

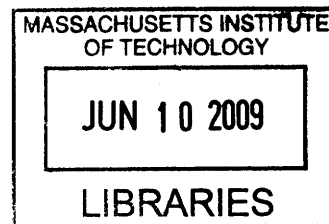
Profound Impact: Leadership Effectiveness and Organizational Transformation through Mindfulness, Intention and Possibility

by Lisa Griffiths

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Submitted to the MIT Sloan School of Management in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Business Administration
at the
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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of the convergence of ideas in science, psychology, organizational theory and leadership development around ideas of interconnectedness, mindfulness, intention and transformation.

First, I explore how the fields of quantum physics and natural sciences are shedding new light on the power of our thoughts, feelings, and intentions to create our world. In this way, these non-tangible things have impact on the tangible world, both our own experience of it and the experience of the whole. Further, when we begin to see the study of management and organization as the study of human communities, rather than as transactional machines, we realize the interconnections and the possibility for change by focusing on communications and relationships.

Delving into organizational leadership, I regard a leader as a potential change agent, but not the sole actor of change. Key to this idea is the assertion that change happens in relation to the world and people around oneself - fundamentally, in *relation*. While individual reflection and spiritual work are important to setting a course for change, it is in relation to others that we act. In these actions and conversations we create and are created. Therefore when we engage in work of change management, seeking to change individual behaviors or organizational outcomes, we must address the whole. Change targeted at the individual alone is insufficient.

Finally, I suggest that this new way of regarding organizational leadership and management has the potential to radically transform business education and leadership theory for the 21st century. Previous organizational environments dominated by competition and scarcity are being replaced by environments of collaboration, abundance and possibility.

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I. Introduction

This thesis has at its core research into existing theory and philosophy, and associated practices for transformative leadership. I have focused on how the work of adaptive change processes and personal leadership can benefit from the study of reflection, presence, sensemaking and authentic relationship. Through examination of the work of Margaret Wheatley, Otto Scharmer, Ben Zander, Eckhart Tolle, Werner Erhard and others, this study considers how both personal and collective transformation creates (and is essential for) effective leadership in the organizational realm, including the corporate, non-profit and government sectors.

The latter part of this study considers how these theories can be useful, perhaps even to MIT Sloan. I suggest that these theories are part of an emerging way of interpreting our world and our collective and individual roles in it. Schools of management such as MIT Sloan may be a part of this emergence, as an incubator for innovation and for the development of breakthrough technologies in management and leadership. Using this framework, we can examine how we develop leaders and define our values as a school. Both in the world of business and in schools of management we have an opportunity to engage in business in a new way. The current global economic crisis, the environmental crisis and massive issues in public health and development policy have raised questions about the sustainability of western civilization through the 21st century and beyond. As a business school, training leaders of the future, we are uniquely positioned to transform the world of business and organizations. Finally, I will pay particular attention to the role of this work as it pertains to issues of environmental and social sustainability and corporate responsibility.

Business is one of the most powerful forces in the world today. Organizations can shift public policy, create or change livelihoods, impact interpersonal relationships and shape public perceptions. If we are to emerge from the financial, environmental and social crises of our times we must inspire organizational innovation that creates a new paradigm. Underlying this assertion is the idea that we may be seeing a societal evolution beyond the useful life of some of our existing institutions and organizational structures. By this, I do not mean that institutions and organizations as we know them will cease to exist. Rather, this evolution comes as we face an opportunity for new forms to emerge, and for existing ones to evolve or dissipate in the face of a changing environment. Perhaps we need a new understanding of the world, and through that lens, a reinventing of business and business leadership to carry us to the next phase of human history and societal evolution.

This study is an examination of existing work, but it is simply the tip of the iceberg. As is stated in *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations and Society*, a cornerstone of this work, “In the end, we concluded that understanding presence and possibilities of larger fields for change can come only from many perspectives – from the emerging science of living systems, from the creative arts, from profound organizational change experiences, and from direct contact with the generative capacities of nature.

Virtually all indigenous or native cultures have regarded nature or the universe or Mother Earth as the ultimate teacher. At few points in history has the need to rediscover this teacher been greater.” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

Presencing is a blend of the words "presence" and "sensing." It refers to the ability to sense and bring into the present one's highest future potential. (Scharmer, 2007) Presencing is step between observing and taking action when we have the opportunity to be present in our

assessments, realize the interconnectedness and be present to the whole and each of the parts all at once. By using this definition, we introduce the act of presencing as a key step in leadership and personal transformation.

A fundamental distinction of this study is that it is an examination of both individual and organizational change. In the psychological theory of individual change, it is asserted that a person changes when a new insight, idea or form fits well with his self-perception and seems to help him become a clearer expression of who he is or aspires to be. (Wheatley, 2006)

Whether individual, or collective as in organizations, change also happens out of a need to adapt to a changing environment or changing circumstances. It is my view that change, awareness and a deeper sense of presence must occur in both the individual and the organization for successful transformative work to take place.

Finally, this study proposes that by regaining awareness of our inherent interconnectedness we can allow the emergence of a transcendent human community. In that sense, this paper argues that the quality of our relationships with one another is becoming more and more central in allowing organizations to thrive.

Key Ideas:

1. How we relate to the world – our words, thoughts, emotions and feelings – has impact in the material world. In that way we co-create our world, and we are *constantly* in this state of creation.
2. Defining and developing leadership:
 - A leader is a potential agent of change, but cannot create change alone; it is in relation to others and the world that change happens. The whole and the individual are interrelated and simultaneous – they cannot be broken apart.
 - Influence, emergence and innovation happen in the relationships between people. If we focus only the individual, we miss the greater impact of the collective.
 - Awareness and “presencing” are key skills/tools for transformational leadership.
3. Authentic communication is key to transformational work. Change happens in the words, language and non-verbal communications between ourselves and the interconnected world around us. In this way, authentic communication is how leaders enact their values and a sense of possibility.
4. A collective vision is powerful and is fundamentally related to authentic communication. The vision of the whole creates a powerful field that exerts influence on the behaviors and conversations of each individual as part of the collective.
5. The old way of business is competition/tension/fear. This limits the ability for something new to emerge. A new model of organizations is founded in awareness, collective emergence, openness and possibility.

A. Hypothesis

Organizations that seek to thrive in the current institutional paradigm must embrace the idea of transformation as a powerful tool to achieve breakthrough presence in business and society. Through transformative work people find new ways to relate to one another, and can not only live life powerfully, but also be in the workplace with more power, passion, commitment and ability to achieve extraordinary results. Organizations that wrestle with this new world of possibility, engagement and relationship will surpass their competitors in the marketplace.

When the work of change is at the level of an entire organization or community, the search for new meaning must be conducted as a collective inquiry. Through collective inquiry we are able to engage in a change process that relates to the whole entity, not just its parts. Indeed, to really embrace and evolve through transformation we must begin to shift the whole. An organization can be viewed as a system, and we will see through our study of the new scientific thought that a system that asks questions of identity, information and relationships is more self-aware. The organization becomes more connected to the truth of its identity, and to the organization's environment and customers. The interconnections help the system develop greater capacity, and the feedback loops and insight made available help the organization become healthier.

How will this transformative work be achieved? Here we find that communication from a place of authenticity creates the environment and the conditions required for change that is impactful. People must be authentic in their relations with one another and with their community, organizations, environment and the world around them. Quantum physics helps us consider each person not as a separate entity but as part of an interrelated and unbroken

whole. In this light, transformative work occurs only when we are being truly present in relation with one another. Change cannot happen in isolation, rather each individual must see the impact of relationships with others before being able to enact change at the level of self.

The thesis is also a call for further research, and the development of a new framework for the study of management. The examination of the intersections between varying fields has led me to call for collaboration and continuing research that transcends the interconnected but often separated fields of study related to ecology, sociology, leadership, economics, physics, natural sciences and spirituality.

II. The Evolving Science of Leadership, the Universe and Possibility

A. The Science behind this Study

The dominant worldview asserts that there is an objective reality, one that can be observed using scientific methods of analysis and understanding. It is this perceived 'reality' that we interact with and out of which comes our experience, perceptions and collections of memories, ideas and thoughts.

The field of quantum physics presents us with a new way of seeing the world around us and seeing the world in which we are engaged. Instead of seeing the world as defined by the opposites of order and chaos, or tension between control and individual freedom, we begin to see the world as defined by constant change and dynamism (Wheatley, 2006). This new definition of the nature of the universe allows us to consider the possibility inherent in chaos, the way in which our relation to the universe actually creates the reality that we experience.

It is an exciting time however, as we have arrived at a turning point in our intellectual history. New scientific thought proposes that reality is merely a figment of our perception, and that our thoughts, feelings and energy actually create the universe and our experience of it, both physical and mental/emotional alike. (Capra, 1983) Further, there is no true state of observation, as by observing the world around us we consider, react to, make meaning of, and therefore actually *create* the world around us. The way we see the world shapes the way we experience the world. Through our interpretation of events and conversations of our lives we, in effect, envision our lives. We are both an observer and an actor, and what we see becomes real.

Quantum matter, it has been shown, develops in relation to the observer and is impacted by what the observer expects to see. This basic finding, still not fully understood, challenges the very idea of objectivity. In this way, the effect of the act of perceiving is immediate and cannot be dismissed. With no objective reality, what we observe, experience or perceive is not ever really in existence without our perception. We co-create the phenomenon through our chosen acts of observation. (Zukav, 1979) It is impossible then for there to be an objective reality that can be the same to any two individuals. Our reality is what we have invented.

1. Implications of the New Science

Accepting that we are constantly in a state of creation, we can open previously unrealized worlds of possibility. Suddenly we have the power to create. We are not victims, actors or pieces in a puzzle. Rather, we are the puzzle, the performance and the meaning-makers. And it is only through relation with others, in the forms of thought and communications that we create any meaning at all. We have previously understood communication to be executed through words, behaviors and body language. Even considered broadly, as ideas, visions and expressions, we are only taking part of the equation – what really exists depends on each of our individual engagements with the experiences around us. Thoughts are at play. Feelings are at play. We have to consider how we are in relation to the world and how our every thought, reflection and feeling can impact our experience and the experience of the whole.

Our emerging worldview sees in this not only the aspect of creation, but the resulting idea of interconnectedness. Not only are events, people and places connected through histories, but a

new sense of “connectedness between the ‘outer world’ of manifest phenomena and the ‘inner world’ of lived experience,” becomes available to us. This new way of seeing the world could revolutionize science, technology and policy. As the authors point out in *Presence*, “While philosophers and spiritual teachers have long spoken about connectedness, a scientific worldview of connectedness could have sweeping influence in ‘shifting the whole,’ given the role of science and technology in the modern world.” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

Our previous way of understanding the universe as a vast place of separate parts, interconnected but still explained as unique objects of matter, has begun to shift with the advanced study of this new science. Our mechanistic view of the universe has begun to change to something more loosely defined. Astronomer James Jeans characterized this when he said, “The universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine.” (Capra, 1983) When scientists have accepted this premise they are able to let go of a reductionist search for the “basic building blocks” of matter, and begin to examine the in-between spaces - the relationships, forces, energies and fields that might be of more interest through this new lens.

Finally, this new understanding of matter and the power of thought and energy, has implications for business and the study of organizations. Viewing all parts as interconnected, enables us to enact change and organizational transformation with a new sense of possibility. In this study, I will explore these implications, and the ways in which the study of mindfulness and intention can and should impact the study of organizations, management and leadership.

2. Synchronistic Events

When people begin to connect with their deeper intentions and find themselves as a true expression of both what is and what can be, a phenomenon begins to occur wherein incredibly synchronistic events are seen. Carl Jung defined synchronicity as “a meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved.” There is a seeming paradox in this statement, that coincidence and something other than chance are used to define the same phenomenon. This relates to the expression of intention and the impact of non-matter, or fields, on the expression of matter in the universe. When people become more open to the potential future emerging, seeming synchronistic events become apparent. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

Synchronistic events occur when an idea, thought or emotion is simultaneously experienced by groups of more than one person. This is the power of collective energy, and the convergence of this energy causes events that seem to be coincidental to occur. When we begin to feel and see these seeming coincidences take place, we are experiencing an outcome of our participating more consciously in the conversation of the universe that is unfolding in this moment within ourselves.

B. New Art of Leadership

With this lens of the evolving understanding of science, and the assertions of interconnectedness and creation, we can begin to consider how the art of leadership might evolve. If we are constantly creating, and change is both welcome and necessary, how do we

create organizations that are flexible and adaptive, rather than those that are constraining and binding? How do we enable organizational change, positive outcomes and successful, fulfilling relationships both within and beyond the traditional walls of the organization? To answer these questions we can begin with an examination of leadership definition and frameworks.

1. Leadership as Self

The definition of self, or the “I” becomes very important when we begin to ask critical questions about how leadership can be defined, and how an individual’s leadership profile might interact with their efforts to create meaningful transformation in an organization and in life. From an early age, the construction of an identity of self, the creation of the “I” begins to take shape. I am identified by gender, ethnicity, roles, experiences and stories that become the definition of “I.” Take the leap to consider how this process manifests further in life – as a person develops as a leader, there is still a story that starts with the noun “I.” A person becomes defined by the characteristics, likes, dislikes and experiences of “self.” A leader manifests these mental models in the act of leading, and is still bound by these constructs. (Tolle, 2005) Tolle refers to this concept as identifying the ego as separate from the reality that surrounds us. The construct of self is the ego, whereas the possibility that we live into in the future is the truer and more accurate undefined state of being.

Examining leadership as contingent on our identification of self, we can gain insight into the role of ego in our presence as a leader. Whether in professional, social or personal settings, we can ask the same set of questions one might ask when identifying the role of ego in

spiritual growth. Our own behaviors as a leader, our ability to make sense of the events around us, to express thoughts in conflict or compassionate leadership in challenging times, are all guided by our own sense of meaning-making. We assign meaning to what we are experiencing and our ego acts out of the place of that meaning. (Tolle, 2005) When we learn to identify this ego, and consider it as the mental model, the construct of self based on early labels, history and our past experiences, we can begin to step outside and be present to the actions of our ego. This act of witnessing our thoughts, allows us to further be present to what is emerging independent of self, rather from the whole.

Tolle's examination of ego can be further instrumental in our definition of leadership. The reader may begin to wonder how we are simultaneously guided by our thoughts and our past experiences, and at the same time, expected to set them aside, or hold them separate from our actions in the world. The goal, however, is not to eliminate ego, rather to identify it and to be able to see that there may be other possible experiences of reality aside from the one I am having.

Nonreaction to the ego, not allowing the ego to dominate actions in response to the observed or felt phenomenon, can be a powerful exercise that opens people up to possibilities beyond the egoic experience. (Tolle, 2005) Tolle articulates that "nonreaction to ego in others is one of the most effective ways not only of going beyond ego in yourself, but also of dissolving the collective human ego." Primary to this exercise is the ability to recognize the ego in another, and to identify the seen behaviors and actions as coming from the ego rather than as being an authentic expression of the person or the collective of humanity. This ability to separate the person from the unconscious or conscious behaviors that come from the ego, frees us up to see the possibility in each person, and to experience the world as a positive place of potential,

rather than a negative circumstance about which we should complain or feel resentment.

(Tolle, 2005)

As we begin to consider this idea that the whole exists in each of the parts and vice versa, we can start to see that perhaps there is something to be examined in the relationships. That is to say, the study of the whole and the parts also must be mindful of the relationships between and among entities and the fields we create. Of course, the art of leadership can also be examined for its relational nature. A leader, and the portfolio of principles and characteristics that define a leader, were for many years examined in isolation. We defined a successful leader by asking questions about what actions should be taken and what type of analytical skills and experience should be present in a designated “leader.” By its very nature, the ego creates a separation between the self and the non-self. Our way of identifying what is me and what is outside of me creates a separation that, when examined from the perspective of quantum physics, can be considered a paradox and one that does a disservice to us in our efforts to work with others and be an effective leader.

Narrowly defined, leadership can be taken as an ability to compel others to action. Powerful leaders are able to direct and inspire people to achieve collective outcomes. Our traditional models of measurement, though, lead us to reward leaders who can get results, despite their tactics or approaches. Within the thinking of this new paradigm, true power in leadership emerges when leaders more authentically relate to those with whom they work, and truly work collaboratively, in the spirit of abundance and possibility to reach new breakthroughs and generate collaborative, creative, and inspired results.

In considering leadership in *The Art of Possibility*, by Rosamund Stone Zander and husband Ben Zander, we are encouraged to consider a new framing question: “How much greatness are we willing to grant?” (Zander, 2000) We can consider this as the idea of being willing to allow that others are truly great – beyond great, they are truly phenomenal and most importantly, that that greatness does not detract from our own. If we look with the intention of seeing this greatness in them, we will begin to find evidence of it, and they will begin to feel more honest engagement from us. As a leader, this exercise can frame one’s entire leadership approach. If your leadership style is to believe in the possibility and potential in those around you, you allow for them to live into that potential. When we decide that we are leading talented, insightful, well-intentioned people, we begin to see that in them. And perhaps most importantly, the people that we see in this light begin to see that in themselves. (Zander, 2000) This new way of not only seeing, but also being in relation to people, makes a transformative difference in our relationships, and creates a new form of leadership that engenders success in both our personal and professional lives.

We are used to thinking of leadership as a study of the ways in which an individual relates to the organization or the people that the individual is leading. In the study of living systems in the natural world we find that each organism maintains a clear sense of individual identity within a larger network of relationships that helps shape its identity. Just as our cells are separate cells, and are simultaneously a part of the complex systems that is the human body, we are separate selves, and yet we are simultaneously part of a whole system. Autopoiesis is a fundamental process of life, creating and renewing oneself for growth and change. (Capra, *The Web of Life*, 1997)

Autopoiesis literally means "auto (self)-creation" (from the Greek: auto αὐτό for self- and poiesis ποίησις for creation or production), and expresses a fundamental dialectic between structure and function.

More generally, the term autopoiesis resembles the dynamics of a non-equilibrium system; that is, organized states (sometimes also called dissipative structures) that remain stable for long periods of time despite matter and energy continually flowing through them. From a very general point of view, the notion of autopoiesis is often associated with that of self-organization. However, an autopoietic system is autonomous and operationally closed, in the sense that every process within it directly helps maintaining the whole. Autopoietic systems are structurally coupled with their medium in dialect dynamic of changes that can be recalled as sensory-motor coupling. This continuous dynamic is considered as knowledge and can be observed throughout life-forms.

-From Reference.com (c) Dictionary.com 2009

An example of an autopoietic system is the cell. A cell is made up of components such as acids and proteins and organized into structures such as the nucleus and the cell membrane. The structures produce the components which continue to maintain the bounded structure and in turn, continue to produce. (Capra, 1997) When we consider all of life, including human life, through the lens of autopoiesis we begin to understand that “all organisms are capable of creating a ‘self’ through their intimate engagement with all others in their system.” (Wheatley, 2006)

2. Selected Leadership Frameworks

“Leadership, an amorphous phenomenon that has intrigued us since people began organizing, is now being examined for its relational aspects. Few if any theorists ignore the complexity of relationships that contribute to a leader’s effectiveness. Instead, there are more and more studies on partnership, followership, empowerment, teams, networks, and the role of context.” (Wheatley, 2006) Leaders in today’s organizations must have the freedom to make decisions and influence organizational direction based on information, energies and meaning that are relevant to them. Proscriptive solutions are no longer relevant in the world of ever-emerging challenges and global crises. The new art of leadership demands heightened sensitivities to the multi-faceted dynamics of an organization.

New frameworks for successful leadership emphasize sensemaking¹, intuition, passion and personal values in order to face the increasingly complex and surprising challenges of our time.

¹ Leaders learn to compete, survive and change by first understanding the context in which an organization and its people operate... leaders share a common challenge—the need to quickly assess a constantly changing environment and to continually readjust as they take in new information and impressions. How can they make sense of a world where feedback is unclear and inconsistent? Where the ‘correct’ answer is not obvious? Where they must understand and change their environment simultaneously? This important leadership challenge is called sensemaking: discovering new terrain as you invent it. (MIT Leadership Center)

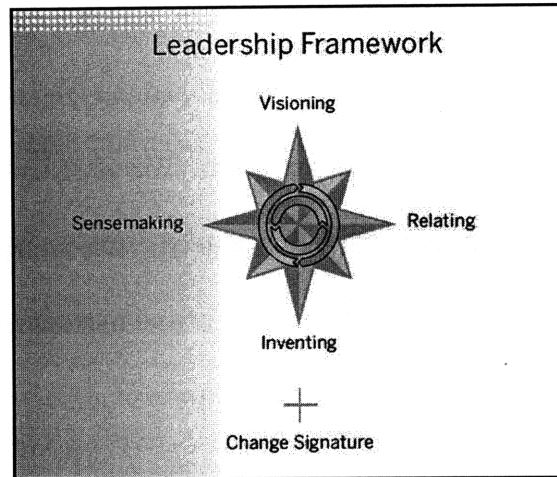


Fig A: MIT Leadership Center Four Capabilities Framework (Ancona, 2005)

Sensemaking is also one of the components of the MIT Distributed Leadership Model and Four Capabilities Framework.

In addition to traditional definitions of leadership, theories on motivation are also starting to reflect the relational nature of human dynamics. Intrinsic motivators are being studied for their ability to energize and inspire people in organizations. When we examine the emotions of humanity: the need for community, meaning, dignity, purpose and love in organizations, we find a new way to characterize leadership in the modern organization. Recent events such as Hurricane Katrina and the global response to the Asian Tsunami argue that the best way to restore order to a chaotic environment is to allow people's collective creativity, love, and capacity to self-organize to emerge in order to make an impact in areas the collective cares about or directs its energy to as a whole. (Wheatley, 2006) This is particularly interesting because it speaks not just to individual motivation but also the factors that motivate and inspire a group to action. This is characteristic of the work of an effective leader.

In this way, we find that work on the “self” is not enough. Likewise, work on the community or group is not enough. Rather, it is both the individual and the whole that are simultaneous and interconnected, and so we must examine them both. We must look at the relationships between people in a new way, but more than that, we must examine the very way we relate to the world around us and the way we communicate about and make meaning of this world, in order to really bring our selves to the work of leadership.

In *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges* (Scharmer, 2007), we are introduced to the fundamental blind spot that Professor C. Otto Scharmer identifies as the source of our crises. He writes “the cause of our collective failure is that we are blind to the deeper dimension of leadership and transformational change. This ‘blind spot’ exists not only in our collective leadership but also in our everyday social interactions. We are blind to the source... from which effective leadership and social action come into being.”

To address this blind spot, Scharmer asserts that we must engage in developing seven capacities. Most fundamental, Scharmer explores a concept he calls “presencing.”

Presencing is a blend of the words "presence" and "sensing," which refers to the ability to sense and bring into the present one's highest future potential. This applies to both the role of the actor as an individual and as a group. (Scharmer, 2007) Presencing is a key part of leadership and personal transformation, between observing and taking action, when we have the opportunity to be present in our assessments, realize the interconnectedness and be present to the whole and each of the parts all at once.

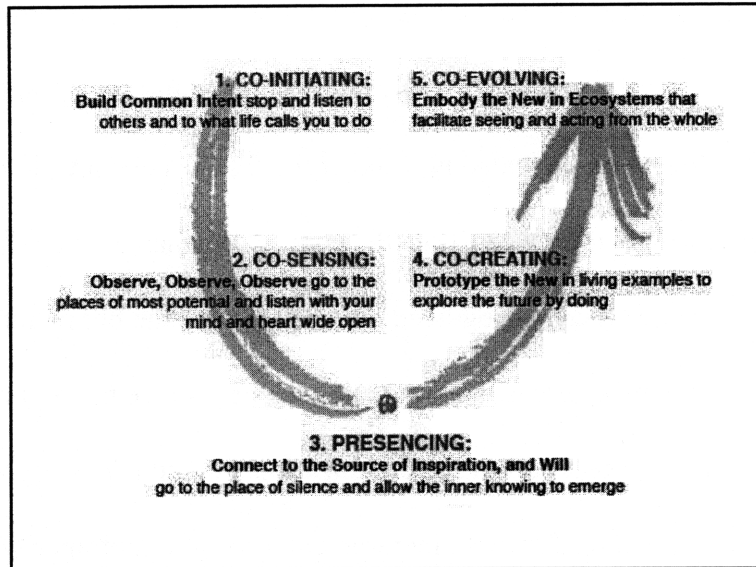


Fig B: Theory U, Leading from the Future as it Emerges (Scharmer, 2007)

Instead of learning from the past, the authors propose a new process of learning from the future that takes the form of three major stages: sensing (observation), presencing (retreat and reflect) and realizing (acting immediately with flow). (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004) Through these stages, the authors assert, we can “sense and actualize new realities prior to their emerging.” In this way we are generating and creating a new reality at the same time as we are imagining such a possibility. (Jaworski, 1996)

Scharmer describes Theory U as both theoretical perspective and practical social technology. “As a theoretical perspective, Theory U suggests that the way in which we attend to a situation determines how a situation unfolds: *I attend this way, therefore it emerges that way.* As a practical social technology, Theory U offers a set of principles and practices for collectively creating the future that wants to emerge (following the movements of co-initiating, co-sensing, co-inspiring, co-creating, and co-evolving).”

Business leaders need an ability to see the whole without being caught up in the individual parts of what is happening in their organizations and related institutions. Ron Heifitz and Donald Laurie call this “being on the balcony,” and argue that leaders have to manage as if they are on the balcony, where, if they can’t see the context for change, they can create one. (Heifitz, 2001) Leaders have always recognized the need to see “the big picture” or to “think outside the box.” What emerges here is that beyond just being above the organization, leaders must consider themselves at once a part of the organization and the *whole organization*. Further, it is not just traditional leaders with hierarchical titles of importance who need to be present to this relationship to the whole, this is a perspective and a sense of knowing that must pervade the organization, as all actors are interconnected and the energy and relationships between people are where this phenomenon really takes place.

C. Transformation in Individuals and Organizations

For the purposes of this study, I refer to “transformation” as the genesis of a new state of being for the people or organizations to which I refer. Each of the authors cited uses their own definition of transformation and transformative work. Zander says that “transformation is a shift in how we experience the world, and these shifts happen continually, often just beyond our notice.” (Zander, 2000)

One of the historically interesting people in the field of transformative work is Werner Erhard. Erhard founded EST in the 1970s and the legacy of his original work can be found today as the curriculum of the Landmark Forum. Landmark Education, the organization that hosts these seminars, refers to transformation as something that happens in an instant, rather than

over months or years or through a plan to reach a transformed outcome. (Symon, 2007) “The program is grounded in a model of transformative learning rather than an informative learning model. Informative or additive learning increases what one knows, adds to one’s skills, extends already established capacities by bringing new knowledge to an existing worldview and frames of reference. Transformative learning, by comparison, gives people an awareness of the basic structures in which one knows, thinks, and acts in the world. From that awareness comes a fundamental shift that leaves people more fully in accord with their own possibilities and those of others.” (Landmark Education, 2006)

For this study, I will use this definition of transformative work. As we begin to consider change and transformation in organizations, I will refer to the two concepts mindful of a distinction Erhard makes in an interview on his work. He distinguishes transformation from change “in that it doesn’t take the past and add to, work from or reorganize, rather it creates a new context in which possibilities that didn’t exist come into being.” (Symon, 2007)

1. Personal or Individual Transformation

The lens of system dynamics can help us assess the evolution of individual behaviors. As individuals interact, individual and collective behaviors evolve on levels greater than just that of one individual’s behavior. To understand self transformation we have to look at the impact of the whole on the self, and the self on the whole. There is no methodical way to diagnose each of the parts and assess desired change to each piece. Rather, we must understand transformation as a possibility that emerges simultaneously through the collective shift in energy around, between and through each of the parts of the whole. Tools used in both

individual and organizational change, such as collective story-telling, collages, imagery, dramatic interpretation and improvisation have gained respect as valuable tools for both leadership development and change because in their artistic, non-linear nature our senses are engaged as much as our analytical minds. In this way, our senses help lead us to new understanding. (Wheatley, 2006)

In the new transformational theory, researchers consider the inventive abilities of the mind, and are examining the ways in which we have power over our thoughts and are able to actually invent our reality. (Zander, 2000) In this, we are not going so far as to articulate the idea that we actually create events and objects through our thoughts. However, as was discussed previously, we do create the interpretations and meanings that determine how we engage with the world, and in that way, we invent the universe in which we live. The mind creates meaning when we are observing or experiencing the world around us. Through this creation of meaning we construct our world, and are constantly determining our own worldview. Once we understand this point, we can begin to examine personal transformation as something very much within our influence. By shifting our own framework for experiencing the world to include the assumptions that will allow us to see the world in ways we desire, we are creating the conditions for our own transformation.

The inventive potential of the mind is further seen when we examine the role of memory in our lives. Our own early childhood memories can govern how we continue to interact with the world around us, and how we interpret the actions of others in love, friendship, work and the daily interactions of life. We recognize actions, behaviors and events that are familiar from our earliest cognitive development and these early meaning-making events then continue to be tied to our present being. In some ways, human culture can be considered over-reliant

on the perception that memory is truth, and that facts can be authoritatively recalled.

However, we have seen brain scientists and memory researchers examine phenomena including total memory loss, false memories and tools such as hypnotherapy to illicit true or created memories in subjects. What if we consider this research, and begin to create new interpretations of our memories? Perhaps the events of the material world stay the same, but the meaning we assign to the events that make up our lives can change. It is, in this way, that we are always creating the world by assigning meaning to it.

An awareness of this inventive ability of the mind is key to transcending the limiting potential in this phenomenon. In *Presence*, the authors refer to this ability to reach a new perspective as “seeing our seeing.” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004) In order to gain this clarity of observation we need not suspend our thoughts, or stop our assessment of reality, and indeed it would likely be a stretch to claim an ability to do so. Rather, in seeing our seeing we are holding our observations in front of us and noticing our thought patterns and judgments that emerge. This concept is not new. Christian, Taoist, Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic Mystic traditions for example, all talk of shifts in awareness labeled terms such as grace, spiritual energy (shin), wholeness and openness. The world’s traditions use different terminology and characterize the outcomes differently, but many view this shift in awareness as central to personal cultivation. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

This suspension process is a way to identify what the authors refer to as the “Voice of Judgment.” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004) Each person’s voice of judgment is constantly active. Judgment is how we make sense of the world and assess how we want to be in the world. We use this voice to differentiate right from wrong, and to assess others’ and our own actions in order to identify motivations, cause and effect. The key is not to resist this

voice – as that too would be nearly impossible and undoubtedly frustrating. Rather, we observe this voice and see the ways in which it is limiting our own creativity and possibility for engagement in the world. With practice, we gradually begin to not only identify our voice of judgment, but also release some of the assessment, and observation begins to take a new form. We can see that we are observing a phenomenon we call reality, and it is simply what it is. When we allow our observations to exist and identify the separation between what we observe and what we judge or assess about what we observe, we experience new freedom of thought. This seeing our seeing or suspension of the voice of judgment, opens a space for a different personal assessment of reality.

Mindfulness and awareness are key elements of bringing this new power to bear on the day to day world of our workplaces and personal lives. Being aware of and present to the fact that what we see, think, feel and do is not who we are, frees us to observe in a state of awareness, and as a result to move through these changing states with a sense of freedom. (Tolle, 2005) Without the confusion of identity wrapped up in the process of each observed state or moment we are allowed to experience what *is*, without trying to “make sense” of it all. This freedom creates an environment in which transformation can emerge.

When we are able to see the mental models that have characterized our way of being in the world we are less likely to be subject to them in an unexamined way. If we take this understanding of shifts in awareness, and overlay the idea of existence as a collective whole, we encounter a new set of questions leading us from our study of individual transformation to the examination of collective or organizational transformation.

2. A View of Transformation as “from the Whole”

a) Is the Whole the Sum of its Parts?

In traditional scientific study, thought leaders and researchers examine questions as they would diagnose a machine that is functioning improperly. The machine is made up of its parts, and presumably those parts work together to manifest outcomes. We can understand the whole by looking at its individual parts. Dissecting a person’s psychological or physical makeup we can diagnose the problem and recommend corrective actions. This view of the world, facilitated by scientists such as Sir Isaac Newton and Rene Descartes, predisposes us to see things in almost fractal relief. This scientific view leads us to look at material components as the most basic “building blocks” of the universe. The study of physics continues to seek the basic composition of matter, and expects the answers to shed light on both everyday and extraordinary phenomena.

The first key distinction of the new science is to engage with and understand the world from a more holistic perspective. In this way we are not only seeing the whole as something more than the sum of its parts, but also becoming aware of the inherent interconnections in a system. We can further consider this principle through the lens of system dynamics [Fig C].

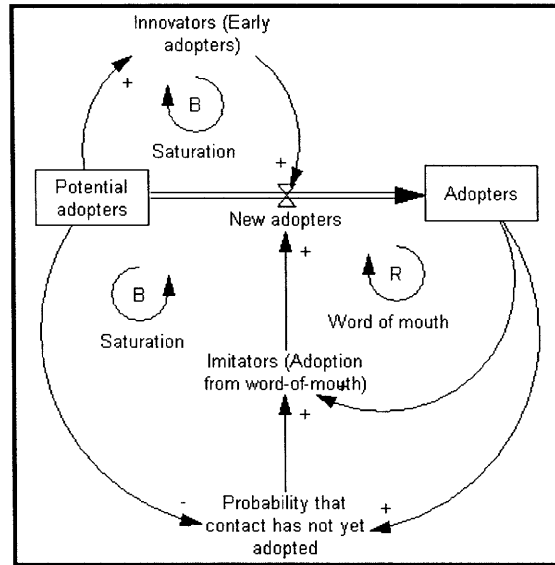


Fig C: "Systems dynamics modeling: tools for learning in a complex world" John Sterman (2001)

Individual components of the whole, when taken as separate pieces, do not necessarily explain the whole. Most importantly, it is the relationships between those separate pieces that define this new understanding of the universe. The connections between two objects, as even with the study of matter, or the study of things such as forces and fields, can make all the difference. Consider the study of gravity. An analysis of two objects in space, falling to the ground, would be vastly incomplete when analyzed from the machine paradigm. It is the unseen, (and at one point in human history, the unknown,) force of gravity that makes the difference. In this way, it is critical that we understand the constant dynamism of the interrelatedness of all things. (Wheatley, 2006)

b) Transformation in Workplaces

How do we balance personal needs for individuality and freedom with organizational needs for structure, prediction and accountability?

Organizational transformation is work that can be enacted by organizational change agents, CEOs, consultants and people at all levels inside an organization. We analyze case studies, related organizations, the competition, our collaborators, and we try to assess what works given our particular reality. However, quantum physics is showing us that our unique realities are what we create. What if we stop relying so heavily on the processes, tools and structures that others have used, and if we instead expect that each organization, each group of people and each individual must find a unique way to relate to the world around them? Engaging the creativity that already exists in each organization would allow us to create unique interpretations, and free us from the pre-existing definition of organizational reality.

Quantum physics has shown us that we can continue to perceive reality in terms of absolute truths, but when we give up thinking there is an “objective” reality, we will be free to find new paths to success and possibility. (Wheatley, 2006)

The findings of this new science have great potential to transform the way we work, and ultimately, the way our workplaces make change in the world. The collection of people that make up an organization can see their work anew, and see the mission and organizational priorities and structures anew. Through this change – allowing our organizations to see work in a new light, we collectively take on great power to transform our work. It is key, however, to allow ourselves to see this change. (Wheatley, 2006)

The study of quantum physics further challenges beliefs about objective measurement in a way that is key for any organization seeking transformed outcomes. At the level of subatomic matter, the observer participates in creation. The observer is constantly impacting the behavior of observed phenomenon. This both leads us to new understanding of how disorderliness and chaos operate in the world, as well as to a new possibility of inherent interconnectedness. (Wheatley, 2006) Perhaps rather than disorder, this is actually a deeper order, a constant flux of energies that change and combine, creating patterns and energy flows previously beyond our perception. Recognizing that we are constantly impacting the world around us, even by the act of “just observing,” opens us up to be present to this phenomenon. This can be a powerful realization for our interactions in the workplace and as leaders of institutions and organizations we seek to change.

These interactions in the workplace are part of what make up our everyday state of being. Being present without resistance, and allowing for what *is*, creates possibility in our daily life. Being present to the physical world without defining, judging or naming the physical world, can open us up to a new way of being in the physical world. In this new way, we find possibility. Our social constructs assign meaning to what is, but our ability to reassign a new meaning, or to simply identify that we are assigning meaning and find in that a freedom, are essential to seeing the world as a place of possibility, and our relationships and organizations as alive in this spirit. (Zander, 2000) Nonresistance is one key to this way of engaging with the world. When we accept a state of observation, and not only keep from judgment, but also allow for what is, we enter a state of nonresistance that frees us to being present in an authentic way. (Tolle, 2005)

As we discussed the voice of judgment in personal observation of what we assess to be “reality,” so too we must examine this phenomenon in groups and particularly in workplaces. The creativity of a team can be a welcome way to elicit inspired ideas, engagement across functional lines and team learning. On the other hand, a group of people can be limited by what is sometimes referred to as “group think.” Group think can be constantly just under the surface, and can be seen in the quieting of dissenting voices, dismissal of ideas or exclusion of group members from discussions, information loops or formal or informal forums. This is the impact of a collective voice of judgment. In modern society, whether in workplaces or social groups, we need shared norms, ways of communicating and engaging and common thought in order to function. In this way groups can be considered to be naturally desirous of a collective voice of judgment. Here again, if we can identify our voice of judgment we can distinguish such assessment from the observation of what is, and can allow for new process outcomes.

Mindfulness, a practice long taught in Buddhist studies and associated meditative and introspective schools of thought, is key to this process of transforming our work in traditional organizations. When we assess organizational challenges, decisions and opportunities from a place of mindfulness we can begin to see out from the emerging whole. Instead of being trapped in the place of judgment and a moment of the past, being in a mindful state allows for whatever is possible to open up in that very moment. “If you bring a certain kind of open, moment-to-moment, nonjudgmental awareness to what you’re attending to, you’ll begin to develop a more penetrative awareness that sees beyond the surface of what’s going on in your field of awareness.” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

Our ability to be present in our most authentic form of leadership can be sabotaged by the presence of the ego in the person. The need for recognition, power, credit and authority are all needs of the self. This is apparent in any workplace situation where things proceed in a way that does not meet our expectations, or when others behave in a way that changes the course of events for us. (Tolle, 2005) Instead of responding to the present situation in the present moment, we make meaning around how things ought to have been, were supposed to have gone, or should be. These stories that we tell about the way things *are*, are just that – stories. When we can let go of the ego’s definition of events and allow that this moment is the only moment, we can act from a place of true leadership, and can disengage from the story of self that keep us from extraordinary progress through challenging times.

Particularly interesting is the way in which new schools of thought around leadership and organizational transformation are coalescing around a sense of experience. This experience is of a new reality not based in solution-finding, rather in future-emergence. In Ron Heifitz and Donald Laurie’s work, *The Work of Leadership*, they articulate this as an ability to practice adaptive leadership. When an organization or individual’s deeply held beliefs are challenged we are experiencing a form of a new reality emerging. This calls for adaptive change that the new form of leadership is particularly skilled at executing - not reacting to change - rather anticipating and allowing to emerge, a new way of organizational being. (Heifitz, 2001)

3. Transformation Happens in Relation to Others and in Communication

As was discussed previously, quantum physics is changing the way we characterize the very existence of matter and how we think of what *is*. Instead of thinking of matter as individual

components or building blocks of life, quantum physics focuses on the connections as the basic ingredients of all existence. “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. They do not exist as independent ‘things.’” (Wheatley, 2006)

In the theory of presencing, or “Theory U,” as the authors refer to it, the transformation of the relation between the self and the world in which each of us may engage, moves through several phases. In this model, we cease experiencing the world as something outside ourselves that is given, and begin to experience the world as unfolding within us and through our very existence. Though this transition in perception and experience can be different for each person, the result is the same, and is characterized by a one-ness with the universe.

(Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

The new worldview posits that the underlying problem we face is the fragmentation we create by our atomistic thinking, and our strong emphasis on measurement to evaluate outcomes. We have mastered the study of the isolated event or thing in order to understand the world around us. This is dominant in our study of natural sciences and has also been how social sciences have framed the observed phenomena of human interaction. Psychology studies, first and foremost, the individual as separate from work, home, family and community.

(Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004) In organizational study we separate out business units, work groups or individual employees in order to find the answers to what needs improvement, or what models to replicate. This primacy of the individual object has limited our ability to see the whole. Our efforts to find measurable phenomenon to guide our conclusions have us miss the valuable insights of the in-between – the dynamics of relationships, fields and potential.

The most fundamental insight of the modern study of physics is that relationships are more basic than things, and that the extent to which interconnectedness exists is farther-reaching than the general human level of consciousness has previously understood. This is what Theory U calls the blind spot of our time.

a) How Complex Systems Evolve and Change

We are constantly creating our identity out of what we observe and evaluate around us. We define ourselves by how we engage in the relationships between ourselves and everything we define as *not* us. To the extent that we choose these observations and relations, we design our world. As a result of increasing awareness of this phenomenon, holistic models are replacing traditional, mechanistic models in all forms of science, and so too, are gaining use in the social and psychological sciences.

Transformation, especially as we think of it in personal and professional lives, does not occur as a result of the efforts of one person, rather it is a series of actions and changing cultural perceptions among the relationships of people. In *The Art of Possibility*, practices are presented as tools to move us toward transformation; and the authors are clear about how they believe personal, organizational and cultural transformation occurs, citing as examples the Internet, scientific shifts in paradigm, and the spread of religion. Transformational phenomena, they argue, happens not through convincing arguments and logic, rather transformation results from active, ongoing practices “that shift a culture’s experience of the basis for reality.” (Zander, 2000)

The fallacy then, has been in the idea that we cannot ‘change people’ in organizations. People come into the life of an organization, and they bring their experience, skill set and way of being in the workplace. This is true, and so we are often reminded by popular psychology that we cannot change what is fundamentally true about people, including their behaviors and ways of being. However, with this new way of seeing organizational and personal transformation, we can begin to consider that nothing is “fundamentally true” about people. What is possible is that we construct meaning about people, events and activities, and create the stories we tell ourselves about the “way things are.”

So, in this way of thinking, we *can* change what we perceive as true about people. Further, we can most certainly change what is true about the relationships *between* people. (Zander, 2000) In fact, we are constantly called to show up to our lives in relation to others. Being in relation can mean being present to the information, people, events, ideas and life around us. Following this thinking we can begin to imagine how professional relationships can evolve, change and even work to transform the way people interact with one another. If the stories and assumptions underlying individual interactions are changed to allow for the possibilities we seek in innovative organizations, then the interactions themselves can be changed.

This Work in Action

A community-based health care organization found that its rates of employee turnover were steadily creeping higher. Salaries were at or near market and recruitment and retention efforts had been stable. An additional problem was that team projects and new initiatives seemed to hit roadblocks and become defunct when various organizational units would begin to face conflict over resources and support. The organization conducted employee satisfaction surveys, and began to evaluate results based on the dimensions of credibility,

fairness, respect, pride and camaraderie.² This model of a great place to work® is based on three key relationships: the relationship between employees and management, the relationship between employees and their jobs or the company, and the relationship between employees and other employees. This relational model is closely related to the work we are examining here.

The organization, upon examination of the results, put in place a campaign of becoming a great place to work, focusing on two elements: honest communication, and the intentional development of a culture based on trust, teamwork and respect. Leaders in the organization found that the act of simply speaking to these dimensions (credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie) served to increase people's belief in these aspects of organizational life. The initiatives aimed at increasing trust and transparency were observed to be important not only for the outcomes of the initiatives, but also because they became shared stories, a language that helped the employees believe in the organizations as a transparent set of relationships.

The organization continues to speak of these dimensions, and regards this work as a constantly evolving process. As an initial result, team projects, initiatives and even individual performance evaluation have begun to be held to a new standard by the collective who share this language and a new understanding of what is possible.³

Change can be threatening to people. The fear of change can hold us back, silence us from wrestling with or speaking the truth, and fear can damage our relationships, our organizations and the world in which we live. At the same time, change is fundamental to our existence, and we all know and have experienced examples of times when change has been positive and even essential to our survival. So we are tackling a fundamental question of why we resist

² The Great Place to Work® Model, (c) 2009 <http://www.greatplacetowork.com/great/model.php>

³ Griffiths, L. 2009, based on work with a non-profit reproductive healthcare organization 2004-2007

change, and when change does occur, why it doesn't always stick. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

Further, when we seek to change organizations in order to better meet the mission, generate results or inspire increased productivity, innovation or satisfaction, is it really a matter of winning over the hearts and minds of our colleagues, of the individual parts of the organization? Can we just change individual departments, processes or systems? Perhaps our understanding of the new science could lead us to a new way of considering change – *that we must enact change in ourselves and in the collective whole simultaneously, and that no actions create this change*, rather that it is a new approach to how we understand and relate to the universe. When we come to understand that we *are* our relationships and that we *are* our world, we see the power of creation in ourselves, and change is us. From this space a new possibility for organizational transformation is able to emerge in our collective consciousness, and because we create it with our awareness, we are *already experiencing* it.

b) Authentic Communication and Being in Relation

Modern Western society uses language not only to communicate with one another, but also to make meaning and demonstrate collective and individual understanding. As Eckhart Tolle explores in *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, words can take on more meaning than the surface value might describe. “All we can perceive, experience, think about, is the surface layer of reality, less than the tip of an iceberg.” (Tolle, 2005) Tolle goes on to explain that the connections that lay underneath the surface are not named by our conventional use of language and are therefore omitted from our day-to-day understanding.

The nature of existence, that which we are questioning here, goes unquestioned as we move through the world in conversation, and the connection to the whole remains unnamed and therefore disregarded in our actions. When we begin to identify the connectivity of all things, we must also develop a way of communicating that reflects this.

Fortunately, it is through communication and conversation that change happens. It is through conversation that meaning is made, and so when we change our language in an organization, we begin to shift the reality. Transformative change is possible when language is identified for what it is: a tool to label and categorize things, capable of assigning meaning, but not the final word. Tolle says “The quicker you are in attaching verbal or mental labels to things, people, or situations, the more shallow and lifeless your reality becomes, and the more deadened you become to reality, the miracle of life that continuously unfolds within and around you.” (Tolle, 2005) When we begin to see past the mental labels we attach to things we are more open to love, joy, creativity and possibility.

In a similar way, Erhard proposes that the stories we tell about our own personal histories and the histories of the world are shaping our perceptions of current events and of the future. We speak of our perceptions of the world as if our perception is reality. If we are hurt, not listened to, overlooked, or insulted, we allow those feelings to dictate our future behaviors and responses in similar situations. What we must realize is that what is “real” is our *feeling* about those events. The *meaning* is an interpretation that we have generated for ourselves. (Symon, 2007) This distinction returns us to a place of power, where we have the ability to chose our reality and to determing the meaning we assign to events in our lives. Further, our chosen perceptions shape the way we relate to the people around us and our world. When we allow our feelings about a past event to become our “reality” of that event, we set ourselves up to

experience that feeling again. As a result, we lose our ability to relate honestly and without preconceived ideas based on past experiences.

Being in authentic relation with others in our communities and organizations can yield new understanding of the complexity of perspectives and issues. Could it be that the core of global crisis today is in the fact that we have lost our relation to not only other people, but to the whole of nature and the essence of the universe? Further, when we engage in a conversation of possibility, and consider that perhaps we have lost our understanding of relation between and among things, people and institutions, we open up to a new understand of what creates our reality. If we are in relation to the universe in a way that *creates* the universe, we become much more powerful and our best self is able to emerge.

The work of Tolle and Erhard are pointing us toward this conclusion that thoughts, where we direct our intellectual and emotional energy, impact reality. A fascinating illustration of this property has been seen in the water crystallization experiments of Japanese researcher Masaru Emoto. Masaru Emoto used microscopic photography to capture the crystallized form of frozen water after exposing the water to varying music, words and thoughts. The images show symmetry and so-called beauty in the water exposed to positive thoughts and classical music, and fractured, so-called ugly shapes in the water exposed to negative thoughts.

(Emoto, 2004) If we take this idea and consider how we think about and conceive of the physical universe, a new way of being in relation to the universe emerges for us. Taking this idea all the way to communication, our manifested thoughts and emotions, leads us to consider what power authentic communication, based in a sense of possibility and creation, may have.

In examining the power of stories and communication, we can look at the historical and cultural stories that shape our collective experience. Our way of being in the universe is often shaped by creation stories and the dominant cultural paradigms that determine our worldview. Anthropology has provided us with a lens on creation stories from around the world - those of indigenous peoples and of ancient civilizations. Consider the quote by Winston Churchill, “history is written by the victors.” This idea reminds us that the stories we tell shape our world, even though they are not always agreed to or understood in the same ways.

Considering those stories alongside our scientific and religious stories of how the world works can be one way to shed light on the relationships within our current society, and the way our society relates to the world around us.

There is a key distinction in this consideration of creation stories and relationships. While the self-help and spiritual culture of today’s society proliferates through books, seminars and individual pursuits of wisdom and spiritual learning, this study of transformation in organizations argues that authentic communication is key to transformative work, whether individually or collectively. The opportunity to relate to one another on a different level often arises in times of organizational or personal conflict. It is in these moments - when individual actors must share a diversity of emotions and opinions, seek to hear the opinions of others, make sense of what is present in the group, and come to an empathic or intellectual understanding and resolution - when opportunity arises through conversation.

Inquiry is a powerful tool for engaging in a different type of conversation. Rather than simply listening and identifying whether we agree or disagree, inquiry allows both the speaker and the listener to identify new ways of seeing things, and creates a collaborative environment for generating meaning. In an organization, the sincere dialogue that can happen when

individuals are able to suspend judgment and authentically listen for understanding can open new creative spaces for outcomes that are greater than any individual contribution would have been otherwise.

When we face great challenges, or when we are confronted with change that feels overwhelming and engenders a level of resistance, it is often in conversation with others that we are able to make the most sense of our behaviors and our selves, and by being in dialogue we create new collective realities. Personal reflection and silent work may be first steps, and are important to the process, but transformation happens when the self reflection and resulting conclusions are manifested. When communication is authentic and a shared meaning is created through dialogue we open up to what is possible beyond the current moment. (Tolle, 2007) When the actors in a conversation are willing to speak about events and observations from a deeper place of meaning, really using inquiry and staying open to what becomes present, new outcomes are possible. More importantly, the very conversation creates a field for openness and relation, and the outcome agreement or understanding becomes almost secondary. The power of transformation is within the energy of the dialogue between the characters at play. (Wheatley, 2006)

In a way, we as a society may not have learned how to be together as our authentic selves. Being in that space - truly being present with others in full presence to all of our imperfections and missteps - is something that is difficult for most people in competitive Western society. This is particularly true when we battle our ego-driven nature and the voices that continually make meaning and add judgment to our every interaction. In teams and organizations working toward a shared objective, we may aspire to be collaborative but are constantly fighting our ego-driven competitive tendencies to want recognition, validation and personal success. The

three Western beliefs of individualism, competition and a mechanistic worldview further keep us apart. (Wheatley, 2006) The recent pop-culture proliferation of self-help and spiritual work in the areas of connection to a greater whole, and deeper sense of spiritual awakening are symptomatic of this. Lifestyle gurus such as Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Wayne Dyer tap into this perspective on relation in their forays into facilitated spiritual and societal self-reflection with their respective audiences.

D. Organizational Vision, Values and Culture

Organizational theorists have long argued that in order to create collaborative energy in organizations, to help people align their efforts and work toward a whole that is greater than its parts, we must clearly define the organization's vision, values and culture. Even when we can't specifically define each reason why these forces are so powerful, myriad case studies point to the success of organizations that have strong and clear visions, values and culture.

“Ideas move from good ideas to governing ideas when they become the foundation of an organization's system of governance – that is, when they become a source of decision-making power.” Governing ideas have to come alive in norms and standards within the organization or group that enable the collective values and purpose to emerge in a real way. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

We could argue that an organization's vision, values and culture can also be considered forces that are invisible yet palpable. Fields are characterized as invisible forces in nature that occupy space and influence behavior. Consider for example magnetic fields. If we begin to

consider organizational vision as a sort of field, one that is not sensed by sight or sound, but which impacts people's individual and collective action, we can better understand how, collectively, an organization can be impacted by such concepts as values and vision.

So, how does a leader frame this question of organizational values and take the conversation beyond a set of principles to a place that speaks to people on a more fundamental level?

Organizations that undergo an in-depth strategic planning process or that use scenario planning engage in this exercise in their attempts to visualize a new reality or set of realities that they might consider for their future. As a group of people, particularly the leaders in the organization, connect with the organization's purpose and begin to speak and work from a more authentic expression of the organization's purpose, they enter the space where possibility can emerge. If the organization is able to put their collective voice of judgment aside, and be present with authenticity, a fascinating generative process can emerge. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

An organization's culture is pervasive, and it can be difficult to see the whole from within an organization. Even more challenging can be how to see across an organization's boundaries and to consider the ways in which we have artificially created and defined separation. The steps to seeing the whole from within are suspending our judgment, observing the connections, imagining impacts and effects two steps away from what is immediately visible and circling back to examine what sense we are making of things. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004) This self-reflective and yet simultaneously observant process allows us to separate observation from meaning-making, and enables an opening of mind and heart that creates a new ability to see.

Field theory has helped us understand more about the invisible impacts of organizational phenomenon that have historically made some theorists uncomfortable. Organizational vision – a picture of what the organization seeks to create, or a dynamic expression of the nature of the organization’s purpose – is instrumental in providing clarity about the direction and purpose of an organization. Linear thinking creates vision statements that read like destinations, a projected outcome we seek to see when our organizational vision is realized. When we begin to consider organizational vision as a type of field, this idea becomes slightly different. Instead of a vision as an end result, working to pull an organization’s employees, projects and resources toward a future end, we can regard it as a vision of power and influence, something that actually impacts every aspect of the organization’s work. Understanding the vision as having profound relation to our work enables us to take the vision far more seriously, and enables every organizational actor to speak from a place of vision and authenticity to that vision. (Wheatley, 2006)

Organizational culture is composed of the behaviors and practices that are repeated in an organization and make up the observed or sensed experience of people in the organization. Culture comes out of the shared sense of purpose and intent guiding the individual actors in the organization, combined with the impact of individuals making their own sense of these elements. Organizations that have a strong sense of values and culture are authentic in their collective identity. Being authentic in their identity means that they act consistently with their stated beliefs and values. Similar to an individual knowing one’s own code of ethics and values, and subsequently being prepared to act on those in any situation, an organization that knows its core is more prepared to act in times of chaos or challenge, guided by a shared set

of values and an overarching culture. Culture, in this sense becomes a force of its own – one that shapes behaviors and interactions in an organization. (Wheatley, 2006)

At the same time, we cannot expect behaviors to change simply by gaining agreement around a new set of values or a shared code of conduct. We can, however, move gradually toward a new set of actions that are closely aligned with those values. In time, through self-reflection, being present to our observations and allowing a new “reality” to emerge out of those values, our behaviors begin to reflect them more accurately. The same is true of an organization trying to shift its culture through an intentional campaign or effort to shift behaviors back to alignment with core values. The values serve as a guiding base for how the relations between people can and should be, and they help us provide feedback and be in relation with one another in order to achieve that end.

An organizational vision that comes from one or two people, even if it is the CEO, founder or president, may only have limited effectiveness as the vision is a result of fragmented awareness. An organizational vision that arises out of larger intention of a collaborative group has a different field. The group’s collective thought and intention of creating a reality makes a space for what is truly possible to emerge. Simply because all of the individual participants have visioned a potential reality, it becomes more possible. In this way, visions are not created, rather they emerge from the collective reality that is the present moment and the future. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

III. Emergence: The Profound Impact of Transformation Leadership and Dialogue

A new understanding of change has emerged from chaos theory. The two forces of chaos and order are understood to be necessary opposites that are at the same time, contained within.

Without one force there cannot be the other and beyond that, without either state change cannot be possible. A system that enters a state of chaos and unpredictability is still bound by parameters that keep the system in a fundamental state of existence, creating some sense of predictability at the same time as there is chaos.

Engaging truly transformational efforts within organizations can allow for creative, dynamic possibility in those organizations. Whereas traditional strategic planning, leadership development, reorganization or management practices can make incremental changes, transformation redefines the very way that people work and relate within an organization.

The previous dominant paradigm in business, of scarcity and competition, can be replaced by the ideas of abundance and contribution. The previous way people interacted, in terms of silos and competitive stakes for limited resources, can be replaced by a shared objective to create extraordinary results out of communication and a sense of abundance and possibility.

Zander articulates that the constructs of identity and possession, the cornerstones of our measurement-based, individualistic society, give way to a relational model of abundance, where there is always contribution to be made, and always a successful outcome if only we shift our interpretation and definition of human relationships. (Zander, 2000)

A new way of being in the world is only possible when a new way of understanding our relationships and ways of being with the earth. An emerging sense of collective awareness

makes possible a deeper and more present understanding of the challenges we face. (Tolle, 2005) This awareness allows us to see that we cannot “do” in order to become successful at our efforts, rather that we must first “be,” and that what we do comes out of this existence. The consciousness creates our reality, as we have examined through the lenses of quantum physics and through the spiritual work of Eckhart Tolle and others. This transformation of human thought, tapping into the collective unconscious, is how we will change our way of being in the world in order to see, realize and be extraordinary.

In the theory of presencing, we seek to reach a state of seeing from a deep and authentic source and, as an extension of that, to become a vehicle for what can come out of that source. In a world shaped by multiple global dimensions of conflict, whether socio-political, financial or governmental, a deeper source of authentic perception and action can yield transformative results in business. An organization that seeks to innovate, to create new solutions or to inspire breakthrough performance through its people, must create a culture of honest communication, sensing, presencing and realizing in order to allow possibility for people to collectively reach their highest possible future.

Even according to more progressive processes for organizational leadership and change we are still bound by the old ideas of planning and process. Take for example the field of strategic planning. Many planning processes focus on short or long-range plans that stem from a visioning process that can be tasked with reinventing the organizational vision. To really reach transformational results many in the field have begun to consider strategic *thinking* the preferred tactic for ensuring adaptive, creative, innovative organizations that are agile in the face of environmental change and new challenges. Certainly, following the logic of the new understanding of the universe’s phenomena, strategic planning in its classic forms

keeps us bound in our old structures and ways of thinking that co-create reality for the organization we seek to transform. Even this new emphasis on strategic thinking and organizational agility are potentially bound by the limits of the mindset of the individual actors in the process. To truly transform institutions, we must be present to the process of collective emergence.

In order to move our thinking to the collective, we must identify not simply the individual actors, but also the relationships between those actors. By focusing on the relationships in an organization, we begin to realize greater impact, and inspire extraordinary results. An organization can be examined for its capacity for healthy relationships and interactions in which the actors create an environment of possibility for whatever seeks to emerge. Power lies entirely in relationships. Are people showing up in authenticity, and does power flow through all levels in appropriate ways? Because power is generated in the field of relationships, to really allow extraordinary outcomes we must pay absolute attention to relationships. Transformation becomes not a singular event, nor a planned phenomenon; it becomes something that characterizes each moment and each interaction in an organization.

Further, it is not simply the relationships between people, but the way each person relates to the environment, the community and the larger network of the world that makes up an organization. With this sense of relationships, boundaries become almost irrelevant. There are no “bright lines” that divide an organization from any other creation in the universe. By engaging in work, conversation, thought, emotion, actions, questions and process the person, people, employees, leadership, customers, stakeholders and even those previously considered external to the organization are inherently interconnected. A collective emergence is possible in each moment, and transformative work will begin.

A.Implications for Business and Management Theory

When we consider the business world, we must ask, given all this new science: How is it possible to really achieve outstanding results if the people who make up the organization are creating dynamics of competition, tension and fear?

1. Traditional models of management and academic thought

In academic thought we follow the guidance and thinking of science. The study of management science, for better or worse, is based on scientific theories, data methods and the conventional understanding of the nature of the universe. This is valuable in that it anchors our work in hypothesis, theorem, data and findings. We are both guided and captivated by science. This demands our constant evolution of thought. And now, we must adapt our understanding of the science of management to reflect our understanding of the science of the universe.

Our understanding of our way of being in the world is evolving as we begin to understand the principles of quantum physics, and so our way of studying management can change as well.

We must begin to understand the nature and art of management as we understand possibility and creation in the universe. (Wheatley, 2006) Fields concerned with organizational design, the science and art of change, leadership development and other aspects of human resources, are dependent on an in depth understanding of humans' relationship with the world around them – relations with one another, and with the perceived physical universe. Theorists and

practitioners in these fields of study, then, must become familiar with this new way of interacting in organizations and the implications for their work.

Since the science of Newton and Descartes we have valued reason and analysis. We have learned to plan and predict based on our quantitative methods. Our focus on “hard” science and numbers to prove, explain or cause has perhaps shaded our vision away from understanding the more intricate (and previously outside of our perception) phenomena. We have understood the natural world as we have understood machines – with separate parts that work together as in symbiosis. This metaphor for our understanding has extended to our frameworks for organizations and institutions. Our emphasis is on organizational charts, systems reports and dashboard indicators. As the study of organizational processes developed we began to see one way in which this machine imagery might be incomplete. The psychology of organizations and groups of people has made otherwise predictable phenomenon hard to understand as separate pieces fitting together in a machine. However, even our forays into the human side of organizational work not only are incomplete, but also are marginalized in traditional management theory.

When we begin to consider organizations as inherently subject to, and creations of, the relationships that are within them, we shed new light on the study of organizational design and industrial psychology. To inspire the best work from employees and create extraordinary results from organizations as a collective whole, we must begin to identify and communicate about the network of relationships that builds the whole. Rather than defining roles strictly in terms of accountable tasks and responsibilities we can articulate the energy flows and relationships each person must have in order to be successful at their desired outcomes. Organizational roles become not about the parts, but instead about the interactions between

them. When an organization becomes simply a community and a facilitation of energy flows, we begin to think of new ways of being within them and collectively creating results.

(Wheatley, 2006)

Entrepreneurial leaders are naturally prone to this work of the expression of intent and focused thought and energy in the direction of the emerging whole. Entrepreneurs have to become extremely clear about what it is they are setting out to accomplish. They have to ask questions of themselves related to why and how. Often, they engage in some sort of assessment of their own values and what they seek to achieve in the world, and subsequently try to align their entrepreneurial efforts with that vision. Finally, entrepreneurs have to stay aware of what happens, and open to all possibilities. In this way, it is not just about being laser focused on the end result, rather it includes the ability to tap into a field of awareness that is broader than the localized sense of self and the particular goal. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

For a school like MIT Sloan, which caters to entrepreneurial leaders and is founded in this spirit, the fundamentals of this new organizational paradigm are key. Students seeking to enter the world of leadership in a new way are part of an emerging awareness of business that transcends the bottom line. There is great potential for authentic conversation and deep presencing in an academic environment to radically transform the way we engage with the world. Further, the population of students, researchers, professors and thought leaders that thrive in a place like MIT are well-suited to a study of leadership based in mindfulness, intention, awareness and the transcendence of ego.

2. Leadership Development for the 21st Century

We have been guided by the study of what we've done in the past, by successful case studies, models and frameworks, and systems that we know. What opens up when we begin to think in terms of possibility and presence? Can we learn to be present to the emerging whole without being bound by the past?

In *Presencing*, the authors speak of a “second type” of learning, referred to as learning from the future. We learn from the past through processes of reflection and experience. Through action, assessment and reflection, we develop new strategies and actions that are a reaction to our past learning. The distributed leadership model, which we looked at earlier, is an example of this. MIT Sloan is exceptional at experiential learning and creates the environments that lend themselves to the Prepare, Act, Reflect model, another MIT Sloan iteration, championed by a faculty working as part of the Praxis@MIT Sloan group. (Praxis at MIT Sloan, 2007)

Praxis@MIT Sloan: Prepare, Act, Reflect Learning Model

“**Core ideas** Three elements are key for learning from experience. **Practicing Management and praxis** learning enables and supports all three parts of the process: **preparing, acting, and reflecting.**”

Prepare - domain-specific education, project skills

- Learn domain knowledge
- Learn relevant theories, perspectives, tools, and models
- Develop observation and reflection skills, including the four distributed leadership skills of sensemaking, relating, visioning, and inventing
- Generate usable frameworks and templates for data: Do the groundwork necessary to extract learning from the action

Action - implementation focus, built-in data collection

- Learn skills by using and applying frameworks, templates, theory, tools, etc. (both content- and process-related)
- Learn domain knowledge as demanded by situation
- Learn by interacting with others
- Generate results (or lack thereof)

Reflection - what to make of this experience

- Learn what you don't know, and want to know, and figure out how to learn more: What new classes do I want to take next? What new questions do I have?
- Learn by reflecting on the use of theory, frameworks, data templates: Did I draw on the right things? Did I capture what I needed to in order to make sense of what happened?
- Learn from other students' experiences---peers are key
- Generate new frameworks and templates: How am I adjusting my mental models?
- Design effective next steps, correct course, return to "preparation" phase

Fig D: Praxis@MIT Sloan “Prepare, Act, Reflect” Learning Model⁴

However, this process of learning based on past action and experience is valuable when the past continues to be a good indicator of the future. When a new future emerges, or a shift in a new possible future begins to take place, learning from the past can leave us ill-prepared for the profound change we face. As previously discussed, Senge et al define learning from the future as the processes of sensing (observation), presencing (retreat and reflect) and realizing (acting immediately with flow). (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004) By moving through these stages, we co-create the reality that emerges in an active way. (Jaworski, 1996)

⁴ <https://wikis.mit.edu/sloan/praxis> (c) 2007 Praxis@MIT Sloan

Questions of leadership development and ethics education are increasingly dealt with as a response to emerging crises of our time. The financial crisis of 2009, the global environmental crisis, and the breakdown of major societal systems such as healthcare and government regulation are all creating a call for more ethical leadership. This call to act brings us to the idea that we need to create a new form of business school education. What would happen if we were to recreate the basic building blocks of management education?

A new business school curriculum could emerge from this way of approaching learning. In physics, dissipative structures are systems with the seemingly contradictory nature of a system that is disturbed and recreated into a new self-organized structure. A dissipative structure succeeds because the process of energy loss allows the it to let go of its former structure and adapt to a structure that better suits a changed environment. (Wheatley, 2006) Dissipative structures can be instrumental in our thinking about the emergence of a new economic order, and it follows, a new management paradigm, as the disorder and chaos of the global economic crisis is the very impetus needed for a new system to emerge.

In schools of management and public policy we have the opportunity to provide preparation and tools to meet the leadership challenges of today and the decades ahead of us. Inventing innovative practices for leadership development will be key for management training programs and organizations that seek to meet this challenge. Innovative practices will be personal, systemic, creative and practical. Schools like MIT Sloan are well positioned to meet this challenge. The programs offered are already focused on collective leadership and experiential learning, and developing the capacity to train the next generation of leaders in the spirit of presence and profound change could be the next level of evolution for such programs.

If we begin to think of leadership development as a question of each moment, rather than a story that is based on past results and future challenges, we regain a sense of presence in the paradigms of leadership and management. Whereas, leadership has, in the past, been portrayed as a set of skills, a result of experience or a goal to be attained, we are beginning to paint a picture of leadership as being present in this exact moment. In fact, the “now” - the present moment - is really all there ever is. (Tolle, 2005) We live our lives in a constant state of this moment, and so, becoming truly present to this moment is even more essential to effective leadership. Leadership then, arises in experience and is redefined moment to moment.

3. The Organization as a Species

In short, we need this examination of the relation between the new understanding of existence and our collective lives in organizations and communities. By examining the parts, wholes, and most importantly, the energy and spaces in between, a new understanding begins to emerge. Through this lens we are coming to understand the ways in which the parts, wholes and spaces in between are the same and are constantly co-creating themselves, and this helps us make sense of how we can transform our world and ourselves.

Perhaps, at this point in human history, we have seen the evolution of a previously unnamed species on earth – that of the large institution such as a global corporation. This species impacts life for almost every other species in our known world. Conversations related to climate change, poverty, hunger, extinction, injustice and the future of life on earth are connected to the activities of these communities known as corporations. Beginning to see

how our living systems are constantly generating themselves, we can raise our collective level of awareness about the systems within which we operate. Once the organization, and ourselves as the organization, recognize that we are living and co-creating, we can begin to see new ways of being, and can begin to see to this idea of possibility beyond what we have been in the past. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

There is promise in the thought of organizations as collective energy fields, almost as a new species or entity of our time. An organization that develops the capacity to evolve as well as change, and even to thrive in the presence of chaos and disequilibrium is one that has developed a new ability to live powerfully. In system dynamics we learn that positive feedback loops can demonstrate where generative actions are present. [See *Fig C*] An organization that is present to its collective energy and responds to signals for change and redirection becomes, at its core, agile, flexible and fully present in its reality. This further amplifies its ability to adapt to new realities and respond to change. An organization that grows out of disorder and disequilibrium has mastered the art of adaptive challenges and will be constantly evolving to a new existence.

Self organized institutions that have learned to maximize this ability are able to eliminate rigidity, and more fluidly support work and outcomes that are sought. Simplifying organizational roles, eliminating hierarchies, reducing powerful positions in the interest of powerful relationships has yielded unprecedented level of clarity, communication and authenticity for employees, customers and other stakeholders. (Blanchard, 1997)

Deliberately seeking radical change, new thought and the ability for people ideas and information to move freely could be characterized as a new species of organization, present to its co-creation and the state of its own energy. (Wheatley, 2006)

Organizations can create new capacities by developing new ways of engaging within institutional assumptions and norms. By shifting organizational awareness and understanding the organization can relate with the world in a new way. Collectively moving the people through the lessons of the new science can lead to creating entirely new institutions and transformed businesses and organizations.

B. Creating Business Impact in Practice

1. What is a “Business Leader” to Do?

The authors of *Presence* label one element of this process as “prototyping.” Prototyping is a way of doing, listening to feedback and reinventing. One interviewee, speaking of a moment of change in an organization, characterizes it as a significant lesson, “Yes, you have to have the vision... and you have to have the deep intention that goes with it. But you also have to have an incredible capacity for self-observation and course correction in real time. The universe wants to help. But you must be able to observe and listen.” This leaders has experienced that from honestly letting go, a new paradigm or a new strategy can emerge. This is the process of prototyping – first being in the world in a way that lives into future possibility, second, listening to feedback, and finally, rediscovering purpose. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

a) Cultivating Transformative Leadership Capabilities

Leaders who seek to be present in this new way have a unique opportunity to lead in the current environment. Though there is no exact method for enacting this new reality, there are characteristics of leadership that can help a practitioner seek transformative outcomes based on a new way of being the world. Following is a brief list of leadership behaviors I have used to develop a model for transformational leadership skills development.

Leadership Behaviors of those Seeking a Transformative Presence	
Behavior	Importance
Giving up the search for cause and effect.	When we can release ourselves from the drive to explain, we begin to actualize new outcomes formerly unreasoned.
Understanding the “and” that connects things, rather than terming things in opposition.	We have been trained to look for opposition. Begin to see the interconnectedness and what new insights emerge from those connections.
Spending more time on organizational conditions and less on rigid plans. Consider what intentions people have set or could set collectively. Discuss what types of interactions are desired.	The energy, feelings and thought that individuals devote are constantly co-creating outcomes.
Learning to observe, listen and feel. Cultivate comfort speaking from this place.	Awareness is key to the ability to sense what might be emerging from the collective whole.
Accepting that you co-create your experience, environment and world at every moment. Acknowledge your power and begin to allow what emerges from that space.	Intention and mindfulness begin to open up new possibilities. Innovation and transformation come from this space.
Refusing to argue what is “real” or “not-real.” Allow that the universe is co-created by you and by each person in your experience.	We each construct reality and reality is ever shifting. Our stories are powerful but are not determining truths.
Stretching your thinking to find and see interconnections even in seemingly fragmented processes, groups, actors and agendas.	Gaining comfort with the in-between dynamics, the connections and relationships between material phenomena, allows us to navigate this space and to see possibility.
Listening to the language you use. Examine the messages that fill your work and the work and halls of your organization. Ask whether they are aligned with your vision, mission, goals and intentions.	Language is a powerful force and interacts as a form of energy and creation. In this way, it can be a tool for breakthroughs.

Fig E: Leadership Characteristics of those Seeking a Transformative Presence (Griffiths, 2009)

This list is not exhaustive, nor is it a recipe for transformative work. However it does help draw the parallels between certain behaviors of leadership, on the left, and the reason as proposed in this study, on the right.

b) Leading from a State of Joy

One way a leader can examine her own way of being present in the world, is to consider the possibility of a state of joy that she might bring to the organizations in which she leads.

Unhappiness and negativity can be considered an epidemic in our society, a way of being that is not only avoidable, but is actively chosen by many in our organizations and social settings.

Particularly when we consider negativity in situations where people's basic needs are met, in the many homes and organizations of western society where people have plenty, and yet still feel frustrated or angry about what is occurring at work. "People believe themselves to be dependent on what happens for their happiness, that is to say, dependent on form. They don't realize that what happens is the most unstable thing in the universe. It changes constantly."

(Tolle, 2005) This way of basing happiness on the events of humanity lessens our ability to see the deeper reality of life that is beyond what is happening or not happening. We have the ability to be truly joyful by accepting the things that happen and basing our joy in the foundation of life itself.

Leading from this state of joy is the ability to be fully present to life inherent, and in so doing, to bring a stability and sense of peace to our leadership. When we accept the present moment and acknowledge that happiness does not come to us through any particular thing,

achievement or other physical form, we can begin to feel that joy is from within, and is the most basic form of consciousness itself.

Being present to the actuality of what occurs in modern organizations can lead us to feel stress, anxiety and frustration. The new challenges of leadership are tremendous when we consider not only organizational goals, but also the potential liabilities, global impacts, complex interrelations and downstream and upstream outcomes. Leading from a state of joy, then, means choosing to be with the present without becoming steeped in our stories of pain, suffering and frustration.

2. Illustrative Scenario: The global environmental crisis and sustainability

“What will it take to redefine business growth so it’s consistent with nature, and consistent with life?” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

When system dynamics researchers present their way of examining the global environmental crisis, or even pieces of the crisis such as global warming, threats to food supply, or worldwide freshwater shortage, one of the breakthrough moments that listeners identify is a moment that can be characterized as a realization as our part of the whole. These conversations enable us to move away from speaking of the oil companies, “polluters” or governments as “they” or “them,” and we begin to use the word “we.” We are doing this to our planet and to ourselves, we are interrelated and our actions are impacting our entire planet and all the species, communities and individuals contained therein. Until we can identify the role of “we,” there is ample blame and fault to be found. When we begin to see that fault and

blame are merely one entry point to the discussion, but perhaps not the best, and more importantly, perhaps not a solution, we can shift our speaking to find paths to new outcomes and we can begin to consider how we as a collective humanity are operating.

The current economic crisis provides us with a unique opportunity to reconsider our systems and institutions that have brought us to this place. We have the opportunity to regenerate the global economy, and in this moment we can ask, “What would it look like to allow a new system to emerge from the future?”

This work points us to consider how a whole system creates the environment for its own transcendence into change. We can examine historical social phenomenon for this process, when a thousand tiny points of change and individual moments add up to the result of a major transitional process, moment or phenomenon. Consider the fall of the Berlin Wall, or the shift from a nation that believed in slavery, to a nation that espouses equal rights for all. There is no one moment when that one distinct thing happened. (Wheatley, 2006) Instead there are countless events, thoughts and activities that, taken as a whole, result in a transformative state of reality. Local actions within the system, phenomena present in the physical world of our perception and energy, thought and relationships coalesced in a profound outcome. In this way, each small act is connected even if we aren't able to perceive it from within. When we consider this potentiality in our examination of global warming, ecological destruction, the economic crisis, global poverty and public health crises, we may consider that a new future is emerging, even if we cannot see it from within our current perspective.

In the time of modern western civilization we have experienced a collective separation of self from a greater consciousness that underlies our relation with the planet. Tolle speaks of this

separation as a result of the imbalance of energies and over-dependence on the role of ego in our society. If we were in balance, and were able to maintain proper alignment between egoic thought and the collective sense of purpose, the whole of human history might look very different. (Tolle, 2005) Most importantly, we have the ability to make this an important priority now. By putting the collective ego in balance, even within corporations, the new species of our time, we can regain a sustainable way of life that does not have catastrophic impact on the earth.

C. Call for Further Research & Dialogue

The reason for this study of new scientific and sociological thought with respect to leadership, organizations and transformation, is to call for further dialogue among leaders and future leaders of the world's organizations and institutions. Enabling the leaders of all kinds of organizations to speak honestly and explore these new boundaries through relationships can enable the transformation we are seeking. In *Presence*, the authors speak of a "greater need than ever for leaders to meet and genuinely 'think together' – the real meaning of dialogue. Only through creating such opportunities can there be any hope of building the shared understanding and coordinated innovative action that the world desperately needs." (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004)

This study furthers the idea that the creation of such opportunities for dialogue opens up the possibility of a shared understanding. From this place of understanding we can be present to an emerging, innovative way of being as a whole. I believe that further research will enable us to better understand the implications to business, and to expand our capacity for profound

leadership and organizational transformation. Further, some of the challenges of our time, including those discussed here, are dependent on a new way of doing business and of relating to one another. I believe that this research will take us toward new realities in organizational and interpersonal life as a global society and as a collective whole.

IV. Conclusion

This study has examined the way a diverse set of fields are beginning to coalesce around the ideas that we co-create our existence, that reality is subject to our intentions and that we are interconnected with others and with the world in ways we don't yet fully understand. Further, I assert that through these lenses we become powerful at the art of living into the future and are able to bring a new way of being to life. The collective whole becomes more than just the sum of its parts.

These ideas have great importance for the profession of business, and likewise for schools of management and leadership. Through a new way of relating, and by becoming present to this reality, we can achieve breakthrough results in organizations, and can help develop truly exceptional communities of leaders.

We are experiencing not just a global environmental crisis, or an economic crisis, rather this is a moment of leadership in crisis. A study of transformative leadership will take us to the new definition of what it means to be an effective leader in today's world. Many of the institutions and systems we seek to fix are symptoms of an underlying lack of consciousness in our way of being in the world. We need integrative solutions to the world's problems, and our answers are already present within us. A new personal and collective awareness will allow us to find an extraordinary way of being and will facilitate the emergence of a new paradigm.

Spiritual traditions of the ages have raised these ideas in part or in whole. Enlightenment is sometimes characterized by nonresistance, non-judgment, and nonattachment. In these cultivated abilities we find ourselves with access to a new sense of freedom to create and live from within the connections and relationships that have always been there. Tolle expresses

this in his statement that “once you see and accept the transience of all things and the inevitability of change, you can enjoy the pleasures of the world while they last without fear of loss or anxiety about the future. When you are detached, you gain a higher vantage point from which to view the events in your life instead of being trapped within them.” (Tolle, 2005)

The ability to live our lives powerfully, then, lies in our acceptance that we are creators of our own reality. When we believe that someone else has created our reality, or that the outside world *is* and that we are independent of but impacted by it, then we cannot see our way to changing that reality. (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004) Further, our personal vision is important to this reality. When we have a vision of our future, we become powerful as we create the future in the present moment. Vision can be of a personal nature, but in organizational leadership, visions become transformational when they have nothing to do with individuals personally.

Finally, when an organization seeks to innovate, to create new solutions or to inspire breakthrough performance through its people, it must create a culture of honest communication, sensing, presencing and realizing in order to allow possibility for people to collectively reach their highest possible future.

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