordinary, and is just part of doing business.</p>

Category	Description
Group Process and Meeting Design	<p>Because meetings consume a majority of team members' time, effective teams conduct meetings that involve well-communicated agendas and design strategies that allow full participation of those in attendance. Both task (products) and process (maintenance) aspects of the meeting are addressed. Each agenda item reflects a creative strategy designed to attack the issue at hand in a unique manner. Proper pre- and post-meeting work occurs and accountability is ensured by monitoring follow-up activities. The meetings, as well as the behavior of the leader in conducting them, would be routinely evaluated so corrective actions can be taken to provide continuous improvement for both.</p>
Leadership	<p>Successful leaders establish clear roles for team members that reflect agreed-upon individual and team goals. They provide clear lines of authority and responsibility for both the team and the individuals on the team. Whenever possible, they allow members of the team to influence decisions that will affect them. Additionally, they make an effort to share leadership responsibilities through the effective delegation of challenging work, as well as through the functional work of the team itself.</p>
Supervision/ Performance Management	<p>In an effective team, a developmental focus (supervision) by the leader helps members become more accountable to themselves and to the team for the management of their own performance. This supervision includes regular feedback for the team and individual members, based on agreed-upon goals and measurable performance outcomes. It also includes measures of team and individual performance in the values they established as their guiding principles. Finally, it incorporates a coaching approach by conducting regular reviews that focus on the individual needs and development of each member.</p>

Figure 25. Example of GMQ results

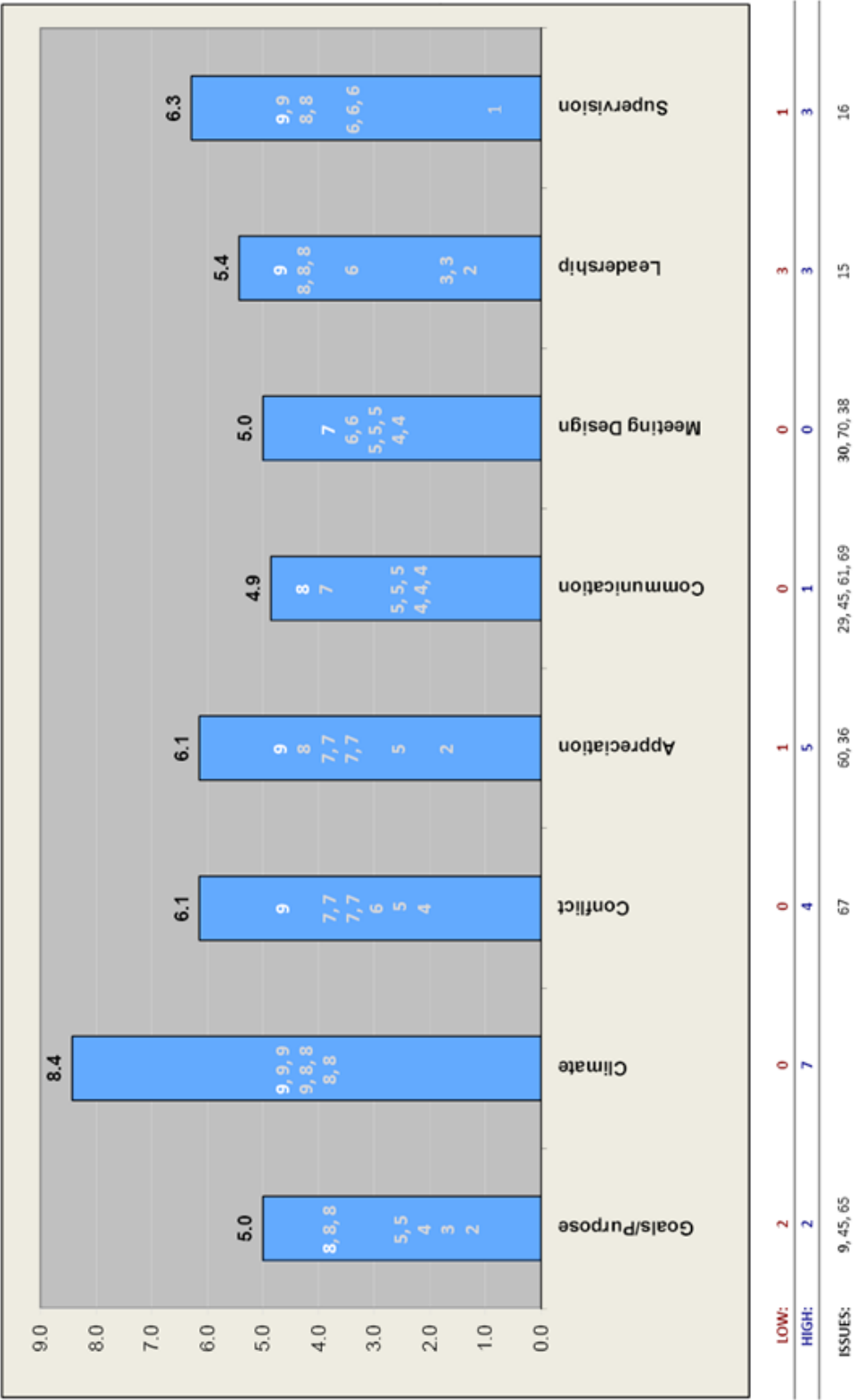


Table 6 lists the types of foundational questions that should be considered prior to the design of any meeting or team-building session. (Rodney Napier et al., 2010, pp. 4-5 [Ch. 3]; Sanaghan & Napier, 2002, p. 1.44)

Table 6. Diagnosis and design considerations for team-building sessions

Fundamental Questions	
1.	Are the outcome-based goals or deliverables understood and agreed to by the participants? Is this meeting truly necessary? Are people prepared for what is to come?
2.	Do the various agenda items reflect these goals? And, is sufficient time, as well as the necessary resources, allocated to allow success to occur?
3.	Is attention paid to the process of the meeting—not only how the task goals are to be achieved but, also, how the various participants are involved and how they feel about their experience as they walk away at the end of the meeting?
4.	Are the right people present to accomplish the task at hand?
5.	Is each agenda item “designed” in a manner that reflects its unique outcome and builds toward the goals of the larger meeting?
6.	Are there decisions to be made during the meeting? If so, do people agree on “how to decide” in advance of the meeting? Is the essential information available to insure a valuable decision?
7.	Do the same people dominate every discussion? Is there broad participation based on the knowledge and experience in the room? And, is the desired amount of collaboration/participation occurring?
8.	Does the use of physical space for the meeting reflect the best means for achieving the desired goals?
9.	Is the technology the best possible for the demands of the situation?

Fundamental Questions

10. Do the participants feel a sense of accomplishment as they leave the meeting?

11. Is the communication open and free-flowing? Are relations among the members strengthened as a result of the meeting? Is trust enhanced?

12. Do the members of the group do what they say? Are they committed sufficiently to each other so that delegated tasks are accomplished in a timely and effective manner?

13. Is time taken at the end of each meeting of an hour or longer to evaluate its effectiveness and the roles of various participants?

APPENDIX D

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: BEING GENERATIVE

Big, Hairy, Audacious Generating

Think back to a time when you were a kid, and someone presented you with a really big challenge. Maybe it was a dare to climb a tree higher than you had ever climbed before. Or maybe it was to jump over a ditch on your bike. Or ski down your first black-diamond run. Or ask a really popular person for a date. Or jump into a pool from a 10-meter (approximately 33 feet, or 3 stories) high tower.

Whatever it is for you, picture it in your mind. Now imagine the nervous anticipation you felt as you considered whether you were capable of accomplishing the feat—at first thinking *No way!*, immediately followed by, *Wait! Maybe I can!*

You may remember the thrum of energy coursing through your body, making you feel like a vibrating guitar string, as you envisioned taking on the challenge and prevailing. Your legs probably trembled a little with excitement, feeling like they wanted to either collapse or run really fast. You may remember feeling your gaze become a bit vague as you envisioned tackling the challenge in your mind's eye. A crooked grin probably then appeared on your face and your eyes brightened. An antsy chuckle—almost a giggle—slips out as you accepted it.

That is how it feels when you commit to a Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal, or BHAG. Jerry Porras and Jim Collins coined the term BHAG (pronounced *bee-hag*) in their book, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* to describe those wide-eyed, knee-knocking, make-you-want-to-give-it-your-all challenges that organizations take on to produce innovative and breakthrough results. The authors' research showed that most enduring great companies set and pursued these big, hairy, audacious goals and that they had specific characteristics that set them apart from normal, non-hairy goals (1994, pp. 111-112):

- A BHAG should be so clear and compelling that it requires little or no explanation—it is a goal, not a statement.
- A BHAG should fall outside the comfort zone. People should have reason they can pull it off, yet it should require heroic effort and perhaps even a little luck.
- A BHAG should be so bold and exciting in its own right that it would continue to stimulate progress even if the people who started it disappeared before it had been completed.
- A BHAG should be consistent with the group's core ideology.

Being generative means generating these BHAGs for the group—audacious goals that give the team a little thrill at the thought of the challenge they entail and an infusion of energy in anticipation of the eventual victory. This is akin to the group throwing their collective hat over the wall. In the normal state, with no plan or purpose, the team would just shrug their shoulders and go home to watch

Cash in the Attic because it was not really their hat, the hat made their hair stick up, and the color of the hat did not really match any of their outfits, anyway. With a BHAG generating a lifted, purpose-centered state, however, the team would be determined to find a way to the other side of the wall because that particular hat was their favorite hat. It was given to them by a favored relative, it complemented the color of their eyes and made them look dashing, and it was luckier than a rabbit's foot and a four-leaf-clover, combined. They would do whatever it took to retrieve such a treasured and inspiring hat.

One example of how the power of a compelling vision or purpose can produce breakthrough results involves the U. S. Naval Academy football team. At the start of the 2003 season, Navy was coming off the worst two-year span in its then 123-year football history (1-20) and had recorded just two winning seasons in the preceding 20 years. By the end of the 2003 season, however, the Midshipmen had finished 8-5 and brought the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy (awarded to the winner of the competition among the Air Force, Army, and Navy service academies) back to Annapolis for the first time since 1981, propelling Navy to a bowl game for the first time in seven years. The eight wins equaled Navy's win total for the previous four years combined, and the six-game improvement was the second-best turnaround in the country. Navy also became just the sixth team in NCAA history to go from a winless season to a bowl game in two years or less. (Johnson & Harper, 2005)

In *Becoming a Leader the Annapolis Way: 12 Combat Lessons from the Navy's Leadership Laboratory*, Brad Johnson and Gregory Harper describe how a reversal of fortune can be attributed to a generative purpose or vision:

Although a sudden turnaround in the fortunes of a football team may not sound all that relevant or interesting to those who are not avid Navy football fans, we find this turnaround striking in light of three important facts. First, in terms of returning players, this was largely the same team that lost nearly every game during the past two years. Second, the team fielded more freshmen than any Navy team in modern history. Third, as a small service academy, USNA is severely hampered in the competition for the best high school recruits. Our athletes must be exceptional academic performers and, in most cases, willing to forgo prospects for professional sports careers. Our graduates must serve a minimum of five years as commissioned officers following graduation. For this reason, many blue-chip athletes shun service academies. So how do we account for the dramatic turnaround in Navy's football fortune? *Vision*. Second-year coach Paul Johnson had this team of freshmen and previously downtrodden upperclassmen believing they could play against anybody and win. This collection of undersized (and underrated) scholar-athletes adopted Johnson's vision of themselves as a team that could play with the best and win in a big way every Saturday. In his own calm and unassuming way, Johnson is a master when it comes to crafting a team vision.

Whether leading a football team, a major corporation, or the crew of a Navy destroyer, leaders have to both create and successfully communicate a vision. Excellent leadership hinges on the leader's capacity to construct the right vision for a unit or organization at just the right time. By vision, we mean an ideal image or picture of what the unit can become. Successful visions are clear, compelling, and carefully articulated. Such a vision is a primary key to creating real organizational change. (2005, p. 92)

I believe that leadership catalysts should generate a vision that gets the ball rolling for not just the team goals, but also for other leaders to step up to the plate (to mix sport metaphors). You empower them, inspire them, and get them expecting the big successes. As they start to deliver on the initial steps leading to the BHAG, it creates a momentum that just brings on more of the same success.

That is what helped Navy football turn around. Once they got a taste of success, once they were one step closer to realizing the vision, they gained the confidence to do it again and again, taking larger steps each time.

APPENDIX E

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: BEING HERETICAL

Heresy in a military setting

Being heretical resonated with me as a component because of a couple of experiences where I played somewhat heretical roles, though at the time I would not have thought to characterize them as such. I first practiced heresy while teaching at the Naval Academy. “New truths” were what we were creating in the curriculum when I showed up as a new instructor. We had made substantial changes in the leadership curriculum to incorporate Covey, MBTI, TQL, and other new ways of thinking that were radically different from the command-and-control, “do as I say, not as I do” culture of the Navy. As a contrast to this more “enlightened” approach to leadership, I had come from a branch of the Navy where the unofficial motto was “We eat our young,” and we not-so-jokingly warned each other not to “expose your back to your shipmate so you won’t get stabbed” in reference to the competitiveness of promotions and gaining favor with senior officers. We junior officers even laughed cynically at how being promoted to a Department Head (equivalent to the director of a division in the civilian arena) seemed to require a frontal lobotomy. There was a good reason that junior officers across the Fleet considered themselves members of a de facto organization in each command called JOPA—Junior Officer Protection Association.

At the Academy, however, I was one of five junior officers who felt we were preparing officers who would start a wave of changed conversations, changed thinking, and changed behaviors in the Fleet, creating an environment where there would be less politics, less competition, and less expediency at the expense of really doing the right thing. We felt we were developing, in the soon-to-be ensigns, the kinds of behaviors we wished had been more prevalent in our own initial experiences in the Fleet. In the classrooms, we were having conversations about knowing yourself and your people from a behavioral perspective, rather than treating people like cogs in a machine with a one-size-fits-all approach to leadership. We were talking about taking advantage of the wealth of knowledge of people on the front lines by including them in the design of more innovative and efficient processes, rather than officers stepping into an unfamiliar situation and ordering changes just to look like they were in charge.

We rallied around universal values that we should adhere to, rather than resorting to situational ethics and looking the other way when our peers were doing something wrong. The conversations we were facilitating with our students were a revelation to us because they were not the same conversations we had experienced in the Fleet.

We taught the midshipmen that it was better to do the right thing—even if it was the harder thing to do—because naval officers had a special responsibility to uphold the honor of their profession and to take care of their people. We instituted a module called *The Constitutional Paradigm*, which defined how officers should resolve moral dilemmas based on a hierarchy of loyalty—with

loyalty to the Constitution at the highest level, followed by loyalty to the naval service, the command to which we were assigned, our shipmates, and finally, loyalty to our own self-interest. It was a failure to adhere to these kinds of standards that resulted in the behaviors exhibited at the Abu Ghraib prison, in Iraq, and the subsequent global scandal.

We felt that we were part of a sea change that was going to take place in the Fleet because of our work. We thought we were part of a new vision for the Navy and we tried to embody those ideals in our own organization. The curriculum was resonating with the midshipmen, who were excited by the possibilities. They were taking in the concepts and applying them intelligently back in the Hall.

Then we ran into the inertia, and at times direct opposition, of the orthodoxy of the senior leaders at the Academy—officers tempered in the dysfunction of the existing culture and attached to maintaining the status quo. While they had wanted us to create something new, they were uncomfortable with how new we were taking it. The senior officers were still smarting from the trials of implementing Total Quality Leadership in the Fleet, and its subsequent failure, so there was somewhat of a rebound effect. The previous orthodoxy was comfortable and familiar, like a worn sports jersey that had seen better days but reminded them of a more simple time when things seemed to work the way they were supposed to.

In retrospect, my fellow officers and I were being heretical: we were loyal to the institution of the Academy and to the naval service, and we cherished our roles as officers and leaders of our people. But we also stood for a higher noble

cause—our Navy becoming a more honorable, humanistic, and principle-centered organization than it was.

I do not share this anecdote to imply that being heretical means taking all-or-nothing actions in an organization. I share it to illustrate the kind of situation I found myself in, one in which I recognized that the paradigm of business-as-usual was not necessarily the best way of doing business and deciding to stand up and be a proponent of change. It was a situation in which I had to decide if it was something I wanted to address—and if so, what actions I would take.

Because of this experience, I want my leadership model to help prepare leaders for similar situations. I want leaders to reflect on why they do what they do—and why their organizations do what they do and determine what standards they will uphold for their own behavior.

On a positive note, while we were required to dial back our efforts at transformation to a more “reasonable” incremental improvement level, the embers of the “new truths” we had championed still smoldered at the Academy even after we had left. Today, the curriculum includes many of those then-radical elements and their practices have become business-as-usual. The officers-to-be are entering the Fleet better prepared to become, dare I say it, leadership catalysts.

Heresy among heretics

My first civilian job after the Navy afforded an opportunity for me to help an industry innovator look to reinvent key aspects of its organization. I had joined up with USinternetworking, Inc. (USi) a week before the company went public, and a

year later, I was moving to a new division just as a major reorganization was implemented—including a surprise reduction in force. As you can imagine, people in the company were in shock. The company had been doing so well: It had been experiencing explosive growth from 451 employees, when I started, to a high of about 1,300. To see signs of the company faltering was a blow to morale.

I still saw potential in the company and was excited by the possibility for regaining our prominence in an industry that we had, in essence, created. In conversations with other colleagues around the company, I recognized that there were others as hopeful for the company as I. Although employee engagement had decreased because of the uncertainty that the layoffs created, people seemed to be looking for a reason to re-engage. So I decided to give them one and created a group I called “USi Champions” and invited others to join via e-mail:

Subj: Impacting the Success of USi

For those of you who know me, “hello.” :-)

For those of you who don’t know me, you were suggested as someone who has a positive feeling about USi and is committed to the success of the company.

Let me tell you what I am up to:

I am committed to the success of this company—so much so that I am looking into ways that I can further make a difference. I am hosting a meeting for like-minded individuals who would like to have an inquiry into what a group of dedicated, intelligent, and enthusiastic people can accomplish in supporting USi’s strategic plan. If having an impact on the success of the company appeals to you, please join me in a conversation about what is possible for the company.

One of the measures I am looking to accomplish is to see the following headline in any respected Business magazine: “USi stock reaches triple-

digits, splits, proves NASDAQ is doing well.” I think that would be a fun game to play. Who wants to join me?

I sent it to 34 people, and everyone who responded—about half—were favorable to the idea. We held meetings approximately every other week, growing to 30+ attendees (there were no official rosters, as anyone was welcome to attend and not everyone could make each meeting). By our third meeting, we had created a charter to serve as a vision for our efforts, naming ourselves *USi Champions* because it represented what we stood for in the company—a group of employees championing the cause of the employees and the success of the company.

During this time, there were more rumblings about the status of the company, and we determined that it was a good idea to let the leadership know there was a group of employees engaged in making the company a success. I wrote an e-mail to the company's CEO and COO:

Subj: Impacting the Success of USi

To: Andy [the CEO] and Chuck [the COO],

Thank you for your latest quarterly letter. It was encouraging to read the latest successes of the company and to see the senior management's commitment to improve communication.

I wanted to pass on to you that there are those of us in the company who feel that it is not just management's responsibility for improving communication—it's the responsibility of the employees, as well.

About a month ago, I gathered a group of enthusiastic, dedicated, and talented employees who were (and are) interested in making more of an impact on the success of the company. This community has had a series of lunchtime meetings now and has about 30+ people interested in contributing to the effort.

We have been working on a “charter” for our group to keep us aligned with USi’s Corporate Goals and focus our efforts on playing big for the company. Here is what we have come up with:

To realize the future of USi as the dominant global ASP, to champion the views of USi employees to USi senior leadership, to connect everyone at USi with our corporate vision, and to create and sustain a USi community dedicated to opportunity and achievement.

We see ourselves as employees who are championing the success of every employee and championing the success of USi, and have named our informal community *USi Champions*. We are interested in regenerating and sustaining the excitement, spirit, commitment, and drive that existed in the early days of the company—and affirm USi as the Technology Employer of Choice.

We thought you should be aware of this community of employees who are excited about what USi is doing, who are committed to the astounding success of USi, and are determined to make a huge contribution in this effort. We have some ideas that we think can hasten the transformation of internal communications that you have set in motion. A few of us (Dick P., Jim L., and myself) request a 30-minute meeting with you to discuss our ideas and get your feedback on how we can put this group of USi Champions to work to further support our USi vision.

Both of them sent favorable replies to my e-mail. The COO replied that he was putting together a group to investigate and make recommendations for improving the company, but “it sounds like you are way out in front of us.” He also recognized that, while there was criticism of the company’s leadership—even admitting he needed some improvement in that area—employee leadership was necessary, too. “This effort is a demonstration of that—leadership by example—exactly the best kind.”

The CEO shared that he had already heard about the Champions group and was pleased to see it taking shape. “Thank you for stepping up and providing unsolicited leadership. That behavior is the core of what will enable us to

maintain and build upon our success.” During his remarks at the next all-hands meeting, the CEO announced our group and shared its purpose, generating much interest among the employees.

Based on my previous military career experience, this kind of interaction with my “chain-of-command” would have been unheard of! Junior officers do not provide unsolicited advice to the Captain and Executive Officer on how to lead the ship’s crew, nor do they take it upon themselves to create a grassroots, outside-the-organization-chart movement to try to influence and improve performance of the command—no matter how supportive the groups “charter” is of the ship’s mission. These were behaviors that were completely heretical in my world up to that point—as well as for the organization—but I was determined to make a difference so I stepped out of conventional behaviors and challenged the current orthodoxy.

Unfortunately, this example does not have a heroic ending. The USi Champions were not able to help save the company. Within six months of the all-hands meeting, the company reorganized for a second time and shed employees in two more rounds of layoffs. Three months after that, USi ended up filing for bankruptcy and was taken over by a private company. This anecdote, however, serves as a perspective on how a leadership catalyst can change the energy in the workplace and realign others so that they are engaged, productive, and innovative—even in a *turbulent environment*. When I came up with the idea of starting the Champions group, I had no previous model to draw upon. In the military, the chain-of-command exerts a strong influence on the members to

follow orders and just go along with the plan. For me to decide to take actions on my own to try to make a difference in the company—outside of my own job description—was completely out of character for me *and* for the company. But I was committed to the success of the company and wanted to do what I could to renew the company's spirit and vigor. I was loyal to the company and, at the same time, I was loyal to the idea that our company needed to move in a new direction—fast. Somehow, the idea of becoming a champion for the company and my fellow employees emerged from my alignment with the vision of the company to be successful in an industry it created. Tapping into my connections around the company was my attempt to become a force multiplier for engagement and creative thinking, and a possible source for unprecedented performance.

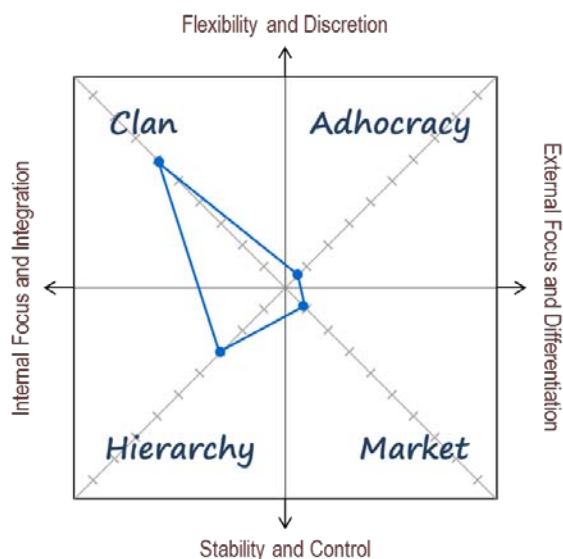
Organizational Cultural Assessment Instrument

Catalyst leaders have an effective tool in the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI)—developed by Cameron and Quinn and based on their competing values framework—which assess organizational effectiveness across two dimensions. The first dimension is a continuum that differentiates between effectiveness through flexibility, discretion, and dynamism at one end and stability, order, and control at the other. The second dimension differentiates between effectiveness due to an internal orientation and integration versus that due to an external orientation and rivalry (1999). The intersection of these two competing-values dimensions forms four quadrants that Cameron and Quinn use to represent major culture types of organizations:

The robustness of these dimensions and the richness of the resulting quadrants led us to identify each quadrant as a cultural type. That is, each quadrant represents basic assumptions, orientations, and values—the same elements that comprise and organizational culture. The OCAI, therefore, is an instrument that allows you to diagnose the dominant orientation of your own organization based on these core culture types. It also assists you in diagnosing your organization’s cultural strength, cultural type, and cultural congruence. (1999, pp. 36-37)

Figure 26 represents the OCAI model and plots the organizational culture profile of the PBS Ready To Learn headquarters while I was there.⁵

Figure 26. Organizational culture profile of PBS Ready To Learn



Looking through the lens of the OCAI Competing Values Framework, the PBS organization was operating strongly as a Clan culture—with some flavoring of a Hierarchy culture due to the influence of ED. A *clan* measures effectiveness as a family-type organization, defined by the authors in this way:

⁵ I created this image using PowerPoint and following the design that Cameron and Quinn use to display the results of their OCAI instrument. The organizational scores are based on my responses to the OCAI questions.

Shared values and goals, cohesion, participativeness, individuality, and a sense of “we-ness” permeated clan-type firms. They seemed more like extended families than economic entities...

Some basic assumptions in a clan culture are that the environment can best be managed through teamwork and employee development, customers are best thought of as partners, the organization is in the business of developing a humane environment, and the major task of management is to empower employees and facilitate their participation, commitment, and loyalty. (1999, p. 41)

The RTL mission was to prepare children up to age eight for success in school. Our program featured the *Learning Triangle*, comprising three elements: view children’s programming, read books, and do activities—all based around a common theme to reinforce learning habits. *View-Read-Do* was a frequently repeated theme around the office and with the Coordinators. During a seminar featuring an Appreciative Inquiry process, which is an organizational development method that focuses on what is working in an organization rather than what is broken—this group clearly communicated their shared values and goals of helping parents and educators prepare their children for school. In addition, one of the treasured aspects of the two yearly seminars that RTL provided was that the 148 coordinators from around the country met up with and re-connected to their counterparts. For them, it was gratifying to be in a room with colleagues who had the same purpose in life and could understand the pressures, obstacles, joys, and rewards of their work. They also shared a sense of frustration that other PBS station employees did not understand or appreciate the work of these outreach coordinators, as their brand of work did not fit easily into the “Market” culture of the sales and advertising side of the stations or the “Hierarchy” culture of the operations side.

RTL staff members were often consulted for their inputs on how to improve the way RTL did business, which experts should be approached for seminars, what books or give-away items should be supplied to members, or what kinds of training should be provided to Coordinators. There was also an expectation that departments would chip in to help each other during big projects or events to get the job done. When it came time to stuff tote bags for a seminar, we had a bucket-brigade of people from the whole team taking turns to help out. During events, we would all show up at the start to mingle with Coordinators and let them know we were around if they had any questions. The Coordinators were full members of the overall RTL team, but they were also the customers of the headquarters staff. Coordinators were often consulted, via surveys and message lists, for their views on what worked and to share success strategies. We even had an advisory group of eight Coordinators who represented the various regions of the country and participated in high-level discussions about RTL, its results, and the direction we should go.

Since RTL was a non-profit entity, it is no surprise there was not much of a business or market mentality. With only 14 staff members, it was easy to feel like one big family working toward a common purpose. The younger staff members would even kiddingly refer to the Senior Director as “mom,” on occasion.

Because of the influence of the Department of Education, which provided the grant that funded RTL, some aspects of the Hierarchy culture were present.

According to Cameron and Quinn, the Hierarchy culture’s success is based on:

...seven characteristics that have become known as the classical attributes of bureaucracy: rules, specialization, meritocracy, hierarchy,

separate ownership, impersonality, and accountability. These characteristics were highly effective in accomplishing their purpose. They were adopted widely in organizations whose major challenge was to generate efficient, reliable, smooth-flowing, predictable output....

Clear lines of decision-making authority, standardized rules and procedures, and control and accountability mechanisms were valued as the keys to success. (1999, p. 37)

RTL relied heavily on ED grant funding and therefore had strict guidelines for how we operated, not only as employees, but also for any kind of monetary expenditure. Contracts with vendors and for services were taken very seriously, and the money had to be accounted for in yearly reports to the government. Compensation time for employees was not treated lightly because our salaries were paid for by the grant as well. The Senior Director did not want to create any perception of being cavalier with the grant money. As a pseudo-department of PBS, we also had to follow stringent guidelines for hiring employees and for performance evaluations and compensation.

Finally, the Senior Director was very reserved and proper in her actions. Although she seemed to participate in the sense that the staff was one big family, she definitely cultivated the aura that she was the parent, and the “kids” would do what she said when the decision was made. She was approachable and acted as a mentor, but she also held the line with regard to the way business was conducted and in communications to outside entities. She had strong tendencies to coordination and organization.

In the end, the Department of Education forced RTL into an Adhocracy culture when it promulgated new grant guidelines and created a complete shift in how it wanted RTL work to be done, essentially disbanding the current

organization and causing a new one to be formed from a mixture of organizations. Any existing staff members who managed to transition to the new organization would have had to adapt to the dissolution of the culture they were familiar with and move through the uncertain territory of forging a new corporate culture. As part of the new team, they would help create new espoused values and, as they successfully overcame institutional challenges, would help forge new underlying assumptions that would become the organizational norms.

APPENDIX F

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OUTLINE

A high-level outline of the process I have created for developing leadership catalysts is provided in Table 7. This process builds on my experience as a leadership instructor, consultant, and organizational dynamics student. It incorporates the elements I have addressed in this chapter, with the express goal of providing a unique, experiential process for anyone—whether they are already a leader or not—who wants to improve their performance and contribute to improving the performance of others.

Table 7. Leadership Catalyst Developmental Process Outline

SESSION A		
Day	Topic	Agenda Items
1	Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to course• Rules of Engagement• Introduction to leadership catalyst model
	Being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How the brain works• Stimulus→Response
2	Mindful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The neuroscience of Being Mindful• The Leadership Wheel• Understanding our conditioning• Tools to help Being Mindful
3	Connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal values• The neuroscience of Being Connected• 360° review setup
	Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss intermission activities

INTERMISSION 1 (5 weeks)

- Daily reading/audio assignments
- Weekly journal assignment
- Practice Being Mindful and connected
- Online discussion board
- One or two virtual meetings to ask questions and share progress

SESSION B

Day	Topic	Agenda Items
1	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share successes and challenges since last session• Clarify learning concepts
	Intentional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group Dynamics• Group norms• Membership• Conflict
2	Intentional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diagnosis and Design• GMQ• Goal planning
	360° Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status update of 360° review processes
	Generative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Being Generative• Identifying higher purpose
	Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss intermission activities

INTERMISSION 2 (5 weeks)

- Daily reading/audio assignments
- Weekly journal assignment
- Practice Being Intentional and generative
- Online discussion board
- One or two virtual meetings to ask questions and share progress

SESSION C

Day	Topic	Agenda Items
1	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share successes and challenges since last session• Clarify learning concepts
	Heretical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mindset for innovation and creativity• Assessing organizational culture• Taking care of your people
2	360° Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Debrief feedback results
	Force multiplier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing the activation energy for change• Take an active role in developing others
	Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designing a structure of practice for being a leadership catalyst

FOLLOW-UP/COMPLETION (2 weeks later)

Virtual meeting to share successes, challenges, and last thoughts.

