

ANCIENT WISDOM



FOR MODERN WORKPLACES

by Graham Williams



Academy of
Culture Ambassadors

Ancient Wisdom for Modern Workplaces

by Graham Williams

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by **Graham Williams**

Modern Meets Ancient

There are many versions of a story related by Chuang-Tzu the 4th Century BC Chinese sage.

Here is one:

A traveller watches an old man struggling to draw water from a well in order to irrigate his garden. He suggests to him a vastly more effective, modern, mechanistic solution. One that would produce water far in excess of what the gardener needs.

The old man is angry as he replies, "Those who use cunning implements are cunning in their dealings with others, and those who are cunning in their dealings with others lack purity of heart, and those who have cunning in their hearts have restless spirits. I know about solutions such as you propose, but I am ashamed to use them".

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Walking Backwards: Practicing Ancient Wisdom in Modern Workplaces



"How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver". Proverbs 16:16

Introduction

The work world that we occupy is rapidly changing, becoming more complex and challenging. No sooner have we tackled one problem than another two appear.

This is rather like what Heracles (Hercules) faced – the second of his twelve labors as chronicled around 600BC. As he battled the Hydra, every time he chopped off one of the huge monster's heads, another two appeared. He had to find a way to stop the severed stumps from regenerating new heads.

We too need to work smarter, and find new, different, better, lasting and sometimes braver solutions. This requires wisdom – going beyond data, information and knowledge to understanding, clear-sightedness, discernment, creativity, and virtuous behavior.

Can we access ancient wisdom for modern times?

The pressures we face tend to shift our focus to the present – for calm, mindful attention and deft execution, and to the future – to ensure that we leave a sustainable legacy for future generations. It seems counterintuitive to look to the past. Original inhabitants of South Africa, the ancient Khoi San culture, reverse our normal linear mode of time. They say: *"The past is in front of me because I can see it. The future is behind me because I cannot see it. And I am walking backwards through my life"*.

To some, Ancient refers to what belongs in the distant past and no longer exists, nor has any validity today. I disagree, and the purpose of what is offered in this booklet is exactly the opposite. We can and should look to glean practical wisdom from the ancients, guided by Solomon's counsel that *"there is nothing new under the sun"*, certainly when it comes to virtues, vices, happenings in life.

In describing the Sumerian society of 4000 years ago Kramer notes that it *"professed such ideals as justice, equity and compassion, but abounded in injustice, inequality and oppression; materialistic and short-sighted, it unbalanced the ecology essential to its economy"*.¹ We've come but a short way since then!

A baker's dozen of ancient wisdoms

The practice of providing a baker's dozen may have started as early as the 13th century in Britain. Because it was easy for bakers to give less than what was paid for – either by design or accident – bakers started giving 13 loaves for every 12 purchased, to prevent being blamed and given severe penalties. Come to think of it, giving more than is expected is a wise practice for product and service delivery in our times!

In these chapters I offer thirteen ancient insights that have a bearing on modern business philosophy, culture and performance. Hopefully they will provide more than you expect as you contemplate, share, and perhaps adopt them in your organisation. A key theme that ripples through this book is one of practicing mature spirituality (not divisive religiosity) in our deeply interconnected and fragile world.

Of course, wisdom is earned and acquired, not learned. What I offer in this booklet are merely signposts for your own journey. Marcel

Proust: *"We are not provided with wisdom, we must discover it for ourselves, after a journey through the wilderness which no one else can take for us, an effort which no one can spare us"*.

I am delighted to engage with you as you move forward into the past.

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Has the Purpose-Economy Arrived?



Purpose " ... was the first phenomenon of life: the first step from a universe in which entropy and chaos held sway toward one in which purposes residing in organisms direct external physical processes and create new physical relationships".¹

William Powers

Why did the latest race to proclaim purpose start?

Organisations are clamoring to proclaim their higher purpose and imbed sustainability-consciousness into their culture. It seems that business has woken up to the need to heal, sustain, nurture and regenerate the environment, society and the economy, to adopt bottom-lines that honor people, planet and profit.

"What is needed, then, is a renewed, profound and broadened sense of responsibility on the part of all. Business is in fact a vocation, and a noble vocation, provided that those engaged in it see themselves challenged by a greater meaning in life. I ask you to ensure that humanity is served by wealth and not ruled by it".²

There has been an accompanying proliferation of sustainability consultancies, service providers, academic papers and conferences. Some speak of a 'purpose economy'.

The race is heating up

The stampede to purpose will gain even more traction because of research findings showing that purpose-oriented employees are the most engaged and the highest performers. In addition to a new Workforce Purpose Index, a Certified Purpose Leader Program has been launched by one consultancy. It offers training in how to create a purpose statement, lead with purpose, harness the transforming power of purpose and develop the purpose-powered organisation.³

The most perfect organisational culture imaginable may be when a critical mass of employees aligns with an organisation's higher purpose, display the desired values consistently and are motivated intrinsically. Engagement then takes care of itself. There is a collective of like-minds and behaviors that approaches an *"...attraction which seems to transcend reality, which aspires to elevate men by an interest higher, deeper, wider than that of ordinary life"*.⁴ Corporate Utopia.

A caution

But "purpose" can be manipulated. Christopher Jamison points to the basic greed that drives consumerism and how that is manipulated by the big brands: *"...they give people a 'higher purpose' through their brand. The companies may congratulate themselves that they are serving a higher purpose but this is basically the commercial exploitation of spirituality"...* and *"... has a corrosive effect on our understanding of personal identity and on our sense of the sacred. Even our souls are now consumerised, and marketing is destroying people's spiritual imagination ... great corporations now inhabit our imagination, the place where greed is generated"*.⁵

Unfortunately, this danger of consumers being manipulated by big corporations who latch onto the purpose- effect is likely to gain momentum.

Encouragement

True purpose stemming from right motive, and supported by the right virtuous behaviors, can however transform both the individual and the organisation. As the ancient Indian sage, Patanjali, reminds us: *"When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bonds; your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction, and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties and talents*

become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be".⁶

Be patient when driving to align employee and organisational higher purposes. Remember that individuals discover their own purpose in a variety of ways. For example some:

- may wake up after a dream, or – like St Teresa – are suddenly aware of a revealed calling (sometimes fairly vague, as hers was: to help those who were unloved, unwanted and uncared for).
- undergo a crisis (physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual) which confronts them with a need they weren't previously aware of, and triggers their now-uncovered purpose
- have their purpose gradually unfold over the course of their life as they mature (This may align with a shift from the chase for position/power/possessions/pleasure/ perfection; to an other-orientation, an awareness of inter-connectivity, and a focus on Personhood, Presence, (other) People, Planet and Purpose). A move from externals to internals.
- expose their motivational pattern, comprised of an essential motivational thrust that reoccurs over the years, preferred subject matter, abilities that are usually brought to bear, recurring relationship patterns and typical trigger circumstances. I got this from Art Miller who I met in London in the 1980s. With Ralph Mattson he extensively researched, devised and thoroughly tested motivational fingerprinting.⁷ James Hillman's 'acorn theory' is that we enter the world complete with embedded destiny or calling or purpose, and that this consists of both doing and being. The theory fits with motivational fingerprinting.⁸
Uncovering one's motivational pattern also uncovers clues to purpose.

What are your plans to identify and introduce an authentic, powerful purpose for your organisation? One that is unique, clear, owned by employees, and consistently builds a reputation that attracts?

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Enter Spirituality



"The longest road you will ever have to walk in your life is the sacred journey from your head to your heart". Chief Phil Lane Jnr, hereditary North American First Nations leader (Dakota/Sioux and Chickasaw)

"There's a bad moon on the rise" ¹

Our land, sea, air and outer space is fraught with interlinked tensions, abuse, dis-ease and risk. We're inundated with messages about climate de-stabilisation, natural disasters, war, food and water shortages, extreme poverty, species extinction, protesting communities, discontent, jittery markets, waste, pollution, degradation, depletion, inequalities, deprivations, migrations, trafficking, exploitation, modern-day-slavery, health hazards, education gaps, income-inequality. *"Scientists maintain that "humans are eating away their own life support systems at a rate unseen in the last 10,000 years".²*

Unravelling values are the order of the day. There are numerous disconnects between an organisation's stated values and actual behaviours. Prominent, 'principled' organisations readily claim a higher purpose and solid values, and when things go wrong their

typical response-pattern is avoidance, denial, naming and blaming, concession, a promise to fix what is broken, then business as usual.

One does not have to think back too far to recall banking institutions that have rigged currency rates and chased excess profit because of their 'banking culture', oil companies responsible for major ocean spillages after carelessly pushing the boundaries of safety, coffee makers using aluminium pods, water bottlers who will raid and deplete a community's underground water supplies (and leave an unwanted plastic legacy as well), car manufacturers who design software to cheat emission tests, a fast-food retailer pirating unsustainable palm oil, the furniture manufacturer who fiddles 'forestry stewardship' figures, or the consumer goods marketer who uses plastic microbeads in its cleansing and toothpaste products (justifying this on the basis that the larger plastics are a bigger threat to ocean pollution, and that their customers enjoy using their products!) – notwithstanding President Barack Obama signing The Microbead-Free Waters Act in 2015.

In all of these instances stated values have not been converted to character virtues, nor have they become an integral part of the corporate culture.

Consequently

Employees are disenchanted with the status quo. In countless surveys, they report losing trust in their leaders. Organisations are searching for the secret to attracting talent and fully engaging their employees. *"Unfortunately, many organisations require or encourage individuals to act in ways contradictory to their values, in effect separating their spiritual values from their work, and resulting in 'the divided soul of corporate America'".*³

Shareholders are concerned. Mark Goyder, The Tomorrow's Company Founder and Chief Executive has commented, *"For too long the high priests of shareholder value have told us that we must worship at the altar of financial analysis. Now, at last, after Enron, LIBOR, Volkswagen and others, boards and investors alike recognise that what most threatens shareholder value is to neglect the purpose, values, relationships and the human side of a business".*⁴

Customers are speaking out. GlobeScan have established that con-

sumers (62% of respondents in 21 countries) expect companies to demonstrate purpose and go beyond the profit motive.⁵

(There are some doubts and concerns about the sincerity and intentions of certain firms who claim a higher purpose. Are they wolves in sheep's clothing, proclaiming a purpose but interested only in profit? Pretending to be driven by the common good yet feeding self-interest? So-called *Green Giants*?) ⁶

Strong, spiritual leadership and corporate governance is absolutely key for the health of, not only a particular institution or corporation, but society, the economy and the environment. Yet many hard-nosed business leaders instinctively shy away from the mere mention of the word spiritual.

So what do I mean by spiritual leadership and governance?

A view of spiritual leadership, governance and management

The usually offered dividing lines between the so-called 'secular' and 'sacred' are unhelpful. Spirituality is not determined by whether your religion is Zeus or *Deus*. I see it as:

- an internal focus and an outward execution
- a transcendent world view that calls forth a higher purpose, and rises above religion, culture and ethnicity
- a deep appreciation of our interconnectedness as a context of existence
- an other-orientation. The desire to serve others, society and the environment
- the development of positive principles and character virtues, a mature ethics and morality in action (purity of heart)

Spirituality is an element of the whole person, together with our physical, intellectual, emotional and social make-up. We cannot divorce it from our work lives. When we're spiritual we tend to think, feel and act differently (and congruently). I am acutely aware of a mystical, mysterious, inexplicable aspect that cannot be captured in words.

Zohar and Marshall argue compellingly that 'spiritual capital' adds "*moral and social dimensions to capitalism....*" ... and is "*....a vital*

component of sustainable capitalism; and of the sustainability of individuals and organisational functioning within an open, capitalist society".⁷

How do we practise spiritual governance, leadership and management?

Corporations are governed, led and managed:

Govern SUSTAIN	Having a long-term overview and short-term oversight, embracing interconnectedness, purpose, meaning and direction, establishing guiding parameters for achieving value-generation and high-level objectives (people, processes, technology) and temporal, cognitive, emotive, moral and ethical orientations
Lead INSPIRE	Establishing shared vision & values, strategies, motivation and alignment. Embedding virtues, resilience, agility and communications that engage. Developing people capacities and the effective execution of processes, and enabling technology
Manage PRO- DUCE	Ensure smooth, harmonious, efficient execution of plans, operations and the development of people. Be results-oriented. Inspire continuous improvement and tap the wisdom of those who do the work

In a small way my hope is that at least some readers will awaken to the veracity of spiritual governance, leadership and management and instigate the necessary conversations and actions throughout their organisations, and within their wider sphere of influence.

Some thoughts for these conversations:

Embracing Conscious Capitalism®

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Conscious Capitalism® is becoming well established and rests on the four principles of:

- A Higher Purpose (related to the triple-bottom-line) that energises its stakeholders
- Creating value for and with its interconnected stakeholders

- Leadership that inspires and embraces a particular culture, consciously and intentionally
- A Culture that incorporates and lives the purpose, principles and values, and forges bonds between all stakeholders ⁸

Chapters in this booklet address aspects of conscious capitalism, including those of purpose, non-dual thinking, compassion, non-hedonistic happiness, sustainability and love.

Having a Higher Purpose

Purpose as an expression of intent, a way to engage employees and a way to put things right, has unarguable merit – provided that motive is pure. It applies all the way from the floor cleaner to the Board Chairman. Purpose is the place where Boards should begin their work.

Being Virtues-Driven

Organisations could take steps to convert their well-chosen values into character virtues, supported by practical behaviour indicators. Such activation not only prevents disconnects between stated values and actual behaviours, but supports purpose and provides intrinsic motivation.⁹

Practising Switched-On Governance, Leadership and Management

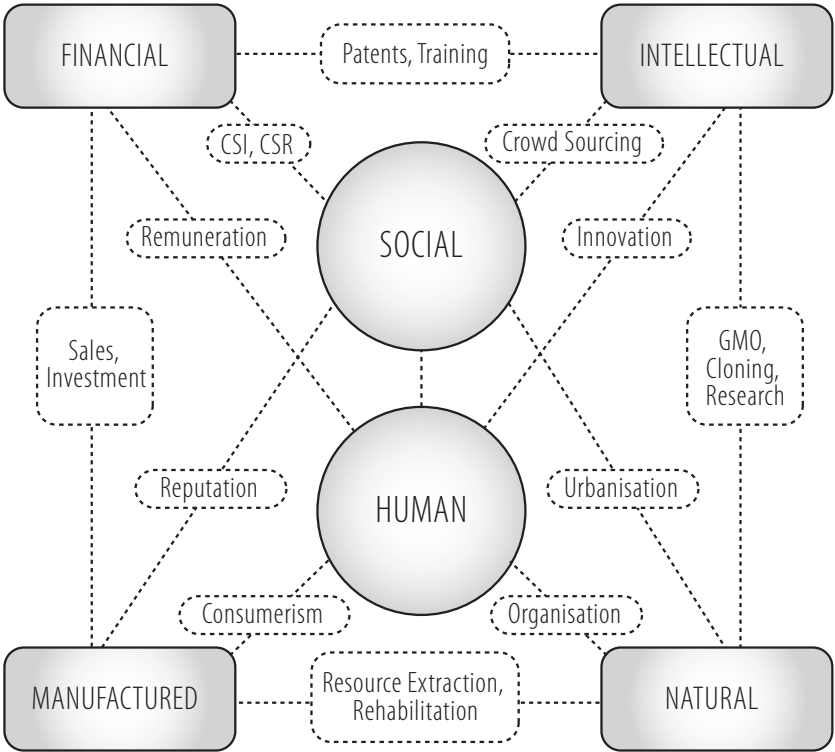
*It is evident that there is "is a clear consistency between the values (in the sense of established ideals) and practices emphasised in many different spiritual teachings, and the values and practices of leaders who are able to motivate followers, create a positive ethical climate, inspire trust, promote positive work relationships, and achieve organisational goals. These spiritual values and practices also allow leaders to achieve organisational goals such as increased productivity, lowered rates of turnover, greater sustainability, and improved employee health".*¹⁰

Spiritual leaders need to be contemplatives in action.

"One dramatic example of the effect of contemplative practice on managerial effectiveness is provided in the experience of leaders in the Great Bear Raincoast Conservation movement in Canada". They were trying to halt unregulated logging of old forests. "Suffering from burnout caused by years of struggle, stress, and angry confrontations, the leaders had learned

to practice meditations of loving kindness for themselves. Then it occurred to them that instead of using their usual confrontational approach, they could use this exercise to extend kindness toward the logging executives in the negotiations as well....” The negotiations became relaxed, solution-based. The valleys were saved.¹¹

Spiritual leaders bring a spiritual dimension to integrated thinking. The model below shows how the six different business capitals relate to and influence each other.¹² Sometimes there may be tensions and trade-offs between capital usage, and sometimes synergy between capitals results in non-dual decision-making. Spiritual leaders navigate the tensions between the various capitals: they are straddled between the push of market trends, change pressures and compliance/ regulation demands; and the pull of the value-added requirements of the organisation – innovation (intellectual), talent (human), sustainability (social, natural), purpose and supporting values (Manufactured, Social, Financial).



Effective organisational leaders and board members appreciate that the work that employees do is *"for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor, in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying."*¹³

End Piece

The urgency and enormity of regeneration and the moral challenges facing our inter-connected society, together with the potential for corporations to take the lead in putting things right, have prompted this call for spiritual governance, leadership and management.

Adopting Conscious Capitalism® as the purpose-economy gains ground, adding proper attention to the embedding of character virtues, and ushering in a new way of governing, leading and operating, are essentials.

I do not offer my contributions to the conversations that must take place from any 'religious' bias.

Rather, from a conviction that a foundation of spirituality is a practical springboard that moves us forward positively.

Things on my own periodic 'personal spirituality' checklist (where I all too often fall short) are:

- Am I inwardly calm, feel safe, at peace, positive, able to see a bigger picture whatever the circumstance?
- Am I aware of a higher presence or intuitive rightness about a situation?
- Am I open, truthful and loving to myself, others, communities, and the environment?
- Am I being and doing congruently in line with living my higher purpose? (Is my contemplation and action balanced?)
- Do I honestly examine my shadow side, especially when I've lapsed into thought, word or action that is less than virtuous?

(This chapter is extracted from a much more comprehensive article due for publication in February or March 2017 by the Journal of Spirituality, Leadership and Management, based in Australia and with a reach far beyond their shores. They major on leadership and management with an ethical and spiritual grounding, and in this

Anthropocene age they approach culture change from a spiritual perspective).¹⁴

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Always Improving



"Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better".

Émile Coué de la Châtaigneraie (19th Century French psychologist)

The corporate world is characterised by huge waves of change. The speed of adaptation and innovation has increased exponentially in recent years. So how can ancient wisdom possibly help our modern-day change efforts?

- Born in the 15th Century, Leonardo da Vinci had the habit of wandering in nature on his own. He can be seen as one of the forerunners of biomimicry. It doesn't take much to make connections between his amazing powers of innovation and his love for nature: Bee ... Helicopter, Tortoise ... Tank, Fish ... Scuba diver, Bird ... Aero plane, Spider ... Parachute, Frog ... Swimming flipper.¹
- Besides their four most famous inventions – papermaking (200 BC), moveable-type printing, gunpowder and the compass, China (named after porcelain) gave us the sundial, silk and iron (in the early 5th century BC). The country is now again on the cusp of becoming a global innovation superpower.²

'Modern' management initiatives (from the 1800s onwards) have seen suggestion schemes, incentives, value stream mapping, LEAN tools, Quality Management, Business Process Redesign (and the related Japanese *Gemba* practice), the 5-Why's? Questioning technique, thinking outside of the box, thinking inside the box, and many other strategies, methods and techniques.

There is often overlap between these approaches and of course a common thread is that innovation is preceded by curiosity and imagination. Continuous change through learning and adapting is an important aspect of a resilient organisational culture.

At times our claimed 'improvements' and progress are ill-conceived, driven by the wrong motive or insufficient understanding. Brain surgeon Henry Marsh said the following about changes and 'improvements' to hospital administration: *"I made my way along endless corridors to the labyrinth of managerial offices in the heart of the hospital. I passed the doors for the Manager and Deputy Manager for Corporate Strategy, the Interim Manager for Corporate Development, the Director of Governance, the Directors for Business Planning, for Clinical Risk, and for many other departments with names I cannot remember, almost certainly all created as a result of expensive reports by management consultants."*³

Learning and innovation go hand in hand. Gino and Staats explain the biases that prevent organisations from learning and improving, and how to overcome these biases ⁴ :

- Action bias: too much action without any reflection and contemplation becomes fruitless, 'treadmill' action. Failure to take time off periodically to sharpen the axe makes things worse.
- Expert's bias: over-reliance on 'experts' leads to a lack of diversity in the thinking through of issues and challenges. There are not enough home-grown solutions. The people who do the work are best equipped to identify improvement priorities and come up with the answers themselves (for example, at AT&T Universal Card a 'Top Ten' initiative in their contact centre was instrumental in ensuring continuous improvement).
- Demanded Success bias: remove the fear of failure, and encourage growth mind-sets and a desire to learn (rather than simply demanding improved performance). Do away with naming and blaming in the culture.

- Fitting-in bias: a need to belong (and not cause 'disharmony') can 'muzzle' people's true feelings and opinions (and ability to 'shine'), causing them and the team to operate below full potential

We cannot order creativity to happen – but we can create the right space and tools and get the right dynamics going with the right people. A group innovation model and processes are fully outlined in *The Virtuosa Organisation*.¹

It is important to highlight two key factors that promote creative innovation:

Fun. Laughter is good for our well-being. Twelve hours after a bout of prolonged laughter the effects can still be detected in the blood stream (vascular flow and oxygenation). Laughter reduces stress, relaxes and calms us, counters negative thought patterns, introduces a state conducive to creativity.

Incidentally, humor and creativity are neurologically similar. Groups that have fun are more relaxed and more creative.

Curiosity. One of science's most important discoveries about fear is that its physical and neurological symptoms differ only slightly from those of curiosity. Fears of failure and insecurity can be driven out by the stronger driver: inquisitiveness. This leads to freedom, exploration, discovery, and improvement as we find ourselves undertaking the rewarding task of "*wandering around in unknown territory, in a search for connections where there seem to be none*".⁵

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Story Power



"Most of our experience, our knowledge and our thinking is organised as stories". Jonathan Gottschall ¹

"The key to the future of the world is finding the optimistic stories and letting them be known". Pete Seeger, singer/songwriter 1919 – 2014

"Tell me the facts and I'll learn. Tell me the truth and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in heart forever" –

Native American Proverb

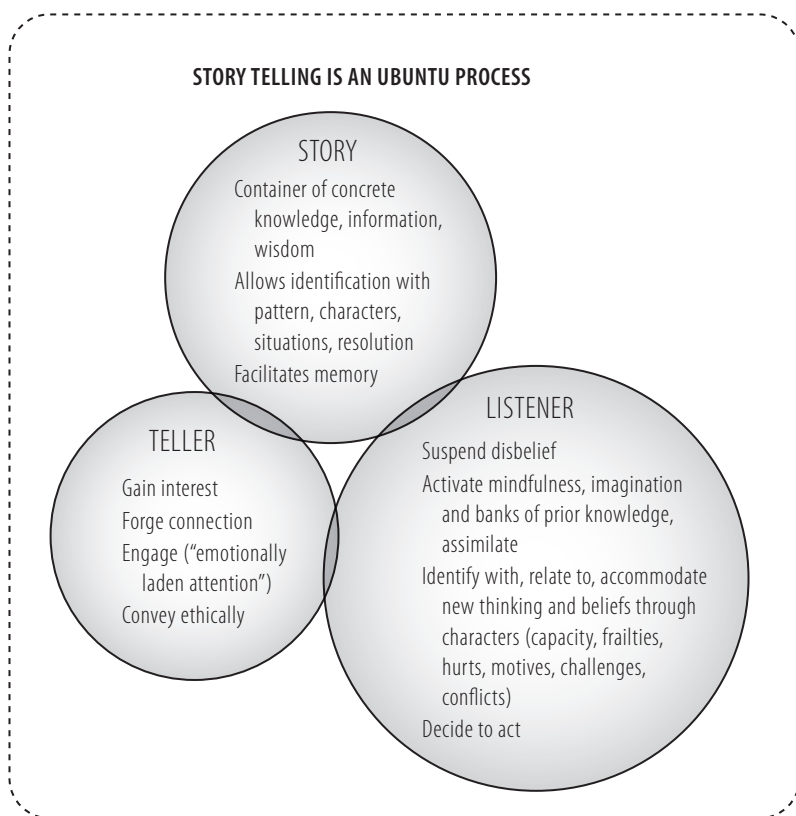
We are hardwired for story

Storytelling has existed for over 150,000 years as a means to communicate, make sense of experiences, and archive human history, wisdom, beliefs, values and attitudes.

Story scientist Kendall Haven has steeped himself in research showing how our brains, from an early age of development, have a 'neural story net' that catches and filters what passes through our subconscious into our conscious mind. And that this can be considered a part of human DNA.²

Rhetoric and data easily bore, but (in lay-person terms) stories invoke the entire left and right brain hemisphere 'team'. Story has an *ubuntu* quality. Through story we find each other and ourselves. We empathise, resonate. We can offer non-threatening and safe attending and listening. We can alter our memory – not of what happened, but of what lingers.

"The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting ... stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives... Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, trans-historical, trans-cultural: it is simply there, like life itself".³



Story In Business

Although not a panacea, stories do have the potential to contribute to most business activities. Some of these areas include shared-value development, scenario construction, qualitative research, forging connections, building teams and emotional/social/cultural intelligence, improving customer service, projecting the brand, knowledge management, instigating and orchestrating change, giving presentations, building resilience...

Developing Storytelling Competence

With practice, story competence can be developed, but what really counts is that a story is told from the heart.

At a rural gathering a famous actor is invited to recite something. He chooses Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd". He recites grandly, eloquently, perfectly.

At the end there is applause. Then one of the locals points to an elderly man. "He also knows that Psalm". So after much persuasion the old man gets up and recites in a quivering voice, making a few mistakes. As he ends there is a poignant silence.

Someone asks the actor, "What was the difference between your rendering and his?" The actor responds, "I know the Psalm. He knows the Shepherd".⁴

Stories connect, engage, inspire and lead to action and powerful influence. Story within conversations is instrumental in the spread of beliefs, values and virtues, new behaviour. Judaism and Christianity spread in ever-widening circles through conversations that included stories, and, *"Among Buddhists fables, fairy tales, anecdotes, adventure stories, and pious legends were very important as instructive narratives.....and made their way, stage by stage, across Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome to modern Italy, Germany, England and France..."⁵*

The Pope visited a Lesbos migrant camp in Greece last April (2016) *to listen to migrant's stories.*

Listening is by far the most important story competence to develop. Rumi reminds us that *"the branches of your intelligence grow new leaves in the wind of listening"*⁶ and theologian Paul Tillich refers to listening as an act of love.

Ethics

In my view story in business is not about performance, ego or manipulation. A recent book has the give-away title 'Tell to Win', and is endorsed by ex-President Bill Clinton as follows: *"...masterfully demonstrates that telling purposeful stories is the best way to persuade, motivate, and convince who you want to do what you need".⁷*

Elie Wiesel tells how Israel's Golda Meir's unexpectedly and successfully obtained missiles from John F. Kennedy after she told a story that ended this way:

"'....all were motivated by the same powerful dream: that one day our Temple would be rebuilt. Well Mr. President, the Temple is not yet rebuilt. We have only just begun. And if this begin-

ning itself is destroyed we will not even be able to dream anymore'. Kennedy stared at her for a long moment and then, without a word, pushed a button and ordered one of his aids to set in motion the administrative process that enabled the Pentagon to supply Israel with its first Hawk missiles.

'What do you think of that?' Golda asked, beaming. 'See?' I replied. 'A good story can get you anything. Even missiles'".⁸

As with so many things, intention influences the way we use stories – to build up or diminish, to create or destroy, to integrate or fragment. Far better to use them to share, convey insight, uplift, reframe (as in Jewish *midrash*), build and heal. That's when the power of story is unleashed.

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Diversity : Harnessing a Rich Mix



"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognise, accept, and celebrate those differences". Audre Lorde

Reality

Ask almost any workgroup to identify disruptive changes likely to take place in the future, and they're sure to mention the rise in diversity and the demographic shifts occurring across the world.

Countries, workplaces and market places are becoming more diverse. This trend will undoubtedly continue, and can represent either a stumbling block or an opportunity for an organisation.

Difficulties

People don't always see eye to eye. Our inbuilt stereotyping, perceptions, prejudices and bias-filters influence how we relate to others from different cultures, ethnicities, religions, belief systems, social classes, genders, sexual preferences, ages and generations, personalities, education levels, language, lifestyles, thinking styles, physical and mental abilities, attitudes, values, motives, temporal and other orientations

Recent mass migrations of dispossessed and displaced peoples,

campaigns such as 'Black Lives Matter', and the forced imposition of racial quotas in workplaces in some countries, have led to enormous resentment, fear and hostility. Harnessing diversity is a big challenge for organisations.

Positives and possibilities

Psychology professor Richard Crisp has examined how positive creativity and progress may emerge out of culture 'clashes', and how a protective, aggressive reaction to a threat from an outside group can be beneficially substituted by non-dual coalition thinking, and a considered response that stimulates positive forward movement.¹

Social scientist Andre Laurant, Emeritus Professor of Organisational Behavior at INSEAD ² discovered a fascinating phenomenon. In brief: the best teams rely on the difference and uniqueness of their members to create something better than can be produced by a mono-cultural (conforming) team. But people in a diverse team who fear difference and put their energy into seeing differences negatively, produce little of note, become one of the worst performing teams.

GROUP PERFORMANCE	
high	MULTICULTURAL GROUPS: energy put into respecting and appreciating differences and multiple viewpoints
average	MONOCULTURAL GROUPS: energy put into conforming
low	MULTICULTURAL GROUPS: energy put into conflict about differences

Low performing teams cannot release the positive energy required to trust, collaborate, and wholeheartedly bring their skills to bear on work outputs, and assume accountability for tasks and relationship building – let alone agree goals and purpose! ³ A three year Google research project has discovered that successful teams (who clearly see past diversity and respect each other and each other's views) "*cultivated two things which help bonding – conversational turn taking and empathy*".⁴

This implies that stories shared across generations, cultures, ethnic groups and all the other diversities can act as an incredible bonding agent – and help groups shift from low to high performance.

At an individual level, if you're having difficulty with a person who is very different to you, try putting yourself in their shoes, imagining their fears, problems, challenges, needs (perhaps as a meditation) so that you can build empathy prior to your next encounter.

The most diverse teams *can* become the best performing teams.

Moving forward

So what can organisations do to move forward?

Raise awareness and encourage the sharing of exchanges and stories within groups where there is diversity. One way is to get a group to read and then discuss a book. I recommend *Black Like Me* by Texan journalist John Howard Griffin. A white man, Griffin darkened his skin to assume the identity of a black man, spent six weeks hitchhiking and traveling on Greyhound buses through the 'deep south', and relates his experiences in his book.⁵

Another suggestion is to watch and have a conversation about Jane Elliott's video-taped diversity experiment, started with grade school children in her native Iowa. Immediately after the death of Martin Luther King she split her class into 'blue-eyed' and 'brown-eyed', gave and withheld privileges, treated one group as superior. In an amazingly short space of time she created a 'racial' divide, observed how the learning performance of the 'inferior' group dramatically declined. When the groups were switched, the same result occurred.⁶

You can also facilitate a session where people are asked to step into the moccasins of the other. "*Successful collaboration between stakehold-*

ers starts with what social psychologists call *perspective taking*: the ability to see the world through someone else's eyes".⁷ Get people to discover each other in pairs, and then allow each share with the group the unique and positive aspects of their partner. They thus act as an advocate for their partner – a sure way of breaking down differences.⁸

Now is the time to get rid of 'we and them' attitudes. Instead of walls and barriers a more appropriate metaphor for our times is that of a bridge.

Here is a good perspective:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnDgZuGlhHs

The rewards of diverse teams

Rumi the Sufi poet told the ancient story of an elephant and blind men. Each man felt a different part. To one a leg was assumed to be a pillar, the tail felt like rope, and ears like a huge fan.

Yet another thought the elephant's trunk was a branch of a tree ... Each one was right in their own way but only by putting their different views together could the complete picture be seen.

Teams that have common purpose, blended competencies, are inclusive and take responsibility to contribute skills to a greater whole, are on their way to becoming world-class.

After all, as an ancient African proverb explains "*Chra chimive hachitswaa inda: a thumb working on its own is worthless. It has to work collectively with the other fingers to get strength and be able to achieve. One finger cannot pick up a grain*".⁹ Ubuntu means that we are human because of our connectedness to all others.

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Sustainability from the Inside Out



"The future depends on what we do in the present" –

Mahatma Gandhi

We're in trouble

Earth seems more fragile than ever before – ecologically, socially, economically, politically, and spiritually. It is possible to cite progress and show improvements compared to the past, yet in many ways we appear to be bent on self-destruction. Fish, bird, mammal, amphibian and reptile populations have declined by 60% in the last 40 years. Global warming is a reality, with hottest ever temperatures being recorded this year – and the ripple effect on food production, water availability, ice cap melting, unheard of levels of population migrations, serious social instability, a huge potential for conflict over scarce resources, and other linked factors, is alarming. Human trafficking and modern-day slavery is more than disquieting. As are arms sales. Deforestation goals are unlikely to be achieved. Space debris is a problem we are now becoming aware of. Big oil still wields enormous destructive power. The rich-

poor divide is wider than ever. Wars are commonplace. Every area of Earth's fragility is threatened. This is no time for complacency.

With respect to the environment we tend towards anthropocentricity – man as superior being has dominion and entitlement, and not towards eco-centricity and responsible stewardship.

With respect to the economy we need to shift from linear to circular, stop waste, clean up our act along the entire business chain. But still, we by and large opt for the cowboy economic system – open, romantic, exploitative, destructive; and not for the spaceman economic system – closed, finite, and needing to be sustained.¹

With respect to society, have we forgotten how to view it as a sustainable, cohesive community? Do we instead see society as a market, as state-owned? ² Vices in our societies, including the world of business, appear to outweigh virtues by a long way. Divisiveness overshadows harmony. Whether because of overwhelm or ignorance, we have become desensitised to what is happening around us and to us.

We're in it together

In 1854, Chief Seattle of the Duwamish Tribe said, *"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect"*. This resonates with findings in Gestalt psychology, integral theory, Jung's collective unconscious, systemic and integrated thinking, rhizomes in systems biology, chaos theory and the butterfly effect, von Humboldt's cosmos, cognitive neuroscience, quantum physics, aspects of ancient Hindu, Buddhist, Shamanic and the Judeo-Christian mystical tradition.

We are interconnected.

How do we play our part in the bigger picture?

Business leaders wanting to contribute to the sustainability and regeneration challenge and adopt a triple-bottom-line practice are faced with loads of new jargon; compliance, measurement and reporting requirements; many emerging techniques, processes, systems and studies; and hordes of 'experts'.

But the truth is that all the laws, rules regulations and principles in the world do not guarantee desired behavior. Like ethics, purpose,

compassion, courage and sustainability come from the inside out. The Williams/ Rosenstein model of the human dynamics of sustainability fosters the development of ethical, compassionate, forward-looking, collaborative and effective leadership, leading to organisational cultures that contribute to sustainability.³ Its interconnected elements are:

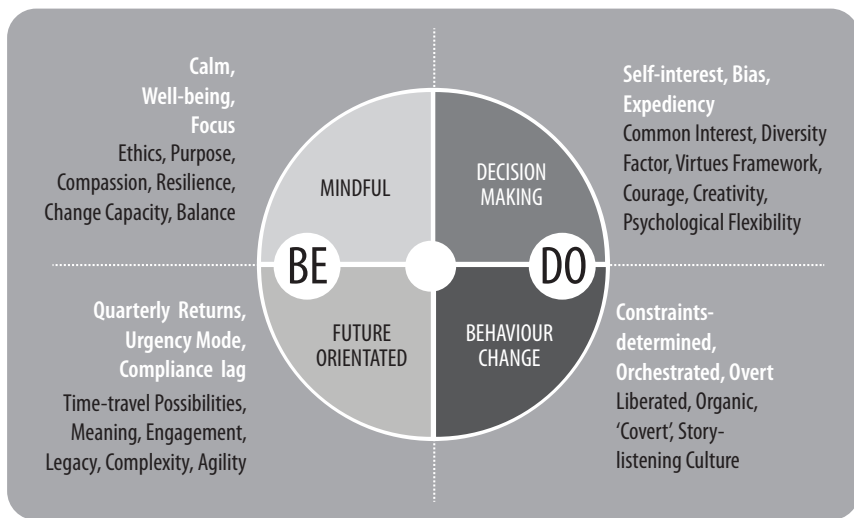
Deeper mindfulness. Many of us are in mindless mode for much of the time – prone to distraction, processing numerous thoughts, being busy (a default state that feeds our self-importance), impatient and striving to achieve. Being mindful introduces calm, clarity, focus, and an open non-judgmental state. We learn to respond appropriately rather than have knee-jerk reactions (often resulting in unwanted consequences). Meditation and reflection have been shown to develop mature ethics, clarity of purpose, a capacity to handle ambiguity and paradox, and transcendence, caring and compassion.

Future orientation. We are so used to deadlines, and quarterly results and returns, that longer term decision-making (including accounting for future generations) doesn't happen naturally. We should honor the past, be aware in the present moment and think carefully about how best to take care of the fast-emerging future. We need to be future-fit. Those who grapple with the future (as when creating alternative scenario possibilities), are at the same time equipping themselves to cope better with current complexities. American philosopher John Rawls' principle is that if we act with justice in the present generation, this will be inherited by future generations.⁴

Considered and collaborative decision making. These days, with so many players in the sustainability game, in order to thrive we need to make collaborative decisions – building bridges is a far more appropriate metaphor than maintaining silos. Diversity of experience, thinking style, and perspectives – all make for superior decisions. In order to overcome our default-setting (what Kahneman has termed System 1: fast, parallel, automatic, convenient, associative), we need to employ mindful pause, allowing System 2 factors to kick in (slower, serial, controlled, effort-filled, rational and flexible).⁵ This 'pause' supports ethical and virtues-based decision-making.

Behavior change. Proven practical tools, ancient and modern, are offered, including the use of story. Properly applied, story is deeply relational and non-manipulative. Story-listening research in the form of anecdote circles and metaphor elicitation, nudge theory, carbon conversations, and pledging, all subtly shift behavior. Most importantly those who often feel overwhelmed, powerless, and unable to make a meaningful contribution – employees and customer/ citizens – are drawn in and included.

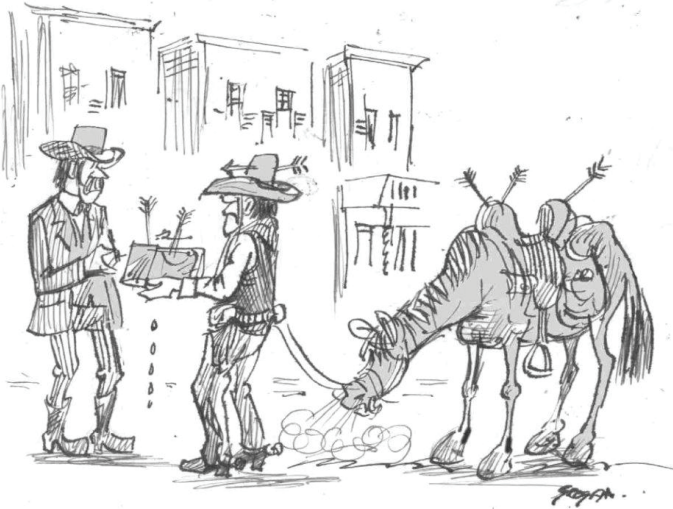
The authors advocate both doing and being, and encourage business to go beyond only limited leveraging of each of the four components of the model.



Having a sustainability/ regeneration mind-set means developing a new awareness, being concerned and caring from the inside out, thinking systemically, moving from automatic to reflective, being future – fit, instigating change shrewdly, being brave.

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The Secret of Superior Service



"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts". Einstein

Does high tech ensure successful service delivery?

In the service and contact centre world, technology has developed at a frenetic pace over the past few decades. We've seen a range of analytics, customer relationship and customer experience management systems, technology-enabled business process redesign (including more do-it-yourself, from more devices). There has been continual improvement in multi-media contact, call distribution, predictive dialling and mailing, voice recognition, workforce and workflow optimization. A recent service provider advertisement promised *"We allow you to excel at digital containment of customer engagement!"*

Have these developments significantly improved the average customer's experience?

There is lots more tech development on the way which will influence our purchase options and choices, change how we transact, how we make payments and receive goods and services, and examine and monitor how we emotionally respond to offers.

In this fast-paced, rapidly changing environment it behoves us to remember that which stays constant: the *customer* ultimately remains the sole arbitrator of business success. And the experience of human contact and care in many situations will make the difference.

Does more savvy measurement help providers to improve their delivery?

Measurement too has become more sophisticated. Technology has boosted measurement possibilities. We can measure more. Faster.

We are measuring beings. Bean counters. We measure how well we've slept, the temperature of our bath water, the time of our next meeting, the speed at which we're traveling, how angry we're feeling, how long we've been kept waiting, our pulse rate, how old someone might be ... we're seeing the introduction of smart tennis rackets and golf clubs ... and the advent of 'big data' will see measurement design and practice go to new heights (or lows).

Zorba the Greek pointed out that '*clever people and grocers, they weigh everything*'¹, suggesting a 'Western' thinking style that is always comparing and judging, always rational, always dualistic. A focus on measures creates for many an illusion of orderliness, precision, certainty, predictability, objectivity, control, success.

However, quantitative data can be shallow and misleading, especially when applied to people, and if we measure in the wrong way, measure the wrong things, and fail to recognise that there are some things we simply cannot measure. (Quality management guru W. Edwards Deming stated that 97% of what matters in business cannot be counted). And if we reduce human beings and their experiences to mere numbers, statistics, and being rational – only (which trend will increase in a 'Big Data' world) then these 'people-metrics' could cause us to lose sight of people as people. Perhaps our surveys and measures are best used for guidance, and not to pretend at certainty?

We must continue to be aware of the measurement trap. Zappos

attention to the virtue of building customer relationships and an outstanding service focus allows them to discard typical contact centre measures based on quantitative 'efficiency'. One of their customer service representatives had a ten and a half hour call. David Hutchens reports, "*The customer called to order a pair of Ugg boots, but in the conversation the service rep discovered that the customer was about to relocate to the Las Vegas area, where Zappos is located. They spent 10 hours exploring neighborhoods and other details of life in Vegas. At the end of the call, the customer purchased the pair of Ugg boots*").² Somewhat extreme perhaps, but this story does make the point that relationships are paramount. That there is a difference between imposing responsibility and achieving response-ability.

Can we learn from the past?

According to legend, 7th century Irish King Guaire of Connaught in Ireland '*was so constantly giving away that his right hand grew longer than his left*'! ³

In the days of the Pony Express in the Wild West, the letter or package might arrive late, as well as torn and dirty, perhaps because one of the horse riders had been ambushed or even killed along the way. It was not technology nor process nor measurement, but the customer knowledge and appreciation that the employees of this company were actually risking their lives, that guaranteed its place as a service legend.

On my first business visits to Durban in South Africa many years ago, before the high – tech rush, I got into the habit of staying at the Edward Hotel on the beachfront. The manager always greeted me by name on arrival and made sure that my preferences regarding room location, daily newspaper, and other services were met. I felt important. He recorded these needs and expectations on a manual card 'system'. Lo – tech but it worked! The experience was good.

An authentic *motivation to serve* is the thread that has and will hold together all good service experiences. (Notwithstanding the many and increasing calls for improved Public Sector service delivery in South Africa, this is highly unlikely to happen soon for one simple reason: Government departments and officials (ever increasing in number) are motivated by control and risk-avoidance, and not by the giving of service).

What lies ahead?

The need for sustainability/ regeneration has triggered a huge shift to the adoption of triple – bottom – line operating (Environment, Society, Economy) in the corporate world. This has prompted a focus on the higher purpose of each business – as a way to become more attractive to potential employees, customers and investors – and to lead to improved reputation and performance. Corporations now need to serve customers and employees (who are also citizens) and all other stakeholders who have an interest in economic, social and environmental impacts. These include activists, suppliers, government The superior service challenge, and the initiatives and drives needed to obtain the support and loyalty of all of these different publics is occupying the minds of business leaders.

An obsession with technology and quantitative measurement (both “left-brain” activities), to the exclusion of the people factor, carries within it the seeds of decay – a potential loss of the soul of service. In a world characterised by greater technical prowess, ever-increasing levels of distraction, and lower-quality face-to-face connectivity – those who can add the necessary high-touch, will win. High-touch operates at a number of levels: not simply during the service experience but every time the customer ‘touches’ the Brand. My anecdote circle and metaphor elicitation work has convinced me that DEEP LISTENING to customers is, in most instances, far more valuable than telling and quantitative measuring. Constructive, connection-conversations trump divisive, controlling, win-lose conversations.

Process, product, systems may change but people remain constant – their needs, aspirations, desires, hearts. This (“right brain” activity) will be the driver of truly world class customer service excellence. (Futurist John Naisbitt, who has laid down and advocates the balancing principle that more high-tech demands more high-touch, puts it this way: *“The most exciting breakthroughs of the 21st century will not occur because of technology but because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human”*.⁴ and thus the imperative of *“learning how to live as compassionate human beings in a technologically dominating time”*.⁵

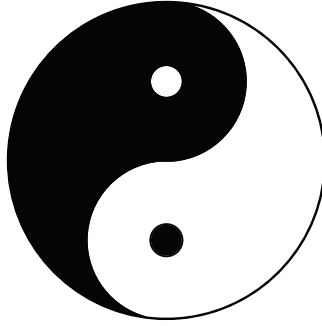
In 2000, I wrote that the *“consistent delivery of excellent and ever-improving service remains a rarity”*. That sentiment prompted a book on how to excel at service delivery – getting it right by becoming customer-

centric, putting service at the heart of the organisation. The book addresses the strategic, operational and emotional challenges faced by those bent on delivering excellent customer service, was very well received in the USA, UK and South Africa, and remains valid and relevant.⁶

Ultimately, as with compassion, ethics and love service is about BEING. We don't DO compassion and ethics without BEING compassionate and ethical. We don't DO superior service without having a service-heart. We don't DO responsiveness, reliability and assurance without BEING responsive, reliable, trustworthy.

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Non-Dualism (And)



"There are a thousand ways to kneel and kiss the ground".

Rumi

Mutually – exclusive opposites

We humans dislike paradox, ambiguity, and contradiction. Grey is far less acceptable than black or white. In our lives and in our work-places we seek clarity, definite choices. We employ dual thinking. But many times life simply doesn't work that way. Things are more complicated, complex, and sometimes even chaotic.

I believe that most times 'And' trumps 'Either-Or'. An open, flexible mind, a readiness to embrace ambiguity and expand, is an incredibly valuable trait and a sure sign of maturity.

Separate AND Together: Love/Hate

Two turbulent, fiercely independent Mexican artists, Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, whose on-again-off-again relationship saw them marrying each other twice, deeply loved each other. They lived in adjoining studio-houses in San Angel, Mexico City. The architect designed a home made up of two separate concrete blocks linked by a narrow bridge that joins the rooftops. A red block represented Diego, a blue one Frida. The bridge that united them was the bond of love.

Crisis AND Opportunity.

Business life is full of ambiguity, ethical dilemmas, conflicting interests, riddles, and crises. (The ancient Chinese character for crisis is a form of paradox, meaning dangerous + opportunity).



Compassion AND Power (hard/soft).

Neuroscientist Dacher Keltner's extensive research exposes our limiting beliefs about power. He shows clearly how compassion and selflessness enable influence – both direct and indirect, and invoke followership. Compassion produces positive power.¹

2500 years ago Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu taught that "*Leaders whose position will endure are those who are the most compassionate. Compassion is a mysterious intellectual force that allows reality to act on the mind in a deeply affecting way; and in turn the mind may act upon reality*".² Compassion is an aspect of mindfulness that will have a huge impact on our efforts to create sustainability, regenerate planet, people and the economy.^{3, 4}

Lose AND Win.

When we switch away from feeding ego, chasing after position, power, and possessions, pleasure and perfection – and learn to be content with less and give to others – then our self-esteem and happiness is boosted. We give AND receive simultaneously.

People AND Planet AND Profit.

Many businesses are seeing the interconnectivity between people, planet and profit ... they've seen the imperative to act responsibly to ensure the sustainability of society, communities, the environment in their own interests.

Holy AND Commonplace, Sacred AND Secular.

"The great lesson is that the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbors, friends and family, in one's backyard" (Abraham Maslow, 1908-1970) and at work, "spirituality is an experience of depth in life, it is living life with heart rather than just superficially".⁵

High-Tech AND High-Touch.

Futurist John Naisbitt advocates the balancing principle that the rise of high-tech demands more high-touch.⁶ One hopes that this continues to hold true – social media and other cyber-space distractions tend to create distance between people, and the advent of people-friendly robot companions may be another separation factor.

Embracing paradox, ambiguity, contradiction

A couple approach a therapist for marriage counselling. First the husband shares his version. The therapist nods, "You're right". Then the therapist listens to the wife's version and comments. "You're right". There is a trainee student with the therapist, who asks, "How can you say to both the husband and to the wife, "You are right?"

The therapist turns to the student and says, "You know, you too are right".

I am not saying that there is no room for either/or, or that differences do not exist. There can be separateness within sameness. Ancient Hindu Advaita (non-duality) – from around 700 BC – conceived of the entire universe as one essential reality. Advaita means that *"they are not separated anymore, and yet they are there"* – Bede Griffiths, Benedictine Monk AND Hindu Swami. Modern, popular philosopher Ken Wilbur separates first tier thinkers and second tier thinkers, the latter having matured to non-duality.

Differences do exist. "But a contradiction that is faced leads to true knowledge... Contradictions are on the surface, the symbols of deeper and more fertile forces that can unleash the most marvellous energy when they are embraced".⁷

On the other hand stubborn, dualistic, either/or thinking tends to promote divisiveness and exclusion, as we see in political election campaigns, and in relationships between groups and individuals.

It is good to adopt non-dual thinking, see a bigger picture, and appreciate that:

- "And" is a bridge that unites
- Accepting the palatable and less comfortable (for example during self-reflection) can make the difference between fragmentation and wholeness/ authenticity. Learning to identify and avoid our fear-based reactions helps prevent closed minds and prejudice.
- Humble enquiry and developing open minds is a character-building practice that helps build positive workplace cultures. *"Because in an increasingly complex, interdependent, and culturally diverse world, we cannot hope to understand and work with people from different occupational, professional, and national cultures if we do not know how to ask questions and build relationships that are based on mutual respect and the recognition that others know things that we may need to know in order to get a job done.... we must become better at asking and do less telling in a culture that overvalues telling".⁸*

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Unleashing the Power of Compassion in Organisations



"Unless someone like you cares an awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not". Dr. Seuss (The Lorax)

Context

Business has begun to awaken to the need to heal, sustain and nurture the environment, society and the economy; to adopt people, planet and profit parameters. There is a growing realization that successful organisations will require:

- A clear (higher) purpose, supported by meaningful values that can be translated into character virtues. This will impact their reputation, performance, and ability to engage employees.¹
- A devotion to the human dynamics of sustainability so that caring, loving behaviors are enabled, and there is a move from inside-out to the wider society that makes a lasting difference.²

Both of these requirements rest heavily on the characteristic of compassion. Compassion is a tenet of all the major religions including Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. In Buddhism, as a bird needs two wings to work in harmony so that it can fly well, we need wisdom and compassion to work in harmony in order to reach 'enlightenment'.

Explaining compassion

"In 1944 the mother of the poet Yevtushenko travelled from Siberia to Moscow, where she witnessed a procession of 20,000 German prisoners of war marching through the streets. The generals strutted at their head, oozing contempt, determined to show that they still considered themselves superior. 'The bastards smell of perfume', someone shouted. The crowd yelled its hatred. The women waved their clenched fists in anger, and the police had great difficulty in holding them back. But when the Russians saw how pitifully thin and ragged the ordinary German soldiers were, dirty, battered and completely miserable, many of them hobbling on crutches, the street became silent. Suddenly, an elderly woman broke through the cordon and held out a crust of bread to one of the soldiers. Then from every side, other woman copied her, giving food, cigarettes, whatever they had with them. 'The soldiers were no longer enemies. They were people'".³

Compassion is not an intellectual decision. We begin to practice compassion after we've experienced it or seen it practiced by others. It is not about having the answer, but being the answer. It is about feeling AND acting.

Keltner's extensive research exposes our limiting beliefs about power. He shows clearly how compassion and selflessness enable influence – both direct and indirect, and invoke followership.⁴ Compassion produces positive power.

How is the self (and the organisation) impacted?

Being compassionate benefits relationships, our health and fosters a sense of well-being. When we're compassionate, we are less lonely. We feel better about ourselves, are happier, more content and more positive. Our resilience to stress is raised. The nurturing and caregiving areas of our brains are reinforced, our general attitude towards all other people improves, and our moral principles are upheld. In workplaces where compassion is present morale is higher and people are more committed to their jobs.

Keltner has pointed out that we actually suffer moral injury, reduced happiness and lowered resilience if we are NOT compassionate. Famous brain surgeon Henry Marsh exclaimed: "What are we if we don't try to help others? We're nothing. Nothing at all".⁵

Paul Gilbert, clinical psychologist and founder of Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT) teaches that as we humans have evolved

our capacities for reflection, self-monitoring and criticism, shame, anticipation and imagination – we have developed new brain troubles in parallel (for example anxieties and fears), and the practice of mindfulness and compassion (to self and others) alleviates these new ailments.⁶

(Of course, depending on how much, how often and how intensely we give of ourselves, and on how we cope with this giving, we may become drained from time to time. We may need to draw on resources that refresh us: a support group, retreating to 'sharpen the axe', and mindfully appreciating the value of the compassionate work we're doing – so that we are able to experience uplifting, refreshing compassion-satisfaction)

Developing compassion, using mindfulness

Many organisations have turned to mindfulness training to reduce stress, improve focus and increase productivity. Far fewer have employed mindfulness to build ethical, purpose-driven and compassionate practices and character virtues. This is a huge missed opportunity.

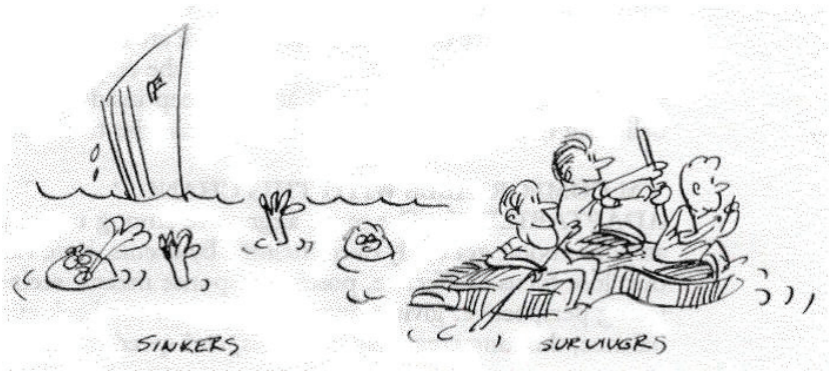
One area of mindfulness meditation, the development of self-compassion (being aware of one's own emotional pain, acknowledging and not blocking it, nor being over-critical of self, but rather showing kindness to self) is to foster compassion from the inside-out.

" ... contemplation is the only ultimate answer to the unreal and insane world that our financial systems and our advertising culture and our chaotic and unexamined emotions encourage us to inhabit. To learn contemplative practice is to learn what we need so as to live truthfully and honestly and lovingly. It is a deeply revolutionary matter".⁷

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Resilience: Building Bouncebackability



"Did you want to see me broken? Bowed head and lowered eyes? Shoulders falling down like teardrops ..." Maya Angelou

"I love those who can smile in trouble, who can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection". Leonardo da Vinci

Life isn't fair

Forrest Gump was right. As human beings, we're randomly buffeted by large, frequent, and difficult shocks and changes. Life may seem unfair. During these tough times, some sink and others swim. But we can all build resilience – that positive quality that helps us to cope with disappointments, stress, adversity, change, and enables us to bounce back.

Renowned Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön once received this advice from her mentor: Trungpa Rinpoche:

"Well, it's a lot like walking into the ocean, and a big wave comes and knocks you over. And you find yourself lying on the bottom with sand in your nose and in your mouth. And you are lying there, and you have a choice. You can

either lie there, or you can stand up and start to keep walking out to sea".

"So the waves keep coming," he said. "And you keep cultivating your courage and bravery and sense of humor to relate to this situation of the waves, and you keep getting up and going forward".¹

The approach outlined here enables us to cope with change and adversity when they happen, *and* to live less anxiously. It follows that resilient employees make for a resilient organisation.

Building personal resilience

Based on early work by Suzanne Kobasa on hardy personalities², Allen Zimbler and Caryn Solomons developed an accurate and robust instrument to assess personal resilience. It is a self-report questionnaire that has proved itself over a long period of time, and takes only a few minutes to complete. I've used it in many settings with individuals, couples, teams and large change interventions. It covers the challenge, comfort and control of resilience. Tools, methodologies, techniques, conversations and practices are then offered that help people to make improvements, supported by coaching where necessary.

Nine factors (all interconnected) are grouped for convenience under:

CHALLENGE (rising to the challenge of change by having purpose and being positive)

COMFORT (being comfortable during change events and transition journeys – by having empathy, being adaptable and able to express feelings), and

CONTROL (being in control of self during change by regularly sharpening the axe, being proactive, having self-esteem and an inner locus of control).

Resilience factors:

To expand on one factor from each group:

Purpose (Challenge).

Purpose brings direction, clarity and meaning. Those who have purpose tend to engage, relate and perform better. *"At the heart of resilience is a belief in oneself – yet also a belief in something larger than*

oneself". (Hara Estroff Marano (Editor at Large, Psychology Today). Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put in every heart ... Let yourself be silently drawn by the stronger pull of what you really love – Rumi

Without a meaningful purpose we face ennui. If we think our work has no meaning, feel jaded, nothing new and exciting is happening, we feel unsatisfied, unfulfilled, aimless, listless, if our lives are swamped by burdens, responsibilities, chores that are mundane and routine, we stay in the drone zone, and lack resilience – then the dis-ease we're suffering from is the absence of purpose.

Purpose differs from person to person in span, depth and time horizon, and depends partly on their 'motivational fingerprint'. This can be the difference between job, career and calling.

Expressing feelings appropriately (comfort).

This is a component of emotional intelligence we can learn. Related to self-esteem, it is *"important enough to express what we are feeling... (the) energy we were using to keep down the resentment and frustration gets freed up and we get more energy for life (and relationships)".³*

"Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – this is not easy" – Aristotle

"When one is out of touch with oneself, one cannot touch others" – Anne Morrow Lindburgh

How we express our feelings is an indication of our emotional and social intelligence. Being able to share in a supportive environment during change is an important aspect of resilience. Leveraging 'proximity'.

Self-esteem (self-control).

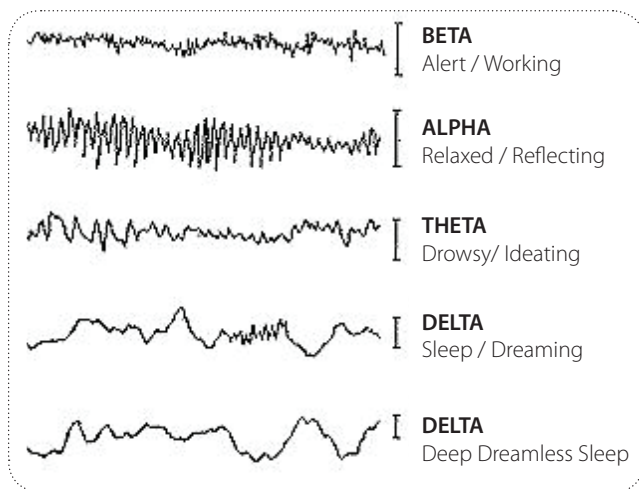
Our self-esteem too often resides in how 'successful' we are in the eyes of others. Savvy building of self-esteem, step by step, which includes reframing limiting beliefs, having realistic expectations and self-compassion, contributes hugely to how well we handle change and adversity.

Dr Jan Halper conducted 4000 interviews with top Fortune 500 executives. The majority felt that they had wasted their lives in the

pursuit of “empty and meaningless” goals, never even thought that their success would bring them unhappiness, and failed to separate and balance their personal and professional lives.⁴

Two practices that undergird the development of many of the nine resilience factors are:

- Story. Story helps with resilience-building strengths such as raising awareness, creating a safe space for sharing, re-imagining and reframing of situations, invoking possibility, overcoming limiting beliefs, forging connection, and conveying wisdom.
- Being mindful is contrary to our normal behaviors. It goes against our busy-ness, frenetic thinking and acting, distractibility, striving to achieve, impatience.



The root word of Buddha, *budh*, means to wake up, understand and know at a deep level. Mindfulness meditation is one of the ancient practices that help us develop a state of mindful living. An example, which falls under the resilience factor of regularly ‘sharpening the axe’, is to cat nap.

Foresters know that to keep on performing well, they need periodically to take time out to sharpen their axes. A weary woodcutter with a blunt axe is ineffective. Winston Churchill, Britain’s wartime Prime Minister, Albert Einstein, Napoleon Bonaparte, Thomas Edison, John F. Kennedy all took cat naps.

A yoga nidra, (which you can Google), is a practice that takes you to somewhere between waking and sleeping, from beta to theta waves, for purposes of relaxation and restoration.

Mindfulness brings calm, clarity, a non-judgmental approach to life. It can also be harnessed to directly facilitate the development of purpose, compassion, and mature ethics (all of which support resilience).

Listen to informative and encouraging conversations and stories about building resilience – podcasts 20 to 24 on <http://liminal-coaching.com/liminal-podcast/>

(A personal mindfulness checklist that addresses the whole person; physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual; is available through grahamwilliams@change.co.za)

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Opening Our Hearts to Happiness



"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion". His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

Wrong ideas of happiness

Democritus, born in 460 BC, is as right today as he was nearly 2,500 years ago: *"Happiness resides not in possessions and not in gold; the feeling of happiness dwells in the soul"*.

In our consumption-driven, materialistic world, fueled by self-interested marketers hell-bent on growth and profit, we tend to base our self-esteem on external signs of 'success'. We pride ourselves on being independent and busy, and aggressively seek to be more and more successful. But we delude ourselves.

Unwittingly we are in this process becoming self-absorbed, one of the greatest conditions for unhappiness. Too late do we wake up to the realisation that happiness does not equate to material well-being and *hedonistic* 'pleasure.'

It's far better to strive to live virtuously, seeking to reach our unique potential as human beings. This may be termed *eudaimonic* well-being, and stems from Aristotle. Others along the way (Rogers, Maslow) have shown that we *do* have an actualizing, higher-purpose tendency.¹

"According to the Buddha's teachings, the most basic condition for happiness is freedom. Here we do not mean political freedom, but freedom from the mental formations of anger, despair, jealousy and delusion. These mental formations are described by the Buddha as poisons. As long as these poisons are still in our heart, happiness cannot be possible".²

Counter-intuitively, as our focus moves away from ourselves and purposefully outwards towards others, we give to ourselves.³ Happiness and inner peace result when we take our focus off our own pleasure and instead adopt an unconditional other-orientation, a purity of heart.

3rd Century AD Christians who chose to live in seclusion in Egyptian deserts (and became known as the Desert Fathers and Mothers) gave valuable insights into how we may achieve enduring happiness by:

- overcoming vices and disciplining desires through contemplation (from Plato)
- developing and delighting in living virtuously by practicing moderation and balance,

where both sets of practices *"imply a struggle against the lower passions that lead us away from beauty and goodness"*.⁴

They pinpointed universal negative thoughts or vices – inner realities that we all must face and tame if we are to have well-being and happiness. For example, anger is a root cause of aggression, violence, cruelty, and murder. In order to move beyond the moral imperative of 'do no harm' and into actively 'doing good', they identified the opposite virtues that we should develop in order to attain true happiness.⁴ The acquiring of happiness, joy, peace only comes after patient inner work, and growth in maturity to an other-orientation.

Purity of heart is the way to happiness

Economist Richard Layard ends his book *Happiness: lessons from a new science* by citing a letter written by Jeremy Bentham to a friend's daughter:

" ... for every grain of enjoyment you sow in the bosom of another, you shall find a harvest in your own bosom; while every sorrow which you pluck out

from the thoughts and feelings of a fellow creature shall be replaced by beautiful peace and joy in the sanctuary of your soul".⁵

A story to mull over is the oft-told Cherokee legend: A boy confides in his grandfather that a big fight is raging inside – like a battle between two wolves. One is bad, the wolf of anger, greed, lust and pride. The other wolf is good – generosity, compassion, self-control and gentleness. "Which wolf will win?" The wise grandfather replies, "The one that you feed".

We are 'And' beings rather than 'Either/Or' beings. Every individual has a Mother Teresa and a Hitler living inside them. Every organisation has the potential for good and bad practices. Yet we do have choices we can make and quests we can pursue. 12th Century St. Francis of Assisi asked "Can true humility and compassion exist in our words and in our eyes unless we know we too are capable of any act?"⁶

In our quest for happiness "We can learn from the great religions. Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims. They all focus on key values, and how to make of them character virtues: mindfulness, compassion, generosity, patience, wisdom, inclusivity, humility, joy, love.... They inculcate virtues through meditation, teaching and practice. Values are important bases for action, and eventually we 'become' our values. We move from vicious to virtuous, from an ever-tightening noose to an ever-brightening halo. We self-actualise, transcend. Achieve contentment and true happiness.

In spiritually governed, led, managed organisations the most desired outcome is that agreed values become part of the organisation's DNA because they are spontaneously lived – fully and consistently. Become virtues".⁷

As a governing director, leader or manager in your organisation, ask: 'What policies, programs, practices (remuneration and reward, promotion, assessment ...) feed the bad wolf and have the potential to result in dissatisfaction, poor team and workplace dynamics? What can we do to put in place good training, culture development initiatives and different ways of working, feed the good wolf in our people, and promote sound, lasting happiness?

If you have 8 minutes, listen to the Dalai Lama talking about happiness: www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUEkDc_LfKQ.

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Social Intelligence



"Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant?" Henry David Thoreau

Two millennia ago, in a time of uncertainty about the future of the Mediterranean world, Hannibal of Carthage led an army from Spain, across the Pyrenees, then the Alps, in order to invade Italy. Possibly the greatest military undertaking ever, his contingent of 30 000 or more men and about 40 elephants had to contend with landslides, snow storms, hostile barbarian attacks, intense hardship. On the four month journey, 15 000 men and nearly all the elephants were lost.

The Romans, expecting a Sicilian invasion, were caught totally off-guard by the overland invasion. During his subsequent 15 year occupation of Roman territory, Hannibal mustered more followers, destroyed over 400 towns, and at least 30 000 Romans were killed in battle.

How did Hannibal mobilise his follower-ship? How did he retain their loyalty and commitment during this mission impossible? What competencies (head, heart and hands) must he have displayed in order to achieve what he did? What lessons can business leaders learn from Hannibal?

What was hannibal's secret?

Hannibal clearly possessed 'hands' competencies such as achievement through results-based leadership, being hands-on or hands-off as appropriate. He practiced cat-napping to maintain his energy levels.

He undoubtedly was blessed with 'head' competencies, strategic and lateral thinking, problem-solving, decision-making.

But two 'heart' competencies stand out: being purpose and values driven, and being socially intelligent.

Social intelligence (SQ) overlaps with emotional intelligence (EQ).¹

EQ is largely about being self-aware and managing one's own emotions. SQ is mainly about being socially adept and managing one-to-one and group connections and relationships.

How did hannibal's social intelligence manifest?

Hannibal empathised by sharing at all times on an equals basis, listening deeply to his advisers, refusing any special physical comforts, eating only when he absolutely had to, commanding attention when required.

The times then were hard and cruel, but we can deduce that Hannibal put much importance on forging alliances, being daring and innovative, respecting viewpoints, reasoning, treating his followers with respect.

Management consultant and business thought leader Karl Albrecht says that "... *we need leaders who model high social intelligence. In particular we need leaders who can articulate a positive vision of development and progress – even if it doesn't make all of us happy. We need leaders who appeal to our higher selves and invite us to grow as individuals and as a society, rather than leaders who pander to our primal fears and selfish greed*".²

Social intelligence is the way in which we apply a rational, moderating brake to our evolutionary-wired and memory-driven primitive, impulsive being. How we turn instinctive, impulsive perceptions and automatic reactions and responses into smooth effective interactions with others. It is about presenting clearly and authentically to others, having a presence and gaining trust, always attending through listening fully and tuning in to the other, building rapport, engaging with, understanding and valuing others. Being

street smart, knowing how the social world works, and opting for collaboration rather than separation. Daniel Goleman quotes William Ickes, the University of Texas psychologist who has pioneered social intelligence research, and who points out: "*This ability (SQ) distinguishes the most tactful advisors, the most diplomatic officials, the most effective negotiators, the most electable politicians, the most productive sales persons, the most successful teachers, and the most insightful therapists*".³ And characterises effective governors, leaders and managers.

And love is manifest in how we communicate with each other. The language we use as we tell and live our stories is as important as ever. Rosenberg's nonviolent communication process has much merit. It's about connecting to self and others as equals, in a mindful, positive, honest, assertive and loving way that is respectful of difference and promotes peace:

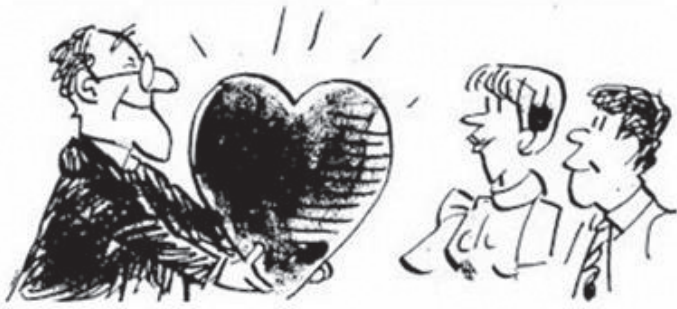
- Observing and hearing one's own and the other's needs – without evaluating or exaggerating
- Identifying feelings related to observation. Answers 'What's alive in us at a given moment?'
- What needs, values, desires lie behind those feelings – cause, trigger, are a direct link to the feelings
- The concrete, specific action required to fulfil those needs, and that make life more wonderful⁴

That's social intelligence!

(The ancient skills of storytelling and story listening enjoy a close connection with social intelligence).

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An Elephant in the Office: The Business Case for Communities of Love in Our Workplaces



"Love, that thing we have great difficulty even describing, is the only truly real and lasting experience of life. It is the opposite of fear, the essence of relationships, the core of creativity, the grace of power, an intricate part of who we are". Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, & David Kessler ¹

"We must study love. We must be able to teach it, to understand it, to predict it, or else the world is lost to hostility and suspicion". Abraham Maslow

Workplace communities of love?

200 years ago a fable by Russian author Ivan Krylov introduced a wonderful metaphor – an elephant in the room.² It is something big. So big that it fills the room. It simply cannot be ignored. It has great importance and potential value. But incredibly, we fail to see it! And if we do see it we refrain from talking about it. The metaphor accurately describes the possibility of workplace communities of love.

What is love?

The Ancient Greeks distinguished between love of self, sexual passion, playful love, deep friendship, longstanding love and sacrificial, unconditional love for everyone. We can think of love as an isolated act, a feeling or emotion, a virtue (the highest), a state of being, or a power still directing the evolution of the universe

Is there a business case?

We have experienced a long era of business being single-mindedly focused on profit maximisation. Only recently have we begun acting in the area of sustainability/ regeneration in response to threats to the economy, environment and society. Even more recently we are realising that the human side of the business deserves urgent attention if these endeavours are to succeed. A shift to: 'use things, love people'.

June Singer, a giant in the world of analytical psychology, "*In our concerns with counting and weighing and measuring, with precise descriptions and careful evaluation, we sometimes fail to recognise or give credit to values that do not fit these criteria. Or, when we do recognise that such values exist, we split them off from the consciousness of the marketplace and relegate them to the categories of religion or the arts*".³

The human side of business, including love – the highest virtue – the most positive human quality – deserves a lot more attention in our workplaces because:

- The 'whole person' is physical, intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual. Neuroscientist Rick Hanson points out that "*being cared about was crucial to survival ... and (mammals, primates, hominids, and humans) that did not care about being cared about did not pass on their genes*".⁴ So, "*Love is a natural upwelling current inside us all. It doesn't need to be pushed or pumped, it needs to be released*".⁵ The concept of loving others and giving unconditionally can be found in nearly every ethical and religious tradition down the ages. Delio writes "*We are born social and relational. We yearn to belong, to be part of a larger whole that includes not only friends and family, but neighbors, community, trees, flowers, sun, earth, stars. We are born of nature and are part of nature; that is, we are born into a web of life and are part of a web of life*".⁶

- The sick and parlous state of our habitats, resources, communities and livelihoods; the shocking numbers of people who are homeless, hungry, thirsty, displaced, abused and trafficked; the unethical and self-interested behaviour of many governments and corporations – all combine to make a compelling case for an infusion of love on an unprecedented scale.

Research is beginning to show that a culture of love enhances team dynamics, customer service, innovation, and performance on a triple-bottom-line basis. *"In a 16-month study of a large long-term-care facility on the East Coast, we found that workers in units with strong cultures of companionate love had lower absenteeism, less burnout, and greater teamwork and job satisfaction than their colleagues in other units. Employees also performed their work better, as demonstrated by more-satisfied patients, better patient moods, and fewer unnecessary trips to the emergency room. (Employees whose dispositions were positive to begin with received an extra performance boost from the culture). The families of patients in units with stronger cultures of companionate love reported higher satisfaction with the facility. These results show a powerful connection between emotional culture and business performance".*⁷ I believe that this finding applies outside of the health care sector as well.

Fear and love

In August BBC World News TV broadcast images of a man in Delhi who was knocked over by a vehicle. The driver stopped to have a quick look, and then travelled on. Witnesses and passers-by paid no heed to the man's plight. After an hour, someone walked to where he lay and stole his cell phone. The man died, unattended.

(There is a "Good Samaritan law" in India that sends the message that it's OK to get involved, there is no reason to fear being intimidated by authorities, nor of getting caught up in red-tape. Clearly this was not enough to change the 'bystander effect' that was observed).⁸

Fear in many guises is also what drives dysfunctional, toxic, workplaces. It is perhaps the major barrier to love. *"Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it".* – 13th century Sufi mystic Jalaluddin Rumi. (I've heard Mother, now Saint Teresa, talk to a packed audience in Cape Town and, eight centuries after Rumi, her message was the same).

Conversely, unconditional love invites the release of anxieties and worries and feeds our self-confidence, assurance, self-worth and significance. How we speak, listen, appreciate, support, uplift each other, tend to each other's needs are important, loving behaviours and practices. When they become part of the workplace community culture, they drive out the fear that feeds dysfunction and toxicity. Such behaviour soothes hearts, lifts spirits, builds resilience, and boosts performance.

50 years ago a professor at the University of Southern California, Leo Buscaglio, who became known as Dr Love, was bravely talking about just that – about our connectedness, our purpose, and that we can all learn to love. Love is a learned response, a learned emotion, a state we can attain, a force we can become. He talked about the power of love in action, of stripping away of all conditions, and of reaching our potential to share.⁹

Organisations can tap into this wisdom. In *The Virtuosa Organisation* a number of chapters are devoted to workplace fears, and to infusing loving practices into workplaces.¹⁰

Role models

"PepsiCo, Southwest Airlines, Whole Foods Market, The Container Store, and Zappos all list love or caring among their corporate values".⁷



Aptly, Southwest Airlines started operating out of Love Field Airport, Dallas, Texas and the no-hassles, fun, employees-are-family airline (affiliation valued over authority) – who exist to connect people to what's important in their lives – practice what they preach: *"America's largest low-fare carrier, serving more Customers domestically than any other airline with a unique combination of low fares with no annoying fees, friendly Customer Service delivered by outstanding People (internal then external), safe and reliable operations, and an extraordinary corporate Culture that extends into the communities we serve"*. They hire for character rather than skill and have long used the word love internally and in advertisements. They refer to themselves as the love airline, have spread the love through their LUV initiative for over 40 years, posting a profit every year in a cut-throat, crisis-ridden

industry using clever low-cost strategies. They use only one type of aircraft, customer service is paramount, but most of all they focus on their internal culture which then spills over to all those they deal with.¹¹

Southwest Airlines show care for their customers and employees (being committed to looking after their livelihood and well-being). They've been doing this for many years, so they've stood out as 'the benchmark'. They support disaster response work, and recently launched *LUV Seat: Repurpose with Purpose*, a global sustainability initiative to upcycle 43 acres of used leather seat coverings into new products that will benefit communities by providing employment, skills training, and donated products.¹² This project (used as an example) was developed following the Company's *Evolve* program, a large-scale redesign of all 737-700 aircraft interiors, a portion of its now out of service 737-300 fleet, and is now standard on all new planes. The *Evolve* program replaced the leather seat covers and other interior elements with environmentally friendly materials. (Through this redesign, Southwest reduced the weight of each aircraft by more than 600 pounds. What's good for the environment can also be good for profit!) ¹³

Other organisations leading the way are:



Haiti Partners' is a Christian NGO/ social entrepreneurial organisation doing in Haiti work similar to what Thich Nhat Hanh did in Vietnam many years ago. Haiti is a few miles and a world away from Florida. The Haiti Partner's "*mission is to help Haitians change Haiti through education. We believe that the key to providing an education that inspires is love: love for people and love for life. We believe education rooted in love is transformative and that to do education rooted in love, we have to have an organisation rooted in love*" – John Engle, Co-director, Haiti Partners, Haiti ¹⁴



A creative, print and IT agency, they leverage people, products and profit as a force for good, and *"believe that the expression of our 'emotional culture' (i.e. the compassion, care and love we show for one another) is even more important than our "cognitive culture" (i.e. living our purpose and values)"* – Jay Wilkinson, Founder & CEO. Firespring, Lincoln, Nebraska. One of their unique and appealing values is *"We have each other's back"* which means helping a team member out of a pickle or going the extra mile for a client.¹⁵

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A highlight of a visit I made to Boulder, Colorado a few years ago was to experience Vail Resorts. I can attest to their role model status of love from the inside out, *"Love at Vail Resorts means creating incredible experiences for guests and our employees. Vail Resorts recognises that cultivating the passion, connection and joy of employees has a direct effect on customer joy and happiness"* – Jeff Klem, VP, Talent Management. Vail Resorts, Boulder, Colorado.¹⁶



Samantha Thomas, Executive Director, Dream Change, Inc. and organiser of the Love Summit business conference believes that the secret to introducing a culture of lovingkindness in workplaces is *"... by beginning with the individual. Science shows us that we are in a happy state of mind, we are more likely to be compassionate, inclusive and embrace diversity. Therefore, any problems we face as an organisation are*

rooted in each of its member's wellbeing. If we want to create compassionate workplaces and businesses that do good in the world, we must first begin with the individual".¹⁷

The second Love Summit takes place on October 12th, 2017 at LPK Brand Innovation Centre in Cincinnati, Ohio. It is a TED-style event with interactive breakout sessions, where conference delegates share and learn about creating heart-centred business models that improve employee well-being, positively impacting customer and stakeholder relationships, and the planet. I asked Samantha for her most meaningful quote about showing love at work. She offered:

- *"The secret is, if you can in life, work at what you love with people you love. It comes back at you. Love is something you can't get rid of. If you give it to other people, you get it back. If you try to hold onto it, it disappears" – Warren Buffett*
- *"Business is about relationships. Money is simply a tool. Business is about relationships with everybody that we buy from, and sell to, and work with...and about our relationship with earth itself, and all the other species who live here with us. My business was really the way that I expressed my love of life, and that's what made it a thing of beauty" – Judy Wicks, entrepreneur, author, speaker and mentor working to build a more compassionate, environmentally sustainable and locally based economy.¹⁸*



Menlo Innovations LLC, an IT services company, has focused on joy as a value, a purpose, a description of their culture. They have become the pre-eminent role model for being both high-tech and high-touch. CEO and Chief Storyteller Richard Sheridan believes that employees *"want to have a lasting and valued effect on the world. They want to make their mark, not for the glory, but for the purpose of bringing delight or ending suffering"*. When I spoke to Richard he underlined Menlo's emphasis on being other-oriented, an externally focused

resolve to bring delight to clients, suppliers and other stakeholders. During their journey Menlo Innovations have addressed the whole person:

- *Physical* space – people friendly, comfortable, inviting, homey
- *Emotional*, recognising that in many ways joy is the opposite of fear
- *Social*, including unique ways of communicating, relating (pairs working together, sharing and focused on delighting the other. One computer: two people),
- *Intellectual* concepts, design, development and implementations are cutting edge and flexible, and supported by physical, emotional and social initiatives, to delight clients
- *Spiritual*, represented by deep joy (which of course connects causally to compassion, peace, love)

I asked Richard about how he measured joy. His response was that he could produce statistics, metrics and improvement-outcomes for the cynical and disbelieving, but essentially successes travel as anecdotes by word of mouth. We considered a burning candle. One might measure how long the candle lasts, its brightness, how often it flickers, the length of the shadows it casts on a wall, now hot it gets but ultimately what counts is recognising its beauty. In the same way, joy (and love) is felt.

Even resumés are not used by Menlo for hiring interviews because they are essentially measuring and judging instruments. Instead potential new staff are assessed for their practical ability to promote the well -being and success of a working partner.

Bookshelves groan under the weight of so many "how I did it" books, and Richard Sheridan's approach is refreshing and attractive: "*I don't assume what worked for me will work for you*".¹⁹

The practice of love brings about inner peace and joy, a causal connection and because of their intrinsic relationship.

My hope is that in time to come every organisation will appreciate that work is "*for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor, in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying*".²⁰ That their

employees will experience being alive, intrinsically motivated, in the flow zone, be purposeful, and fully engaged.

The work of love is highly individual. As Leo Buscaglia points out: *"We seem to have few models to look toward. But the behaviours which seem to enhance love are consistent, observable and available for study. Fully functioning persons know that it must be mainly self-taught, and it is best learned through simply being vulnerable to love and by living in it as dedicated human beings each day of our lives".*²¹

Love spreads quickly. (It is more than a movement – it's a force)

There is no need to shout about initiatives from the rooftops. Anthony de Mello used to tell this story:

A little girl spent all of the pocket money she had saved on a surprise gift for her mother. Mother was delighted. The daughter explained, "I bought it because you always work so hard and no one appreciates all that you do".

"Why thank you" said the mother, "but you father works very hard too".

*Replied the little girl, "I know, but he never makes a fuss about it".*²²

When organisations allow and encourage communities of love to emerge, word spreads powerfully and quickly.

During the second World War Ernest Gordon was an officer with the Scottish Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, captured and imprisoned, and forced by the Japanese to work on building the infamous Bridge on the River Kwai. The story is told of a Japanese officer becoming so furious when a shovel was found to be missing that he threatened to kill the entire squadron if the shovel was not found. One man stepped forward to take responsibility for the lost shovel, and was beaten to death. At the next tool count there was no missing shovel. The previous count had been wrong.

*The soldier had died in vain. But the deliberate sacrifice of an innocent soldier, an act of love to protect others, had a huge, positive impact on how the prisoners now related to each other.*²³

Gordon, an agnostic, found himself in serious ill health and in the 'Death Ward', expected to die. Two other soldiers boiled rags and cleaned and massaged his frail and diseased body every day, and against all odds he survived. This too impacted positively on the spread of love within the camp. In the process Gordon found his spirituality and calling, later becoming Dean of the Princeton University chapel. His two friends both died, one crucified by a Japanese guard two weeks before the war ended, and the other on a prisoner transfer ship that was sunk.

Infusing love into a workplace community makes that community a catalyst for changing its own culture and impacting on others. It fuels positive momentum.

One translation of the Zulu word *Ukhamba* is a gourd or earthenware pot, a container from which we all drink and nourish ourselves, a symbol of unity and friendship. In the office an *Ukhamba* culture is a container filled with hope, joy and love. A container that never empties. That implies feeding the whole person: physical, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual.

Love is not something that we measure and manage. It happens. It results from what Leonard Cohen called "*a revelation in the heart*". It is not taught. It is caught.

(Readers who wish to explore this topic in more detail may obtain the full version of this article from the author – grahamwilliams@change.co.za)

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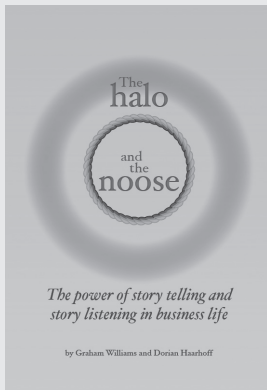
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Other Books by Graham Williams



The Halo and the Noose

This book offers an innovative approach to the stories that beat in the heart of an organisation. Here are techniques and practical applications. At a deeper level the book shows a way of being in business and doing business.

The authors set out their complex and important themes with an impressive directness and clarity. The narrative moves between argument and story in a seamless way which argues a deep but unobtrusive scholarship in the literatures, cultures and traditions of many societies. A 2nd

Edition has been issued because of popular demand.

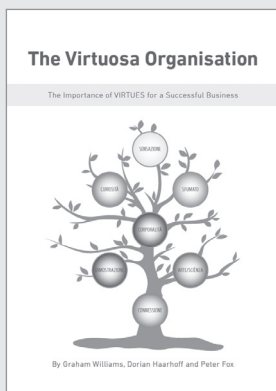
"The Halo and Noose should be seen as an exciting further step in the long process of re-connecting business life to the mainstream of human history, experience and potential."
Ralph Windle, founder/ director: The Creative Value Network (UK)

"This is the best book about leadership and business that I have seen in a long time. It is fresh, interesting, needed and written to reach out and touch the toughest part of each of us. This is not about storytelling, but more importantly, about how we can all change our story and create a future distinct from the past."
Peter Block author (Flawless Consulting) and consultant partner in Designed Learning, USA. Masters Degree in Industrial Administration (Yale)

"What a brilliant read this was. The Halo and the Noose is a truly motivational and energizing read. The book inspires us to learn from individual life experiences, and organisations will undoubtedly achieve business success through developing their people in this way."
Stephanie Edwards, MA. MD of Customer 1st International (UK)

"This beautifully written book takes us into a honeycomb of food for the soul – useful information and inspiring stories. I recommend it to readers who would like to expand their ways of looking at themselves and the organisations with which they are involved". Carl Greer, PhD, PsyD Clinical Psychologist and author of Change Your Story, Change Your Life (USA)

Available from www.haloandnoose.com, www.amazon.com.



The Virtuosa Organisation

The authors believe that business is uniquely poised and equipped to be a significant and sustainable difference in society. They comprehensively present practical ways and means of living a new strategic narrative and delivering a virtuosa performance grounded on relevant virtues.

They make liberal use of story, images, metaphor and poetry to convey their experience, insights and findings. Virtues drawn from the life and works of Leonardo da Vinci, and which

span all cultures, illustrate what is possible.

Here is an opportunity to see afresh, to envisage courageously and to position your organisation differently. (311 pages, full colour illustrations)

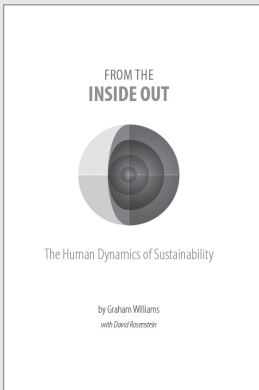
"We spend most of our waking hours invested in an activity called 'work' that we accept as necessarily selfish – out to enrich ourselves and shareholders at the expense of consumers, society, and the planet. We satisfy our guilt by promising ourselves that we'll feed our souls, support charitable causes, and save the environment in our spare time, whenever we find some. But what if there was another way? What if you could make the world a better place while you were at work? Read this book and you can".

Paul Smith, Key Note Speaker, Author of *Lead with a Story: A Guide to Crafting Business Narratives that Capture, Convince, and Inspire*. (USA)

"This book is a powerful presentation of some of the issues associated with organisations and society and the failure of conventional methods to tackle them. It presents a model of human behaviour and interaction which is aspirational in nature. It represents a useful starting point on a journey to change and transformation".

Dave Snowden, Founder & Chief Scientific Officer, Cognitive Edge Pte Ltd.

Available from www.haloandnoose.com, www.amazon.com, www.kr.co.za
(Hard copy also available)



From the Inside Out : The Human Dynamics of Sustainability

Written with Dr David Rosenstein, clinical psychologist, neuroscientist and founder of Neural Sense™ for those who wish to successfully enter the maze of sustainability approaches, practices, processes and rules.

This booklet will appeal to those who recognise that successful execution of sustainability initiatives is more about being the answer than having the answer, hence the critical importance of a psychology of sustainability.

Indeed the authors go far beyond 'maintain' and 'sustain', and advocate that we 'attain' new heights, regenerate and thrive.

Their handbook (70 pages) presents a unique concept and practical model of the interrelated elements of successfully implementing sustainability in any organisation. It is loaded with tips, references, stories, activities and case studies, and:

- employs mindfulness as the route to mature ethical and compassionate behaviour (because right action stems from genuine caring)
- hooks into the future and its possibilities to create meaning, develop a legacy, cope with current complexity
- understands the fallibilities and frailty inherent in decision-making processes, and bases decisions on considerations beyond self-interest
- uses neuroscience, behavioural economics and the power of narrative to trigger significant and lasting change

"This book is a decade ahead in its thinking and I am therefore convinced that a more compassionate culture awaits us in the future". Editor of The Cultural Times, UK, Steve Maguire

"This is an incredible piece" Gerry Wagner, Ph.D. CEO of The Institute for Inspired Organisation Cultures, Inc. USA

Available from: www.haloandnoose.com

About the Author



From Cape Town, Graham Williams, Hons B. Com, B.A, CMC is a certified management consultant, executive master coach (an Associate of Change Partners), organisation development practitioner, thought provoker, facilitator, speaker and author who has worked in over 40 countries, in many sectors – private and public – around the world.

His purpose is to bring healing and wholeness to organisations and their members. He focuses on the use of story as a critical contributor to successful business interventions, specialises in inculcating character virtues and a sustainability mind-set as essential components of corporate culture, and in building resilience to change. He loves sharing and leaving a "D.I.Y" capacity with his clients.

He has co-authored *From the Inside Out: the human dynamics of sustainability*, *The Virtuosa Organisation: the importance of virtues for successful business*, *The Halo and the Noose: the power of storytelling and story listening in business life*, and is the author of several other business books.

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About the illustrator

Illustrations – 'memory anchors' – were provided by Tony Grogan. Tony was the editorial cartoonist for the Cape Times and other South African newspapers for 40 years before retiring. His cartoons, caricatures and illustrations are noted for their perceptiveness, wryness and wit. Seven books of his own work have been published and have become sought-after Africana. He still accepts commissions.

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