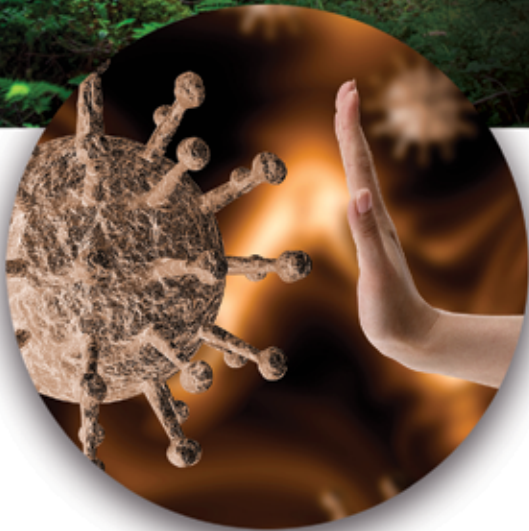


# Part Five

## Covid Book Series

When the Trees Get  
**BIGGER** and the Forest  
Gets **DEEPER** –  
It's Time To

**SHARPEN  
YOUR SAW**



TRANSEARCH  
YOUR WORLD PARTNER IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

John O. Burdett





When the **Trees Get  
BIGGER** and the **Forest  
Gets DEEPER** –  
It's Time To  
**SHARPEN  
YOUR SAW**

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ISBN:978-1-7773773-1-1

National Library of Canada Cataloguing

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# The TRANSEARCH COVID BOOK SERIES

Welcome to **Part Five** in the TRANSEARCH Covid Book Series.

**Part One, *Coming Down the Mountain***, looks at how to come out of this crisis stronger. Recognising, as we move forward, how important organization culture is, **Part Two** outlines the ***Culture Conversation***. **Part Three** explores the need for leadership agility and what that implies: ***Leadership Agility and Learning – The Way of the Dolphin***. Drawing on the reality that tomorrow's organization will be a team of teams, **Part Four** examines what it means to be an outstanding team: ***Great Organizations Are Made Up of Great Teams***.

## The Soft Stuff ... Is The Hard Stuff

In some senses, the title to **Part Five** says it all – ***When the Trees Get Bigger and the Forest Gets Deeper, It's Time to Sharpen Your Saw***. Who can deny that this crisis has brought a recognition that, metaphorically speaking, the trees have, indeed, gotten bigger and the forest much deeper. Few are those leaders who don't need to sharpen their saw.

Complexity, ever-increasing speed of change, ongoing disruption, and the challenge of implementing new technology have had an indelible impact on the first two decades of this century. That said, when it comes to implementation, they carry a subtext that we can no longer ignore. The 20th century organization is a very blunt instrument with which to confront the challenge of this century. Moreover, when we add the human dimension a pandemic brings into sharp focus, it becomes patently obvious that moving forward is about far more than digitalisation, an improved supply chain and remote employment.

To come out of this crisis stronger means, paradoxically, drawing on a behavioural investment that has its origins in our hunter-gatherer past; a capability that business schools don't teach and few recruiters set as a priority. The very core of character that has, all-too-often, been described as "the soft side of leadership." Inaccurately portrayed, one should add, because – based on how effectively they are practiced – these *soft skills* are clearly, pretty hard.

As a result of the tragedy, trauma and mental health issues that define this crisis, it is clear that there has been a significant emotional shift in how many executives now view "leadership." Over the years, I have coached a good many senior executives. Part of that support has been to emphasise "leadership balance." By the latter is implied the need to build capability that moves beyond – essential though they are – a winning strategy and driving results into the business. That is to say, the need not only to employ the head and empower the hand – but to also engage the heart and enrich the spirit.

Of course, there is not much in life that is new. Aristotle believed that there are two virtues – intellectual and moral. Through his writing, he tells us that intellectual virtue is a combination of birth and teaching. Moral virtue, meanwhile, being dependent upon our nature and the habits we develop and adhere to. A more modern interpretation would view the head and hand residing in the neocortex; the heart and spirit drawing on the mammalian (emotion) brain. One is future oriented. The other, in the here and now. What does this all mean? The late Maya Angelou said it best, “People will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

Even though the weight of evidence points to followership, decision-making and both employee and customer “buy in” being dominated by emotion, the heart and spirit are not where leaders traditionally focus when it comes to self-development. It’s work that even successful executives set aside as “something I need to get to.” And yet, in the midst of this crisis, what a number of executives are sharing with me is that only now are they discovering just how **essential** leadership balance is. And that is what this short, four chapter book seeks to draw out.

Chapter One focuses on a truly pivotal question. “Are You the Leader They Need?” Here we examine the concept of “leadership balance.” The chapter concludes with a unique assessment of “leadership balance.”

Chapter Two introduces a statement that could be an anthem for our times ... “If Ever There Was a Time to Listen – IT’S NOW!” This chapter isn’t meant to be read and forgotten. A past client, who chairs five major Boards, shared with me that he keeps the listening material clearly visible on his desk. It’s a constant reminder just how important listening is. At the end of the chapter there is a simple listening test.

Chapter Three focuses on a topic that rarely comes up in a performance discussion. Caring! Teddy Roosevelt is quoted as saying, “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” And he wasn’t exactly what you would call a “softy.” In October 1912, on his way to give a campaign speech, he was shot in the chest by a would-be assassin. Although slowed down by the 50–page speech and the spectacles case in his breast pocket, the .38 bullet penetrated his chest cavity. He, nevertheless, successfully delivered his speech and only then allowed his staff to call an ambulance. To lead is to care! Now more than ever. Chapter Three concludes with “50 Ways to Show That You Care – In a Covid World.”

Chapter Four emphasises that, although caring is about how we reach out to others, leadership is grounded in the conversation we have with ourselves. The theme of the chapter being that if you are not living your own story, you are living someone else’s. The content explores how to connect with and celebrate your own story. It concludes with the 10 central issues that frame “Leadership of Self.”

At the conclusion of the book, you will find the Resilience Assessment. Now, more than ever, there is value in stepping back to reflect on what you have found challenging, how you responded and what you learned about yourself as you navigated the pandemic. Part One in this series focuses on how to ensure that your business comes out of this crisis stronger. The Resilience Assessment provides insight into how you can personally come out stronger.

# CONTENT

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<b>Chapter One:</b> Are You The Leader They Need? .....	Page 1
Assessing Your Organization's Leadership Balance .....	Page 9
<b>Chapter Two:</b> If Ever There Was a Time to Listen – IT'S NOW .....	Page 17
The Listening Tree .....	Page 28
<b>Chapter Three:</b> To Lead Is To Care .....	Page 29
50 WAYS To Say You Care – In a Covid World .....	Page 41
<b>Chapter Four:</b> If You Are Not Living Your Own Story, You Are Living Someone Else's.....	Page 51
<b>Resilience Assessment</b> .....	Page 67





A group of business professionals in a meeting. In the foreground, a woman with blonde hair, wearing a grey blazer over a white shirt, holds a white sign with a large black question mark. Behind her, several other people are visible, some holding similar question mark signs. In the upper left, a man holds a blue sign with four icons (a profile, a flame, a hand, and a heart) and the text 'ORXESTRA INC.' below them. The background is slightly blurred, showing an office environment.

# Chapter One

Are You The LEADER  
They **NEED?**





# Are You The LEADER They NEED?

## Employ the Head, Empower the Hand, Engage the Heart, and Enrich the Spirit

In our workshops, seminars, coaching and facilitated dialogue with more than 10,000 leaders and encompassing five continents one theme is ever-consistent. There are four things<sup>1</sup> an employee (regardless of level) needs – not wants, **needs** – from his/her immediate team leader.<sup>2</sup>

1. A clear sense of direction – where are we heading? How will the business environment evolve? Where and how is technology going to change the business? What will tomorrow look, sound and feel like? What is our unique point of differentiation? Who is tomorrow's customer? *The head.*
2. The discipline of delivery – a cadence, a rhythm, a regular and continuing pattern of behaviour where the agreed outcomes and feedback regarding those outcomes are always in sharp focus. It's about an organization that, by way of design, is agile enough to support tomorrow's needed speed of delivery. In performance terms, it's the need for everyone on the team to know where they stand. *The hand.*
3. To provide a learning environment – mentoring, coaching, stretch, building the team, a focus on learning how to learn. Currency in the job market. *The heart.*
4. That the leader in question is someone who everyone on the team respects and trusts – consistent, authentic, affirming, displays humility, keeps people informed, is tough-minded when he/she needs to be and, regardless of the circumstances, he/she listens, really listens. *The spirit.*



1 The Head, the Hand, the Heart and the Spirit, when framed within a business leadership context, was first published in *New Role, New Reality*. John O. Burdett (2000). It has been a central feature in my work around leadership ever since.

2 This is an insight that is supported by my asking over 10,000 leaders in twenty-five plus countries, "As you look back, who was the leader, that you worked for or with, you admired the most? What was it about him/her that inspired you?"



A consistent and compelling performance ethos, day-to-day focus, an engaged workforce, and a sense of belonging – all draw heavily on the four leadership domains outlined above. Lack of leadership balance – behaviour skewed towards one of the above to the detriment of the others – and innovation and responsiveness become a lost cause. Meanwhile, failure to fully deliver against any **one** of these (four) leadership imperatives and for those you count on most, the grass will inevitably look greener elsewhere. Guaranteed!

To lead is to hire, promote and build for succession – at a level of excellence.<sup>3</sup> Anything less is unacceptable. Nothing is more important. To be in a position of responsibility and lack mastery in hiring is to actively mismanage a critical business asset. The head describes success in strategic terms. The hand outlines what, specifically, needs to be achieved. The heart captures the people management capability demanded. The spirit is all about character. Character matters. And in this Covid environment, it matters a lot. Talent acquisition, specifically, and talent management, generally, that fails to embrace all four leadership characteristics is a gateway to yet more recruitment.

It is obviously essential to be “customer-centric.” But, what does that really mean? The head implies being fully informed as to where the customer’s business is heading. It’s to understand the customer’s emerging value proposition. It’s to see opportunity through the customer’s customer. The hand means getting inside the customer’s business processes, delivering on time and maintaining the highest level of quality. The heart recognises that the buy-decision is based on emotion. Selling is not simply how well you get across what you do or even how well you do it – it’s, ultimately, how you make the customer feel. The spirit is found in truth, authenticity and living the organization’s values. Spirit comes to the fore in passion, perseverance and, when needed, patience. It is also about challenging those on the front-line to improve the processes that dictate how the work gets done – and do so every day, in every way. Efficiencies that not only improve margins but, in the quest to remain competitive, enable the firm to pass part of the cost savings along to the customer.

In shaping the emerging culture, leadership that draws on the head and the hand can be termed as “cultural drivers.” Meanwhile, the heart and spirit act like cultural anchors. If they are not present, in full measure, being who you have always been is the best that can be hoped for. Don’t even think about implementing sweeping change (e.g., breakthrough technology) if the heart and the spirit are found wanting. From our own research and the work of others, only one company in five “manage” their culture. Then again, the organization’s culture will change whether you want it to or not ... if you are not attentive, in ways that are less than helpful.

So far so good, but even the leadership qualities outlined will likely not keep your high contributors on board should the right opportunity beckon. They need more ... they need

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3 TRANSEARCH International and The Bedford Consulting Group – both of whom I support – utilise the Head, Hand, Heart and Spirit leadership template in their unique and compelling approach to talent acquisition.





to be **inspired**. They need to believe that what we choose to call “work” is making the very best use of their time and ability. They need to be able to bridge the challenge they face today with what tomorrow’s success will look and feel like. This equates to leadership of an altogether higher order.

It’s not enough for the leader to communicate where we are heading. Gaining buy-in has to draw on language, imagery and story. To inspire is to make tomorrow’s success come alive in the room today. If you can imagine it, you can implement it. If you can see it, you can be it.

The “F” word is integral to what it means to be a successful leader. That said, it’s not enough to simply *focus* on execution. To inspire, the leader has to believe and convey with every strand of his/her DNA, not that this needs to happen – but that it will happen.<sup>4</sup>

It’s not enough to push for development and growth. To inspire, the leader has to display a personal passion for learning. Leaders are readers. They give full reign to their own sense of curiosity and draw it out in others. They see resilience not as bouncing back after a setback but learning from the experience and, as a result, being better equipped than ever. They build great teams. They ask great questions and, in doing so, transform *what is* into *what can be*.



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4 Having consulted to him for well over a decade, I am often asked, “What made the late (and legendary) leader, Sergio Marchionne, CEO of Fiat and Chrysler, special?” Simply put, he recognised that when faced with an unprecedented challenge, knowing what to do and how to do it doesn’t necessarily get you to where you need to be – you have to believe. He made you believe.



It's not enough that the leader be respected. To inspire, he/she has to step down from the pedestal, look people in the eye and act in such a way that those he/she leads know, really know, that he/she cares more about their success than his/her own. To lead is to care. Caring is step one in engendering trust. Courtesy, meanwhile, as Peter Drucker pointed out, is "the lubricant of leadership."

For both the new and the seasoned leader there is some tempering news in all of this. Although faced with a pandemic the like of which we haven't experienced in the past 100 years, our fears and concerns are pretty much the same as when our kith and kin worried about sparsity of game, being a sabre-tooth tiger's lunch and/or the unknown visitor who just walked into the village with a very big spear. When we fail to deliver (1) a strategy that mitigates danger; (2) action that moves us beyond the crisis; (3) ongoing reflection such that we will learn from this; and (4) optimism, reassurance and a sense of caring – we fail as a leader. As would have been the case during any crisis over the past 40,000 years.

As we face the human adventures that AI, robotics, cobotics, blockchain, 3D printers, autonomous vehicles and their like represent – members of the team need to know where they are heading, how they are doing, that they are growing and that trust is ever-present. And, **in the midst of a crisis**, people deserve to know that those who are leading them will never stray from the belief that people are more important than profit. There is an enduring leadership principle here. "The **bigger the crisis**, the greater the degree of uncertainty, the deeper the depth of despair, the greater the need to engage the heart and enrich the spirit."

Finally, we come to existential threats (the environment), black swan events (the 2008 financial crash), and because it involves human suffering, the biggest leadership challenge of all – tragedy. When tragedy unfolds and the human side of that drama isn't the organization's number one concern – when the heart and spirit are missing – then everybody loses. "Never waste the opportunity offered by a good crisis," is a quote first attributed to the Italian Renaissance writer Niccolo Machiavelli. A crisis is indeed an opportunity: *To show that you care!*

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) being a case in point. How the organization deals with these unprecedented – in this case life-threatening – events remains, indelibly, in employees' minds. And not just for those most at risk. The question customers and employees alike want to know is "who are you?" At times like these, "what do you stand for?" Beyond the symbolism, the sharp marketing and the self-promotion, "what is the real story behind the brand?"

A crisis demands, more than ever, that to be a successful leader is to *employ* the head, *empower* the hand, *engage* the heart and *enrich* the spirit."

1. The future recast anew. As a priority, work to understand the customer's emerging





needs. The essential short-term actions must not take away from the compelling need to formulate the data/information and strategic insight demanded to put the business back on course as quickly as possible. Revisit the business model. Meanwhile, time is set aside to build longer-term strategic scenarios – the *head*.

2. Fully acknowledge the scope and impact of the crisis, redefine critical goals, do what is necessary to protect the value chain, take advantage of the technology available, reorganise how the work will get done and do so at lightning speed – the *hand*.
3. Craft an empathetic and inclusive response that speaks to all of the key stakeholders. Act decisively while also recognising the organization's role as part of a wider community. The investment in teams and cross-organization collaboration pays off. People, regardless of level, unite behind a common purpose. The support for working remotely builds on and further develops knowing that team members support each other. No one gets left behind – the *heart*.
4. Caring, listening and transparency are front and centre in everything the organization does and communicates. The alter ego of empathy is hope. Even during the darkest hours, people need to be able to see the first glimmering light of an early dawn. It is recognised that without reflection there is no learning – the *spirit*.

Good leaders will engage some of the team, some of the time. Conversely, it takes a leader who brings leadership balance to the role, who knows how to inspire, who does inspire – to instill a sense of lasting commitment from all of the team. Leaders must lead! Leaders do lead. Are you the leader they need?

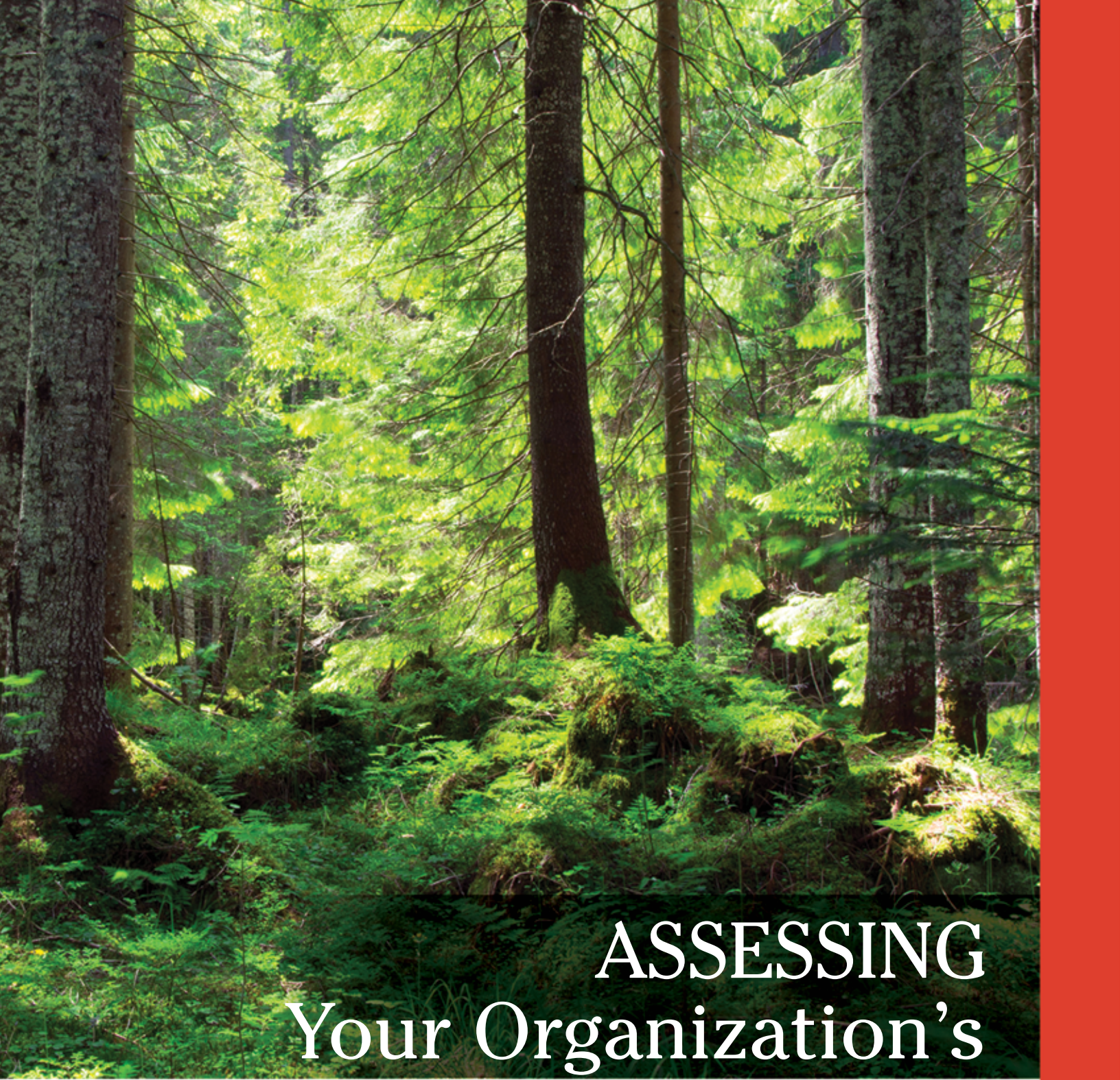
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*“The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.”*

Carl Jung.







# ASSESSING Your Organization's **LEADERSHIP BALANCE**





# Leadership Balance

Go through the fourteen matched groups. Determine which of the four characteristics in each group is the leadership characteristic you perceive to be the most dominant in your organization. Give it a score of (4). Score the next characteristic of perceived value a (3) and the next a (2). Score as a (1) the characteristic you deem is afforded the least attention.

Take into account what gets rewarded; the perceived criteria used in key promotion decisions; and the signals emanating from the top of the organization about what it means to be a successful leader. Indicate your score with a (✓). Go through the assessment a second time with your own leadership approach in mind. Indicate with (X).

1.	<div><input type="text"/></div> Create tomorrow, today	<div><input type="text"/></div> The discipline of delivery	<div><input type="text"/></div> Developing others	<div><input type="text"/></div> Being a role model
2.	<div><input type="text"/></div> A thought leader	<div><input type="text"/></div> Business development	<div><input type="text"/></div> Mastery in coaching	<div><input type="text"/></div> Social responsibility
3.	<div><input type="text"/></div> Balance short and long term	<div><input type="text"/></div> Measure the right things	<div><input type="text"/></div> Speed of learning	<div><input type="text"/></div> Agility and nimbleness
4.	<div><input type="text"/></div> One direction, one plan	<div><input type="text"/></div> Speed to market	<div><input type="text"/></div> Orchestrates freedom to act	<div><input type="text"/></div> A track record of innovation
5.	<div><input type="text"/></div> Drive to win	<div><input type="text"/></div> Hire and retain the best	<div><input type="text"/></div> Team player	<div><input type="text"/></div> A sense of caring

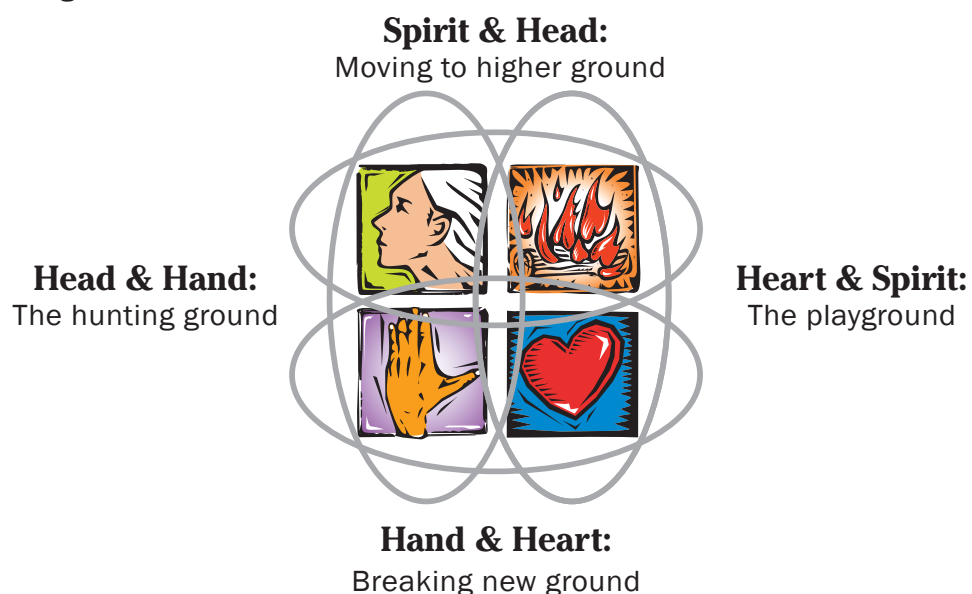


6.	<input type="checkbox"/> See the business through the customer's eyes	<input type="checkbox"/> Process innovation	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee engagement	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrity
7.	<input type="checkbox"/> Manage the business from the outside-in	<input type="checkbox"/> Drive to do things faster	<input type="checkbox"/> Work successfully across different cultures	<input type="checkbox"/> Deliver diversity
8.	<input type="checkbox"/> Create and communicate a winning strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Tough minded; hold people accountable	<input type="checkbox"/> Build a great team	<input type="checkbox"/> Live the values
9.	<input type="checkbox"/> "Scenarios" – not a linear strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand how the business makes money	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenge the status quo as a way of life	<input type="checkbox"/> Creating tomorrow's culture, today
10.	<input type="checkbox"/> Shareholder value	<input type="checkbox"/> Brand management	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring the informal organization on board	<input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder value
11.	<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional hierarchy	<input type="checkbox"/> Very flat structure	<input type="checkbox"/> The organization – a team of teams	<input type="checkbox"/> The virtual organization
12.	<input type="checkbox"/> Change – a project	<input type="checkbox"/> Making the organization change ready	<input type="checkbox"/> Embracing disruption	<input type="checkbox"/> Being the disruption



13.	<input type="text"/> Entrepreneurial flair	<input type="text"/> Sweat the details	<input type="text"/> Talent management a competitive advantage	<input type="text"/> The environment
14.	<input type="text"/> Technology	<input type="text"/> Continuous improvement	<input type="text"/> Measure culture	<input type="text"/> Change mindset
	↓	↓	↓	↓
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	<b>HEAD</b>	<b>HAND</b>	<b>HEART</b>	<b>SPIRIT</b>

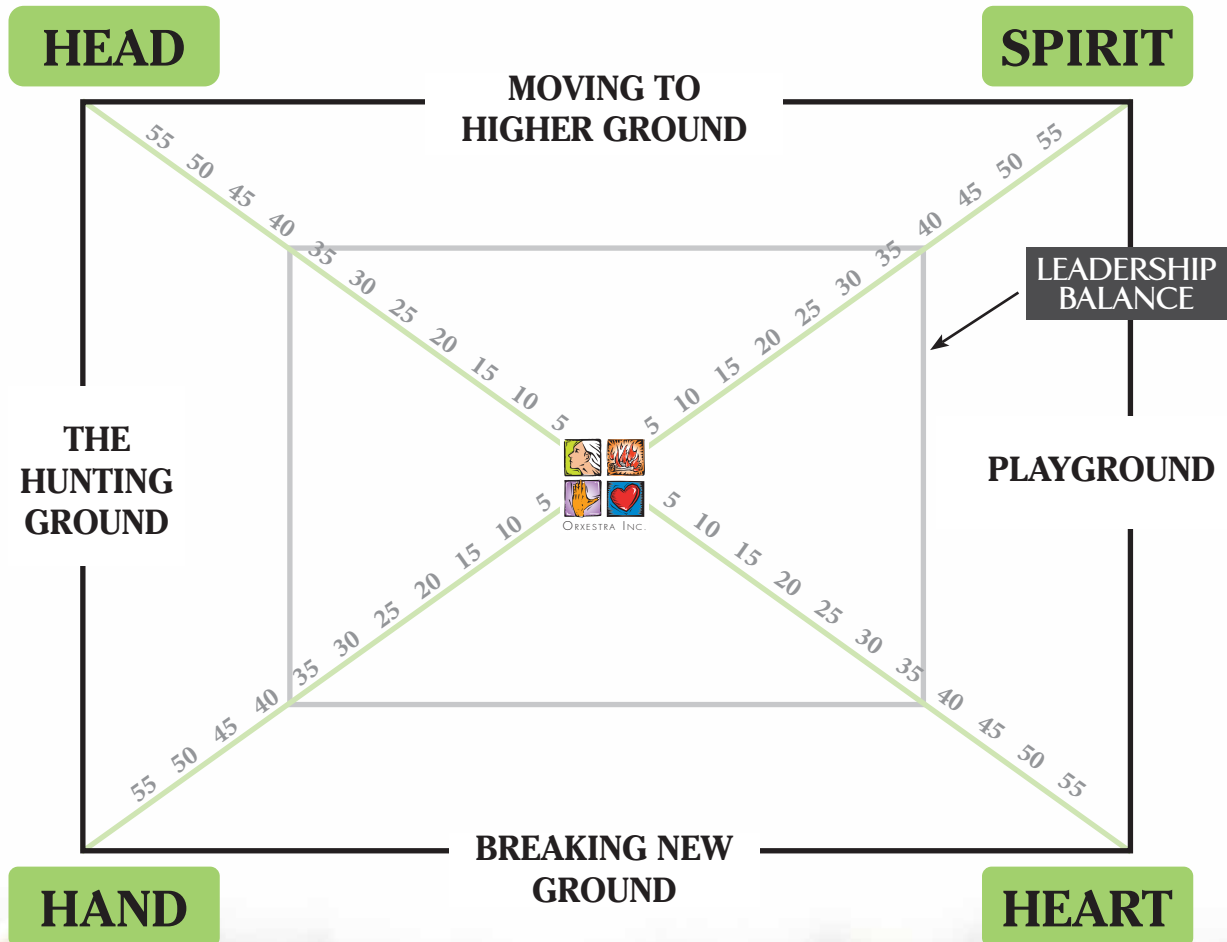
Go through your responses and total the score for each of the four columns. Transpose the overall score in each column to the simple diagram on the next page. Join up the datum points to create your organization's Leadership DNA. Go through the questionnaire a second time and define where your own current leadership priorities lie. Add your own score (in a different colour) to the diagram.







# The Four Leadership Domains



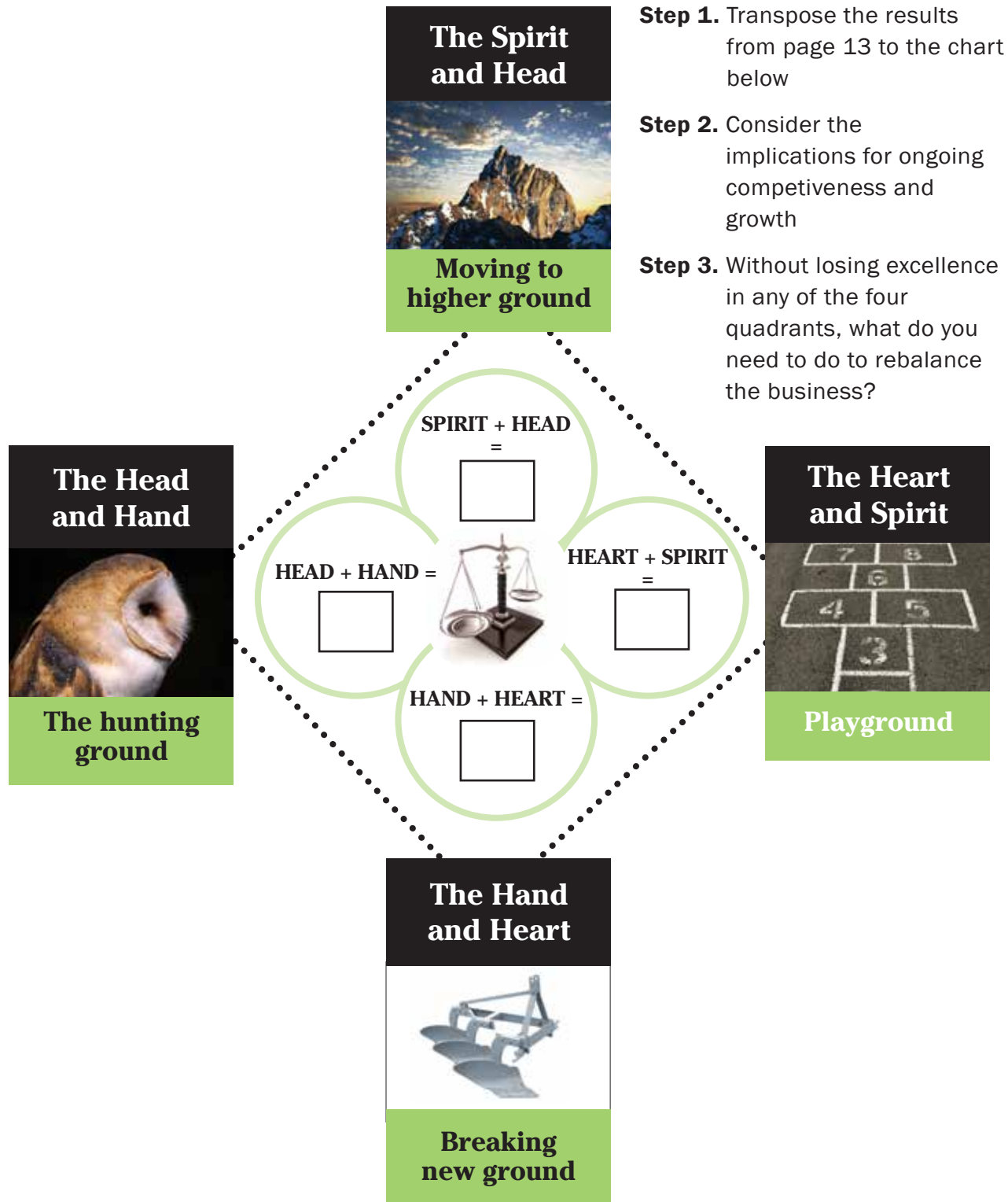
**Transfer your scoring from page 12 to the chart above.  
Connect the datum points.**

**Note:** Feedback on the assessment may well be along the lines that you have achieved leadership excellence in all four domains. While there may be some truth in that assumption, it's tough to have 56 priorities. A forced ranking approach surfaces what your true priorities are.





# Leadership Balance





# Reviewing Your Organization's Leadership Balance

## What successful leaders do

We have asked 10,000 + leaders, in over twenty-five countries, a simple question: “What are the qualities of the best leader you have ever worked for?” Two key results emerge. First, successful leaders empower the head; enable the hand; engage the heart; and enrich the spirit. Lack of attention (or capability) in any one domain and team members/subordinates are shortchanged on all four. It matters not, for example, that you have a great strategy (head) if execution (hand) is found wanting.

The second insight speaks to leadership balance (coherence). Balance describes performance excellence in each of the four domains. It is also about how those domains combine. Specifically, how the head and hand; the hand and heart; the heart and spirit; and the spirit and head come together.

## Why leadership balance is a business imperative

**HEAD & HAND: *The Hunting Ground*.** Theme: if you don't win today there will be no tomorrow. Actions: clear direction, the drive to win, customer focus, a differentiated value proposition, the discipline of delivery. Mindset: it's fun to win. Greatest potential disruption: lack of focus. Balance: without the head and hand, know that your future will be shaped by missed targets.

**HAND & HEART: *Breaking New Ground*.** Theme: doing what you have always done is a mandate for mediocrity. Actions: growth, stretch, business development, cost savings, continuous improvement, technology, redefining process, putting new learning into practice. Mindset: getting better every day, in every way. Greatest potential disruption: assumptions that competitive advantage has an extended shelf-life. Balance: without the hand and heart the status quo will inevitably rule.

**HEART & SPIRIT: *The Playground*.** Theme: if you don't grow the talent base you can't grow the business. Actions: pushing the boundaries, learning at the edge, teamwork, coaching, mentoring, collaboration, leadership of self, authenticity, caring. Mindset: how you learn is at least as important as what you learn. Greatest potential disruption: a bully in the playground. Balance: without the heart and spirit expect to always be short of top talent.

**SPIRIT & HEAD: *Moving To Higher Ground*.** Theme: tomorrow's marketplace will be different. Count on it! Actions: rethinking possibility, forging a new direction, succession, innovation, risk, emotional buy-in, commitment, letting go. Mindset: entrepreneurial. Greatest potential disruption: lack of succession. Balance: without the spirit and the head, know that you are passing the baton of opportunity to the competition.



# What Successful Leaders Do

## From an organizational perspective:

Review the characteristics listed in each domain and identify what you now need to do as a business to deliver leadership excellence in:

**HEAD:**

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**HAND:**

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**HEART:**

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**SPIRIT:**

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## From a personal perspective:

Review the characteristics listed in each domain and identify what you personally need to do to deliver leadership excellence in:

**HEAD:**

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**HAND:**

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**HEART:**

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**SPIRIT:**

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## Chapter Two

If Ever There  
Was a Time  
to Listen –  
**IT'S NOW!**









## Don't just hear, LISTEN!

Listening is not a spectator sport. It's an intense, full-bodied, emotionally involved, empathetic experience. Listening is hard work. Then again, so is change. Habits, and especially social habits, once formed, are very difficult to reframe. No doubt some of the advantages of working remotely will remain but those who suggest that the COVID-19 crisis will totally reinvent the workplace as we have known it are surely going to be on the wrong side of history.

Make no mistake, the workplace will change. The urgent need to address the environment; artificial intelligence; the next generation of computers; ongoing disruption; the ever-increasing speed at which things happen; a move to stakeholder value; that, by way of design, the organization that created wealth in the last century is a total misfit in this one; and a host of other factors will combine to create organizations that are flat, fast, focused, flexible and fertile (to new ideas).

After 40,000 years of social evolution, what's not going to change is that our kind are highly social animals. It's clear from social media sites like Facebook that we are just as much a village today as we were before one of our kith and kin said, "Do you know



what, if that flat bit were round it might roll!" Dignity, respect, trust, caring, empathy, social kinship, storytelling, teamwork and the need to be listened to aren't going to be thrust aside – they define who we are as a species. Or, as Calvin Coolidge once said, "No man ever listened himself out of a job."

And what sort of listener are you? To find out, go through the rest of the text. Also, go to the Listening Tree on page 28.



## The Listening Paradox

Niels Bohr, the renowned Danish physicist, was fond of saying, “A paradox – now we can really learn something.” As we work our way through this COVID-19 crisis, we run full force into, what appear to be, contradictory outcomes: salvage the business from the financial wreckage while, at the same time, make empathy and caring the dominant priority; as a leader, feel the disabling effect of anxiety and uncertainty, yet present a confident and optimistic face to the world; push forward on projects that demand collaboration but, out of necessity, eschew face-to-face, social/team interaction; demand that business remain fully committed to customer service while being sensitive to the reality that a typical employee could well be working out of a small apartment shared by two young children, an out-of-work partner and a barking dog.

The learning that Bohr spoke of comes from seeing a paradox not as a binary choice between opposites, but as an inherent challenge about a need to see the overall challenge from a new perspective. By replacing “or” with “and,” one is forced into not just a creative solution, but a different mindset. It’s a way to view the world where awareness, agility of thought and the capacity to adapt comes from first knowing – really knowing – how to listen.

You can’t listen in a vacuum. Or as the late Peter Drucker pointed out, “Fifty years ago a leader knew the answer ... today he or she asks great questions.” Asking a great question without a comparable skill when interpreting the answer is about as useful as throwing an anchor over the side without a rope or chain attached. As for the paradox, to add texture to the current crisis, at no time in our history have leaders been faced with today’s volume of background noise, with the present blend of speed and complexity, and with the current reality that to lead invariably means being less knowledgeable than those being led. Yesterday, the team worked for the leader. Today, the leader works for the team.

When you step back to reflect, what becomes patently apparent is that at no time has listening been more important. At no time has your team needed you to listen more than they do now. At no time have those you rely on the most had a greater need for you to hear what they have to say. At no time, however, have there been more physical and emotional barriers. The good news? As we move forward, a crisis can be a learning experience like no other. The not such good news? Don’t expect simplicity, sagacity and stability to break out any time soon. Believe it or not, when we look back, today may well seem like the good old days.

To add to the challenge, every decade or so, those smart enough to design the protocols necessary to conduct listening tests with leaders announce that our listening proficiency is, more or less, dysfunctional. Numbers that describe overall listening proficiency of 30 per cent, or less, are commonplace. Put another way, as our need to listen goes up, our listening efficiency goes down. In the past, moving on to the high potential track was, all too often,



based on easy-to-identify attributes – overall image, use of language and skill in front of an audience. In an era defined by ongoing disruption, listening, speed of learning and the capacity to let go of the past are far better indicators of future success.

## Why Don't We Listen?

Trust, rapport, personal connection and mutual respect can't move beyond intent if one of the parties is emotionally absent. The average person talks at a rate of about 125-175 words per minute. Meanwhile, we can listen at a rate of up to 450 words per minute. We fill that “vacuum” by daydreaming, attempting to both be in the conversation and elsewhere, and by thinking about how we are going to respond when the other person has stopped speaking (script writing).

We don't listen when we make subconscious choices about whom we perceive as being not worth listening to: people who we deem to be less educated, less experienced, who have only tangential knowledge of the issue; who are from a different culture, who don't share our beliefs or whose use of language is less developed – particularly when lack of time and/or crisis frame our lives. We don't listen when we make the (invariably misguided) assumption that the speaker's contribution to our well-being is likely to be of “marginal value.”







We tend to avoid those who make our life difficult, those who make us angry, those who ask the questions that make us uncomfortable. Communication enacted through Zoom creates yet one more excuse. To be a leader is to actively seek out those who disagree with you. To be a leader is to make the first call of the day – both video and voice preferred – to the person you least want to talk to. To be a leader is to listen hardest to the person on the team who frustrates you the most. We invariably gain most by listening to those who are most unlike us. Personal breakthroughs happen when we afford others the opportunity to challenge our way of thinking.

Someone who comes to the issue for the first time brings not just a fresh perspective but, as often as not, a new way to see what is possible. The customer that we can learn from is not defined by those we currently serve. Important as it is, new insight is not limited to listening to the customer we lose. It is the customer we have never landed, the one who rejected our offering out of hand that often offers the most compelling evidence of new opportunity. The paradox: the people we reject as being those who offer little value are very often those from whom we can learn the most.

Innovation is often spoken of as if it were magic dust that the idea fairy sprinkles on those so blessed. Innovation is a combination of curiosity, creativity, challenging the status quo, concept generation, customer awareness, choosing the right project, collaboration and commitment to the craft, which we refer to as “teamwork.” Meanwhile, the element that is often missing, the leadership lubricant, the innate ingredient that turns ideas into a winning investment costs little and yet reaps huge rewards? Listening! Listening to the markets. Listening to the customer. Listening to those who have to build or sell what others imagine. But most of all – listening to each other. If you want greater impact from innovation, start by making listening a core competency.

Generally speaking, women are better natural listeners than men. Indeed, nothing strikes greater fear in the average man than those four words, “We’ve got to talk.” The terror emanates not from “talking,” but from the implied subtext, “You’ve got to listen.” It turns out that the differences between the sexes are not just the obvious physical ones; our brains are also wired differently. PET scans suggest that during human interaction there is 15 per cent more blood flow in the female brain. The outcome is that the emotional centre of the brain is far more active in women, with the result that they take in more of the conversation.

The assumed superiority of the speaker is compounded by an educational system that presents listening as the passive role. When, for example, did you last read a school report that commented on your child’s skills in listening? All relationships ultimately are about power. Unfortunately, the “power role” is mistakenly assumed to be the one in the spotlight, the actor who delivers the soliloquy, the leader presenting the information. Nothing could be further from the truth. The appearance of power is not the same as actually having power.



A professional actor will be quick to point out that delivering the lines is the easy part and that the real “art” lies in how the other players listen.

If you are still in doubt about the relationship between listening and influence, watch a top salesperson at work. To the inexperienced, selling is a form of tonsil tennis. To those who build long-term relationships, it’s a behavioural ballet where listening is little short of an art form. The next time you are in a meeting, take a mental note of who is doing the listening. That is where the power lies. Like a conductor with a hidden baton, it is the masterful listener who shapes the outcomes – who, unobserved, uses the subtlest of signals to steal the show.

## Becoming Better Listeners

There is a positive side in all of this. In much the same way that we know most of us are poor listeners, we know what it is that outstanding listeners do that makes them special. We know the difference that makes a difference. And lest we forget, if you want someone to listen to you, first you have to show that you can, and do, listen to him or her.





How do we become better listeners? Getting rid of distractions is the start of it; using our whole body as an antenna is part of it; but being there, really being there, is the heart of it. We listen when we make an emotional commitment to be fully present – to be in the moment. We listen when we put a hold on likely interruptions and spend a few moments clearing the clutter from our mind. We listen when our self-talk moves to full volume with a message that emphasises, “The next few minutes are an invaluable learning opportunity.” We listen when we put the needs of others ahead of our own needs. If you are operating in virtual space, double down on each of these behaviours. If you are on Zoom or some other video connection, especially if your face is full-screen, set the scene for exemplary listening – take the clutter out of the background, avoid casting shadows on your face, adjust the camera to be near eye height (buy a stand for your laptop).

Claude Debussy once remarked, “Music is the stuff between the notes.” Masterful listening implies “listening for” and not “listening to.” It means listening not just for what is said, but also for what is omitted. It means hearing the silence. It means interpreting the message in the space between the words. It means, when emphasis adds to the understanding, making the silence louder. It means, when faced with a tough negotiator, forging the silence the way a blacksmith wields a hammer. It means being tuned into the subtleties of the speaker’s body and the sub-text in the language. The payoff? When we are fully engaged we start to hear not just the speaker’s intentions, but the meaning behind what is being presented. And in that meaning we can start to understand the speaker’s true intent and state of mind.

Professional rally and race car drivers do something intuitively (at a level of excellence) that the rest of us do only after a fashion. They understand that simultaneous use of our hands and our eyes (hand-eye coordination) is how we are naturally wired. They, however, take that capability to a whole new level – to the point that where they look is where the car steers, not a split second later but, literally, in the moment. Leaders who are attentive listeners, in like manner, “tune in” all of their other senses. As a result, they are especially good at picking up subtle clues of disagreement. Here we face another paradox. Everyday logic would suggest that “agreement” is a prerequisite of progress. This ignores the gift of disagreement. Conflict is an idea in the making. That is why diversity is so important. That’s why, especially in this current environment, listening in the way you have always wanted to be listened to has the capacity to turn concern into the art of the possible.

Great listeners develop “peripheral awareness.” The message is important. But no less important is sensing how the message lands with everyone else in the room – virtual or otherwise. To listen is to be an active partner in the communication dance – with all the dancers. To listen is to be the master of both content and context. Listening is not exclusively a real-time experience. Mastery is to develop a “listening memory.” It is a memory that builds a pattern of understanding around what the speaker is passionate about, for there lies untapped energy. It is a memory that builds understanding around what the speaker





gets angry about, for there lies insight into what the speaker fears most. It is a memory that builds awareness as to what the speaker seeks to avoid most, for there lies insight into the speaker's capacity to lead. It is a memory that builds insight into the speaker's authentic-self, for there lies his/her true path to mastery.

## To Listen is to Care

To listen is to care. Not to listen, to half-listen and to “script write” (to think about what you are going to say while the speaker is talking) are arrogant and overt acts of disrespect that carry an unambiguous, collective message, “Get on with it, my time is more valuable than yours.” And does the other person (and everyone else present) pick up on that message? Every time!

We improve the quality of the listening experience immeasurably when our body language says to both the speaker and those present, “What you are saying is important to me.” When we lean in slightly and maintain good eye contact, we signal that we are fully present. When we reinforce key statements with positive body language, such as a slight nod of the head, we are letting the speaker and everyone else present know that the message is landing.





And when we allow the speaker to pause and we resist the temptation to jump in, we show respect. The intensity described comes with a soft edge. When we appear relaxed, we make the speaker more comfortable. Our willingness to smile is a measure of our openness. When we use a gentle voice, we are emphasising that this is a shared experience. When we paraphrase, restate and, as appropriate, summarise what the speaker has said, we are saying that we care. Even when it is clear that the speaker has concluded, when we wait two beats before giving our own response (or question), we give emphasis to the speaker's message. Video conference? Do everything outlined but do so a little more deliberately.

Masterful listening is to listen without biased judgement. It is to be receptive not just to new knowledge, but to new ways of being. Listening without judgement means that we must first strip away our own mask of self-judgement. It is a level of listening that draws on a willingness to be vulnerable. It is a level of attentiveness that is only possible for those who have the capacity to be emotionally "still."

Listening mastery means constantly striving to reach the next level. It is ongoing learning that starts with a simple question, "What is the one thing that I can do that will make the greatest difference to my ability to listen?" To grow as a listener is to write at the top of every page on the note pad or screen you are using, "I will listen." To grow as a listener is to self-rate oneself at the end of every key meeting or coaching session. Learning also means feedback from others. It means a willingness to appear vulnerable. It means being humble. It means asking others on the team how he or she would rate your listening skills. It means seeking input from the customer. More than anything else, of course, it means acting on the input.

None of this implies that to listen we must lose, or mask, who we really are. Listening is not an act of manipulation. When someone else turns up, when any attempt to listen more effectively distorts our sense of self, we take away from – rather than add to – the listening experience. To become more effective as a listener is not about learning how to act in a way that contradicts our sense of identity. It is far more about reaching within and discovering/amplifying qualities we already possess. When we listen to others we listen to ourselves. In listening we, thus, discover our authentic-self. By comparison, poor listeners struggle with leadership-of-self, generally, and resilience, more specifically.



### **Five simple action steps.**

1. Next time you have a meeting spend five minutes ahead of time to reflect on how the session will benefit from a personal investment in listening.
2. Take a pad with you to the meeting. Write at the top a message to yourself “I will listen.”
3. After the meeting, score your “listening” out of 10.
4. List three things that would take your listening to the next level.
5. Make this a habit. Repeat this activity every time you have an important meeting.



# The Listening Tree



10

I ask for feedback on my listening.

9

I listen not for what is said, but for what is intended.

8

As a signal of respect, I go out of my way to use the speaker's words.

7

I pay attention to the speaker's non-verbal language and I do not interrupt.

6

I consciously do not allow myself to "script write" i.e., I do not think about what I intend to say while the other person is talking.

5

After listening to what someone has to say, I wait for two beats before I speak. In doing so, I am signaling that I am listening.

4

To listen is to be there! When I know that an opportunity to listen is coming up, I put a hold on interruptions and spend a few moments actively clearing the clutter from my mind.

3

As part of my listening agenda and, when possible, I go out of my way to build physical rapport with the person speaking. This includes maintaining good eye contact and adopting a complementary posture.

2

I listen not just with my ears but with my whole body. I make this apparent by giving affirmative, physical cues to the speaker: leaning in slightly, reinforcing key statements with a slight nod of the head, smiling in appropriate places, and maintaining listening intensity even when the speaker pauses.

1

Before any conversation, I remind myself that prejudice, past experiences with the individual, and assumptions that you already know what the person is going to say, severely limit listening effectiveness. I also remind myself that listening, far from being a passive role, is the power position in any conversation. Thus, if the speaker is unable to get his/her points across, I have failed.

## Self-Assessment

Think about a recent conversation and review your listening at each level (1-10). For every level where your response is "that's absolutely me" you gain 10%. If in any doubt, or if the statement describes you "sometimes," you do not score at that level.

## Score

30% (or less) doesn't listen  
40% listens out of self-interest  
50% listens for knowledge  
60% listens for meaning  
70% listens to uncover wisdom  
80% + mastery



A scenic view of a mountain valley. In the foreground, there are several buildings with dark roofs and walls, partially obscured by green trees. The middle ground shows a deep valley with green slopes and a small stream. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with significant snow cover under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

## Chapter Three

# To Lead Is To **Care**







# To Lead Is To Care

## People Need to Know That You Care

We won't discover the true impact of the COVID-19 virus until much of the current trauma is behind us. What can be said, with certainty, is that the world of work will never be the same. A Gartner poll, for example, suggests that post COVID, 48% of employees will likely work remotely at least part of the time, compared with 30% prior to the pandemic. A Harvard Business School working paper reported that before the coronavirus hit, 5.2% percent of US employees reported telecommuting most of the time, while 43% percent worked from home at least some of the time. The actual number currently working remotely, other than it has clearly skyrocketed, is hard to assess.



There is no question ... tomorrow's workplace will be different. It's a mistake, however, to think that employees come to work to simply do the work. The traditional workplace is a rich social and cultural petri dish – where employees are exposed to new ideas, exchange experience, learn from each other, share stories and, yes, where gossip (gossip is to humans what grooming is to our ape cousins) is part of what makes it special.

The face-to-face work experience not only delivers a sense of belonging, it provides meaning in people's lives. Meanwhile, if you imagine the way the organization actually functions is



represented accurately by the lines and boxes on the organization chart, think again. Informal networks, non-verbal cues, personal/team loyalties, past history, accidental innovation (people and ideas bumping into each other) and the interpersonal factors that establish trust have far more influence on how things happen than the most compelling organogram – behaviours that are extremely difficult to replicate remotely. You can't override 40,000 years of social evolution and not lose something of who we are.

For the introvert who can shape the nature of his/her contribution – work that is defined by a role and not a job – remote working can be somewhat desirable. Assuming the individual in question is well organised, that is. If you work out of an apartment, have young children, a barking dog, a refrigerator on the blink and no access to a garden, we are describing a grating, “get this over with,” gut wrenching, never-ending grind. The greatest concern to many? The inevitable blurring between who you have to be in the workplace and who you would like to remain – as a private person. Wrap everything outlined in a big red bow marked “help!” and, in far too many cases, mental health issues, addiction and marriage breakdown become the inevitable consequences.



Employers need to recognise that not only have the terms and conditions of employment changed but the emotional compact between the company and its workforce has been cast anew. The nature of trust, goal setting, delegation, the freedom to act, feedback, collaboration, holding a meeting, being a great communicator, listening, “workplace” safety, and what it means to be a team are not as they were. Nor will they ever be again!

For the team leader empathy, transparency, flexibility, resilience and patience move centre stage. It's been said that “come the crisis, come the leader.” It might be more accurate to suggest that a true emergency surfaces who we really are. As outlined in the introduction, however, the more things change the more they stay the same. The context may change, the storm may have reached a higher water mark, the alarm bells may be louder but outstanding leaders have a common response. It's an unwavering and timeless leadership attribute. Abraham Lincoln, Bill Marriott (Marriott Hotels), Martin Luther King, Princess Diana, Bill Gates and Satya Nadella are pretty good examples. Leaders put **people** first. Even when the decision appears to be entirely commercial, the question that always surfaces is, “How will this impact our people?”





What makes a leader? High on any agenda - using a term coined by Warren Bennis - is that, “Leaders are dreamers with a deadline.” One is immediately drawn to **John F. Kennedy’s** audacious goals for NASA. Authenticity and humility loom large ... **Gandhi**. Compassion and a generosity of spirit ... **Nelson Mandela**. Energy and passion are clearly essential ... **Belinda Gates**. Mental toughness and tenacity are important ... **Jeff Bezos**. The deep-rooted and unshakable belief that no matter what the pundits, critics and naysayers might suggest - it will happen ... **Sergio Marchionne**.<sup>1</sup> And in a boundaryless world, the capacity to operate in different cultures cannot be ignored ... **Sheryl Sandberg**.<sup>2</sup> What makes a leader? To create and share the dream, authenticity, humility, energy, passion, mental toughness, tenacity, belief, and cultural agility are clearly part of it.

But what lies at the very heart of leadership? What is it that takes people places they would otherwise not go? The overwhelming evidence is that when everything else is stripped away, when you get to the very essence of what it means to be a leader, to lead is to care! “People won’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Teddy Roosevelt.” (Already mentioned on page iv).

The text that follows looks at caring from two distinct perspectives. One: caring as an enduring and essential leadership capability. Two: at the conclusion of the chapter, 50 Ways To Say You Care – In a Covid World.

Leadership is, and has always been, about followership. As such, leadership is a sacred trust. A trust that has to be won every single day. Especially now. People follow a leader who cares; someone who is more than a figurehead, more than an instrument of shareholder value, more than the manifestation of a set of competencies. Not someone who cares one day and not the next. Not someone who cares for some people and not others. And not someone who thinks that they care. If you wear the mantle of leadership, people need to **KNOW** that you care.

Tomorrow will be different. To care is to know that as we move through unprecedented societal change – accelerated by COVID-19 but by no means limited to the fallout of the virus – the forces of reinvention are both overwhelming and unrelenting. It is to recognise that the organization of the last century is misaligned with the challenges of this century. It is to work from the belief that “agility” – and an overreliance on hierarchy and centralized decision-making are incompatible. It is to make the organization’s values a centerpiece in giving frontline employees the freedom (permission) to act.<sup>3</sup> It is to realise that, although

- 1 The late Sergio Marchionne was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. A long-time friend and client, his inspiring belief that “it will happen,” was a constant, driving force for change.
- 2 Chief Operating Officer of Facebook.
- 3 A host of businesses have “values” but for most they amount to little more than “best intentions:” toothless symbols that have little influence on day-to-day decision-making.



issues such as compensation and benefits are important hygiene factors,<sup>4</sup> without a compelling purpose, without leadership rooted in “why do we do what we do” something essential will always be missing.

In the last two decades, information technology has dramatically changed the nature of work. As we move forward it will redefine “the organization.” Digitalisation isn’t an end in itself, merely a means to compete in a world where shorter lead times, accelerated product



development cycles, responsiveness and speed of decision-making separate the best from the rest. Artificial intelligence, cobotics, machine learning, newer and better ways to connect, blockchain and a host of other innovations represent both a threat ... and an opportunity. To care is to manage the former with sensitivity and face the latter with an open mind. It is to equip employees at all levels of the organization with the skills, insights and know-how needed to thrive in an uncertain future.

To care is to strip out boundaries that limit what is possible. It is to act in the belief that unnecessary organizational levels destroy value, that the informal organization is always more important than that implied by the formal structure, and that failure to cultivate the grapevine is to provide a forum for those who may not care. To care is to work from the assumption that the most effective way to organize reflects the way that people, given a choice, would organize themselves. It is to understand that merger, takeover, and acquisition are exclusively financial terms and that when two (or more) enterprises combine, a new entity **always** emerges.

To care is to fully embrace the view that there are five distinct dimensions of intelligence. One: cognitive intelligence and the ability to manage complexity. Two: practical, hands-on intelligence that some call “street smarts.” Three: interpersonal intelligence – how we relate to others. Four: intrapersonal intelligence – how well we know ourselves. Five: ecological intelligence – our full appreciation of the footprint we leave on this planet. In all the discussion over the past two decades on emotional intelligence what has, invariably, been pushed aside is ecological intelligence. What indigenous peoples around the world put

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4 A term created by Frederick Herzberg. His research postulated that two sets of factors influence behaviour at work. The first: “hygiene factors” (extrinsic) – issues such as salary that, if not properly managed, generate dissatisfaction. The second: “motivators” (intrinsic drivers) – that influence employees such that they want to give of their best, e.g., the relationship between capability and opportunity. Herzberg scoffed at the notion of trying to motivate through money. He called it “jumping for the jelly beans.”



at the very centre of their existence we have foolishly chosen to push to one side. To care is to realise that we live in a fragile ecosystem where every act has long-term consequences. It is to fulfill the responsibility that goes with being a citizen of planet Earth. To care is to leave the planet cleaner than we found it and build a world for our children that we can be proud of. “The Earth does not belong to us. We belong to the Earth.” Marlee Matlin.

Who you are is who you were when you were growing up. To care is to recognise that a new generational cohort now dominates in the workplace. Caring is thus about recognising that different generations come with different life experiences and expectations. Know that if you are selling to millennials the same way as you have/do to Boomers and Gen. X clients you are out of step with reality. Two words should reframe your thinking ... “social conscience.”

To care is a deep-rooted, authentic, consistent way to be. Moreover, the greater the pool of knowledge that rests with those who inhabit the lower echelons of the organization, the greater the need for caring leadership. To care is to work from the assumption that the world will (not might!) unfold in unpredictable ways. It is to realise that sustainable competitive advantage is often fleeting and that unbridled belief in “the plan” is to be wedded to yesterday’s solution. It is to know that only those who can see what isn’t there can deliver what cannot be done. It is to anticipate where your best competitor is headed and get there before them.

To care is to act in tune with the rhythm of the marketplace. It is to realise that the only thing that is unchanging is the increasing speed of change and that victory is the prerogative of those who embrace and relish change. To care is to work to become ever more adaptable, flexible, and fleet-of-foot. It is to know when and in what ways to trust our intuition. It is to understand that in a world where change is an ever-present reality, in-depth and/or extensive analysis is all-too-often an emotional safety blanket that handicaps the ability to compete. To care is to discover new ways to learn. To compete is to be faster to market than the competition. “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” Alvin Toffler.

To care is to recognise that the customer’s emerging needs dictate *the what*, values underscore *the how*, pragmatism orchestrates *the where*, opportunity dictates *the when* ... but it is integrity that dictates ***the why***. Integrity is manifest in high ethical standards, an emphasis on personal responsibility and a supportive work environment. Integrity is caring for the workers in an outsourced factory in Honduras no less than for those who work in the company’s own plants. It is asking the questions that some would prefer to avoid. It is a compensation approach that rewards contribution, not the size of the office. It’s treating everyone the same, regardless of background, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, role or level. Honesty, transparency, moral courage, independence of judgement, impartiality and fairness are words that capture the spirit of integrity. Power without its alter ego, integrity, is exploitation. Leadership without integrity is a broken promise.



To care is to dream. It is to know that to lead is to compete for other people's dreams. Caring is thus a quest that seeks to rid the workplace of work that strips people of dignity. Caring leads to the assumption that, given the chance, "people will get it right." Caring embraces employee engagement not simply as a means to improve productivity, but because it nurtures the human condition. It draws on the belief that people want to produce quality work. Caring builds on the assumption that, given the opportunity, front-line employees will always strive to simplify/improve the processes that dictate how the work they do gets done.

To care is to have an unrelenting drive for improved results. It is to be committed to goals that others merely aspire to. It means that a commitment is absolute and that growth, in its many forms, is the wellspring of sustained success. To care is to make the discipline of delivery a drum beat that is echoed in every presentation, team meeting and/or coaching conversation.

To care is to have top of mind that what a leader does is far more important than anything he/she may say. It is to be always conscious of how even small acts will be interpreted. To care is to be a role model. It is to challenge the status quo and, in doing so, give others permission to explore new ways to act.

To care is to appreciate that because something is difficult to measure doesn't mean it should be judged purely by how the tide of uninformed, subjective opinion happens to be running at the time. Culture, the sense of urgency, tenacity, trust, motivation, teamwork, leadership potential and the human behaviour that drives innovation are all fundamental building blocks of organizational success that, although difficult to measure, with flair and creativity can be, and should be, regularly assessed. Conversely, to care is to know that just because something can be measured doesn't necessarily mean it should be. To care is to recognise that more measurement means less meaningful measurement. To lead is to regularly review and decide specifically what needs to be measured and, just as important, what measurement is no longer of value. If you don't measure it, you can't manage it.

To care is to understand that, paradoxically, selling is never about selling. Great selling is to care more about what (and why) the customer wants to buy than it is about what the vendor has to offer. It is to uncover in what ways the seller can make the customer's business better. It is to coach the customer such that he/she better uncovers new possibility. It is to listen, really listen. It is to talk the customer's language and in doing so gain insights into the customer's world. It is to anticipate the customer's emerging needs. It is to uncover why the customer chose you. It is to respond with not just a solution, but with the *best possible* solution. To care is to always deliver a little more than that agreed upon. "People don't want to buy a quarter inch drill. They want a quarter inch hole." Theodore Levitt.

To care is to question conventional wisdom, to embrace new ideas and to provide space and freedom in order that the imagination of those who serve the customer can take flight.





To care is to support those who have the courage and daring to go where others have not walked. To care is to bring the customer's voice to every key decision. It is to stand behind the brand. It is to make the brand live not just in the customer's eyes, but in the hearts and minds of everyone in the seller's organization. It is to act on the belief that *serving* is more important than *service*. *Service* determines how the seller responds. *Serving* determines how the customer feels.

To care is to have pride in the product and share that pride with others. To care is to know that product reliability is sacrosanct. It is to bring truthfulness to the sales process and to honor the spirit, not just the letter, of any and all promises made. It is to continuously explore ways to enhance the utility of the company's product and/or service. To care is to act with the knowledge that reputation is hard won but easily lost.

To care is to strip out the barriers between supplier and customer. It is to recognise that in some situations collaborating with the competition (co-opetition) is the best way forward. To care is to know that to be a partner is to share not only "the how" but "the why." It is to keep any and all partners fully informed and to provide real-time access to information that is critical to the customer's needs. To care is to build organizational capability that focuses on the knowledge of knowledge. It is to ensure that when seasoned performers move on or retire, hard won insights about the business are not lost.

To care is to be committed to the belief that the efforts of people working together far outweigh the value of any individual. To care is thus to work collaboratively, to enrich global networks and actively share experiences to better satisfy the customer. In that the creativity of the human mind can always find ways to circumvent the unnecessary and the unwanted, to care is to know that even well meaning attempts to control others are always self-defeating. To care is to eschew the trappings of proclaimed self-importance. To care is to know that "status" is a state of mind that insecure leaders seek in order that they can maintain the illusion of being in charge.

To care is to constantly seek ways to simplify. For those who care, simplicity is found in unambiguous goals; policies and procedures that prescribe only that which is absolutely essential; and feedback that focuses on issues that the receiver can influence. Simplicity is realised when the customer finds the product/service easy to access and straightforward to use. To care is to understand that simplicity is, in the first instance, a state of mind. It is also to know that there is a world of difference between simplicity and simplistic. One is to strive for elegant solutions. The other is to create a simple product/service but in doing so forgo fitness for purpose.

To care is to know that it takes the capacity for self-critique to wear the demands of leadership with humility. To care is to have a teachable point of view. It is to work on the assumption that how people learn is more important than what they learn. To care is to coach. It is to



be open to be coached. To care is to find the time to be *available* and the state of mind to be *present*. It is to ask questions that allow others to see the world through a new lens. To care is to create the context such that people coach themselves. To care is to be a mentor. It is to develop a successor who will be more successful in the role than we are.

To care is to act on the belief that leadership is about building community. Community, in turn, speaks to how people share ideas; how groups with a common interest build on each other's success; and how the collective spirit of competition propels people to the next plateau of performance. Caring is to emphasise that community is not about everyone being the same, but about the coming together of those who share a compelling purpose. It is to recognise that diversity isn't a legal requirement, it's simply the smart thing to do. To care is to know that the organization cannot thrive in a vacuum and that the road to societal and customer rejection is littered with those who attempted to gain competitive advantage by riding roughshod over the public good. "Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community." Anthony J. D'Angelo.



To care is to know that any and all shortfalls in the talent management system are multiplied many times over. It is to strive to identify world-class, talent management partners. Caring is manifest in the passion to hire and promote the right candidate. Caring is found in the knowledge that every hire decision is central to the legacy that a leader leaves behind. It is to work from the knowledge that anything less than best-in-class expertise on the part of the hiring

manager, in defining and orchestrating leadership "fit," amounts to a breach of fiduciary responsibility. To care is to provide unstinted support in order that those who are new to the organization land without breaking stride. "I'd rather interview 50 people and not hire anyone than hire the wrong person." – Jeff Bezos.

To care is to communicate not what people need to know, but what they have a right to know. It is to ask people how they feel. It is to share feelings. It is to find the time to listen. It is to listen *for* and not to listen *to*. It is to see the world through the eyes of others. To care is to be vulnerable. It is to ask for help. It is to offer help. It is to be compassionate when others stumble. It is to offer advice only when it's asked for. "Leading by example is the most powerful advice you can give to anybody." N. R. Narayana Murthy.



To care is to be approachable. It is to be human. It is to be humble. Humility is stepping down from the podium that others would have you stand on. It is putting the needs of others first. It is being comfortable saying, “I don’t know.” It is to know when to say no! To care is to take pride in the success of one’s colleagues. It is to know that no one makes it on his/her own. To care is to live up to the expectations of others on the team. It is to be the first to accept accountability when things go wrong and the last to seek praise or personal reward when a successful outcome has been delivered. “Great leaders don’t need to act tough. Their confidence and humility serve to underscore their toughness.” Simon Sinek.

To care is to be fully aware that without investors there would be no organization. It is to honor that trust and make each and every decision transparent. To care is to work diligently to create value for shareholders. It is to hold in high esteem those whose own hard work and continued support allow the organization to be sustained.

To care is to respect the truth. It is to live in truth. It is to be open and honest even when political expediency means that silence is the option others would choose. It is to realise that timing is everything. To care is to act on the belief that confronting a problem is the first step in overcoming it.

Caring is about balance. It means working to build alignment between strategic thinking and strategic doing but recognising, at the same time, misalignment and the tension that results are often the source of breakthrough ideas. Balance means striving for excellence but at the same time fully appreciating how the marketplace is unfolding. It means thinking slow and acting fast. It means giving equal weight to short-term actions and long-term thinking. It means embracing the future that we are part of creating whilst honoring the past. It’s realizing that we can’t step into new shoes until we take off the ones we are wearing. It is the wisdom to know that what isn’t said is always more important than what is. It is to bring people onto the team who act and think differently than the way we do.

Caring is to realise that the organization isn’t a homogenous and self-perpetuating force of nature working tirelessly to make your life difficult. It is to know that you are the organization and that armed with tenacity and a dream you can make a difference. To care is to stop expressing frustration about what you can’t do and start to focus on what you can do. It is to understand that even those in secondary roles, if truly committed to the cause, can inspire others to join them on a quest that has meaning. Caring is to quickly assess the differences between someone who challenges the status quo and a team member stuck in complaint mode, by simply asking, “what are you going to do about it?”

To care is to strive continuously to be the best we can be. It is to ask for feedback. Not only from those who see the world the way we do, but from those who walk a different path. Caring is to act on that feedback.



To care is to realise that leadership demands stamina. It is therefore to take health, fitness and wellness seriously. To care is to exercise and eat right. To care is to provide the opportunity for others to do likewise. To care is to take all of your vacation days.

To care is to make leadership of self our single, most important priority. It means having the courage to live our own story; to become our own hero/heroine. To care is to know that when we look back on a race well run, lifestyle, family and integrity will be deemed far more important than financial rewards. Leadership of self means letting the ones we care about know that we care - and do so often. To lead is to care.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." When we stop caring we stop being a leader. When we stop caring about others we stop caring about ourselves. To be a leader is to care. To be an outstanding leader is to care deeply.

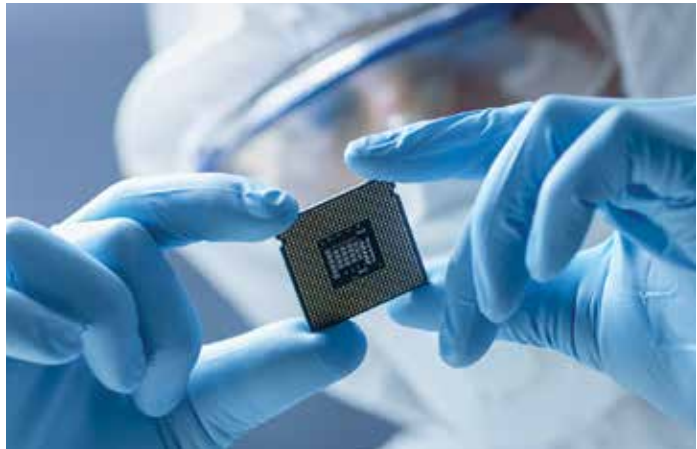




## 50 WAYS To Say You Care – In a Covid World

To lead is to care. The actions listed below outline 50 ways for you to think about what it means to be a caring leader – simple suggestions that will make a difference. Important as caring was in the pre-COVID environment, it is now more important than ever. Go through the list carefully and reflect on what you can do differently on Monday.

1. Provide the resources. If people are being asked to work from home ensure that you support them fully. Video meetings are, literally, twice as effective as traditional conference calls. With that in mind, allow employees to expense, where needed, fast-internet access and/or a computer/software upgrade. The environment we are in is, for most, extremely stressful. Poor internet access and/or inadequate technology add unnecessarily, often exponentially, to that level of stress.
2. Make priorities clear. In times of crisis, priorities change quickly. Make it a habit to start the day by identifying what is essential and that which is merely important. Make the first action/call of the day in pursuit of a goal or solving a problem that is essential.
3. Be real. In these difficult times, making a personal connection is essential. Learn the names of the children of those who work directly for you. Uncover what the people who work for you are passionate about. Ensure that presentations reflect the multigenerational mix of the audience. Share something about yourself that resonates with team members and their background interests.
4. Agility is as agility is seen to be. In the team meeting, learn to move beyond solving the immediate problem. Balance tactical dialogue with strategic thinking. In pursuit of the latter, ask great questions. A great question is one that asks for what you want – not what you don't want. Learn to let go of the need to be in charge. Move facilitating the meeting between different team members.
5. Be there! When you ask someone to call you back, leave a time when you will be available.





6. What people don't know, they make up. It's called "human nature." Key actions, changes and important news must come from the team leader first. Keep the team up-to-date with a dedicated blog. Don't use social media for that purpose. The lack of face-to-face interaction makes keeping people informed an imperative. Ensure that the blog focuses on what people want to know – not on what you want to tell them. Remember, it's not about you!
7. Surprise supports a sense of being special. If possible, stop by people's offices/workstations unsolicited and ask them how they are doing, what they take pride in, what suggestions they might have. Call remote workers with the same objective in mind.
8. If you don't coach, you can't lead! In view of the reality that the *workforce* is now dominated by millennials, work to become a great coach. Be open to be coached. Encourage team members to coach each other. What a leader does is always more important than anything he/she might say. For that reason, much of the learning that takes place at work is based on role modeling. In remote working much of that opportunity is lost or is defused. The result? In the digital world, coaching takes on even greater importance.
9. Make people feel safe. It starts, of course, with masks, social distancing and hand washing. Beyond that, whether the environment is physical or virtual, make health and safety a priority. Fund wellness and online fitness classes. In a traditional meeting, start by making sure everyone in attendance knows where the fire exits are. Ensure electrical leads are taped down. Hold regular fire drills. It's not just a matter of avoiding personal risk – the underlying value is in making people aware that people's health and safety is something you care about. Introduce appropriate safety checks when the team is operating remotely. It might sound like an intrusion into people's homes at first but small acts often have very beneficial consequences. It's not so much what you do, it's how you make people feel. Let them know that you care.
10. Celebrate curiosity. The evidence is that remote working inhibits innovation and stunts collaboration. When the team works from home it can easily default into a digital and remote bureaucracy – addressing problems and not much else. Go out of your way to draw out and listen to new ideas. Start from the point of view that you will look for ways to make the idea work and not dig for reasons why the suggestion being made is flawed. In organization life there is no shortage of great ideas. What's missing is a forum where these ideas can be surfaced. In the words of Captain Picard, "Make it so."
11. Be transparent. Know when and how to apologise. Be vulnerable. Admit mistakes. Share with your team the times you stumbled ... and what you learned from the experience. Ask for help. Learn to say you don't know. Admit when you are wrong. It may well mean dialing in your vulnerability gene but without openness and transparency a digital platform tends to dial down sincerity and dial up resentment.



12. Communicate from truth. Make candour and straight-talk central to how you think and act. Confront those on the team (one-on-one) who, when the tough conversation or new ways to act are needed, deliberately muddy the water and/or default into games playing. The temptation for some remote employees to obfuscate, confuse or hide behind weak excuses must be addressed early.
13. Become an extraordinary listener. Listen in the way you want to be listened to. When we are operating face-to-face, listening is an essential skill. In a virtual space, its importance is even greater. See Chapter Two.
14. Recognise that the basic currency of organization success is the team. Take time out as a team to reflect on how to take the team to the next level. Great teams develop criteria for both the results to be achieved and the four to six behaviours that describe “team success.” Essential for intact teams that physically interact, establishing “needed” team behaviours for teams operating from a digital platform is even more important. Involve the team in establishing “team” success criteria. Have a quick review at the conclusion of each meeting. Act on the feedback. If you don’t know how you are doing, it’s difficult to see how you can ever improve. The technical term is, “you’re stuck!”
15. Emphasise growth. Reward extraordinary performance by allowing the individual(s) in question to choose/attend a leading-edge, on-line workshop. Have him/her share the insights gained with the rest of the team.
16. Leaders are readers. Share your learning. Encourage others on the team to read. Choose a relevant book and, as a team, review and reflect on the insights gained one chapter at a time. A learning agenda can both energize remote work and build an invaluable personal habit.
17. Help new members to the team find their way. Five issues, in particular, are important to someone joining the team: (1) the strategic imperatives of the team one-level-up; (2) the culture the wider organization is seeking to create; (3) why others, new to the organization, have stumbled; (4) the protocols that define team success; and (5) who on the team will be his/her integration mentor.
18. Dialogue disrupts discontent. Organize small virtual groups with little or no agenda – where the purpose is to ask people how they feel about: (1) the organization today; (2) the work they do; (3) their ongoing personal growth and development; and (4) concerns about the virtual way of working.
19. Don’t rely too heavily on the virtual format that focuses exclusively on the whole team. The more meetings take place remotely, the greater the need for one-on-one interaction. Open, honest, freewheeling, candid, growth-oriented conversations with each team member should be part of a leader’s ongoing routine.





20. There is a practical side to empathy. Learn what it's like to be on the front-line. Especially now! Regularly spend time in the trenches: the call centre, serve in the retail outlet, work on the front desk, go on sales calls, wait tables. Be humble. Go to learn. Write down what people tell you. Be seen to be writing it down. Now go to the smallest room in your house, close the door, play pre-recorded sounds of young children fighting with each other and a small dog barking ... and then connect with your immediate team leader on a Zoom meeting. Just kidding ... but at least set time aside to imagine what it would be like.
21. Delegate. Agree outcomes and then step back and allow the employees to get it done. Don't phone to simply ask how they are doing. It seems like support but it comes across as a lack of trust. Move from management by exception (personal involvement only when things go wrong) to management of exception (look for the opportunity to give high performers more responsibility).
22. Cameo capability. Actively promote talented members of your team to other leaders in the organization – especially women and minorities. Find ways to accelerate the experience track of your high performers. Provide international experience for high-potential employees early in their career. Look for meaningful ways to “test” a potential successor(s). Become a mentor. It is not only a truly meaningful contribution to the business, it's the best way imaginable to know what's really happening inside the organization. Identify a bright, young employee to mentor you. You have no idea what you don't know about – how the next generation view work, emerging trends on social media and/or the conversation you are currently not having that is really important.
23. Sharpen your saw when it comes to the hiring process. What amounts to a poor hire decision for the organization is often a life-changing event for a candidate who stumbles. Make diversity central to who you hire. Make your team an integral part of the hiring process. You are not looking for consensus but listen to the input they provide. Compared to its “live” predecessor, the video interview is something of a stunted tool. Preparation is key. Avoid the temptation to personally dress down. Start and finish on time. Recognise the difference between the *best* candidate and the *right* candidate. The former is the outcome of a “beauty contest.” Identifying the right candidate means honing in on, specifically, what it takes to succeed in the role today ... and in the future. That implies assessing behaviour against: (1) the culture the organization has and the culture needed to support future success; (2) the performance scorecard; (3) role-specific leadership competencies; and (4) the team challenge. If you haven't been trained recently in how to conduct the recruitment interview, make the investment. Take advantage of the opportunity a virtual format provides. With permission, record a typical interview and have an “expert” review it with you. “Excellence” in the integration process is a “must.” If they don't land, they won't stay!





24. Go out of your way to find out why your best people stay. With retention in mind, have the team suggest what they/the organization should: (1) stop doing; (2) take pride in; (3) start to do. The bigger the business challenge; the more marketable team members are; the greater the difference in cultural context that separates team members from each other – the higher the bar is set in retaining top talent.
25. Give primacy to the organization's values. Challenge those who don't live the organization's values. Part company with – regardless of the results delivered – a subordinate who consistently acts with self-interest in mind. The 21st century organization gives employees unprecedented freedom to act. Organization agility and personal freedom doesn't, however, mean a world without boundaries. Culture can be viewed as a "container for diversity." Diversity lacking the means to "knit" different groups together invites "tribal conflict." Too little diversity and innovation becomes what the competition is good at. What shapes diversity? What gives people both permission to act and dictates how they do? The organization's values.
26. If you are a leader you live in a goldfish bowl. Know that you are a role model. Emphasise, exaggerate and reinforce, through example, the behaviour needed to succeed tomorrow. Model the change you want to bring about.
27. Health matters. The virus has obviously disrupted most people's notion of work-life balance. That doesn't mean that lifestyle and health goals can't be emphasised. Be a good example to the team. In doing so, you give each of them permission to orchestrate their own approach.
28. Expand your constituency. Reject job applicants with professionalism and respect. Reputation is hard won but easily lost. Stay in touch with employees who have retired. Let them know what's going on. Similarly, stay connected to the great candidate who didn't get the job. They represent an investment you haven't yet drawn on – both in terms of goodwill and as a future candidate.
29. Asking the right question is far more important than having the right answer. When someone approaches you, know that most of the time they already know the answer. They are looking for permission. Permission, in turn, strips the decision of risk. When an employee seeks an answer to a question that hasn't been addressed before, insist that he/she have at least one potential solution. If not, adjourn and ask him/her to return. Even if it's not the solution you would have chosen, assume that, given the chance to act, the individual in question will get it right.
30. Culture matters and in a world changing in an unprecedented manner it matters a lot. If you operate at the top of the house, measure the culture the organization has and the culture the organization needs. Only then can you successfully address attraction, transform talent acquisition, conduct coaching, manage mentoring and succeed at succession.



31. Go to bat for the people who work for you. Let those around you know that you believe in them. Believe in yourself. Display that belief by the simple act of letting go.
32. Listen to the customer. In particular, work assiduously to understand what tomorrow's customer will be willing to pay for. At the end of the day, to create/serve tomorrow's customer is what business is all about. To keep the customer top of mind, on every virtual meeting consider setting an empty seat aside for "the customer."
33. The power of "why." Ensure that the team understand the organization's compelling purpose: "Why we do what we do." Remote working demands discipline and self-imposed commitment. Without a compelling why, it's easy for "the right way" to become "the easiest way."
34. Practice servant leadership. If you are the team leader, remember you work for the team. Think about yourself as first amongst equals. To be a leader is to step forward when criticism is being tabled and step back when praise is being divvied out. The proudest moment an outstanding leader has is when one of his/her team is standing on the winner's podium.
35. If you are the team leader, let people know (with as much clarity as possible) where the team is headed. Through imagery and compelling language, make tomorrow come alive, today. If people don't know where you're going, it's a naive assumption to assume that they will follow you.
36. Become a great storyteller. Share positive stories. Encourage others on the team to share positive stories. A good way to start virtual meetings is for one or two participants to share a story. It can be a work-based or perhaps, even more interesting, a story about how participants are coping. Keep in mind, negative stories can inform but only positive stories inspire.
37. Be consistent. Paradoxically, agility has to be built on a platform of stability. In the midst of a storm there has to be a sense of calm. Establish at least one day a week without Zoom meetings. Whether virtual or not, attend and start meetings on time. Close them on time. In the midst of much that is uncertain, do what you can to provide a sense of continuity. Make sure meetings have a clear agenda. Communicate it ahead of time. Exhibit a positive mindset. Don't let tangential concerns or personal frustration show through. When you smile people realise that you are happy to be there. When you frown you are signaling that you would prefer to be someplace else. Don't assume. Use humour with caution. It could be that the dog just threw up on the carpet and the new baby has colic. Not the best time for the wrong kind of humour. Summarise exactly what is expected following the meeting. Make follow-up a way of life.



38. Without trust you ain't got much! TRUST implies **T**he ability to build rapport – **R**especting individual differences – **U**nderstanding the other point of view – **S**hared values – **T**he commitment to deliver on the promise.
39. Have an eye for signs of stress. Be sensitive to what people on the team are struggling with. Remote working can be stressful. On Zoom meetings, look for signs of that stress. Follow up one-on-one. Invite a health professional in early. Go the extra mile when a team (or a member of his/her family) is dealing with serious health issues.
40. Work with the team to build the team's story. Ensure that the team's story is aligned with (complements) the organization's story. Customers don't buy your product or service – they buy (or not) your story. The reason strategy fails isn't a lack of effective buy-in from the team or problems with alignment from the top down. Strategy fails when peer teams are less than fully supportive of your business and strategic objectives. The way to truly connect with peer teams isn't to simply spend more time explaining your strategy. They will buy-in (or not) based on how compelling your story is.
41. Make meaning matter. Strip away the boundaries between the work people do and how their contribution makes a difference. Work to find ways to bring meaning to those in support roles, e.g., invite such members of the team on sales calls, have them attend meetings they otherwise would not be part of, ask for their ideas about parts of the business they are not part of. Know that our quest in life, in no small measure, is the search for meaning. If people don't know how and where what they do makes a difference, why would they?
42. Adopt a cause where the team can make a difference, e.g., organize a class at a local high school, support a seniors home, build a kids' playground, attend a tree planting day as a group. Where none of this is physically possible, think of creative ways where "giving back" can happen virtually.
43. Respect people's downtime. Call a team member at home as a last resort. During the COVID-19 crisis, allowing employees to enjoy their downtime is especially important. There is evidence that remote employees are already putting in an extra 10 hours a week. Blurring the line between work and home life is what concerns employees working from home the most.
44. Fan the flames of early success. There is a big difference between coercive and creative tension. One is based on a conversation where the subtext spells out "you will or else!" Creative tension is about stretch, growth and positive reinforcement. If the future you are seeking doesn't exist someplace, some of the time, it's very difficult to create. Go out of your way to catch people "doing it right!" Affirmation is to start to create tomorrow, today.





45. Meeting mastery. Courtesy is the default behaviour of management that matters. On virtual meetings emphasise inclusiveness. Close with class. Go out of your way to say, “thank you.” Make it a practice that everyone on the team interacts with respect. There are three ways to “turn up” at your next virtual meeting. One: a focus on “my needs.” Two: working to see the challenge and/or opportunity through other people’s eyes. Three: being both in and outside of the team. Inside the team means being fully present and doing everything you can to move the agenda forward. Outside the team implies being able to step away from the ongoing interaction and observe what’s really going on. The dilemma? Far too many attendees spend virtually all of their time concerned about “their needs.” The ability to see the team from the outside-in allows the individual in question to not only be a better participant but to subtly shape/facilitate a richer interaction. It’s called “mastery.”
46. Be optimistic. The absence of optimism allows fear to flourish; invites stories without heroes, emphasises problems that defy solution and supports a narrative replete with excuses. By comparison, optimism provides an arc of hope that energises the enthusiastic, inspires the innovative and captures the committed.
47. Match opportunity with capability. Being “out of sight” starts to stretch the very fabric of trust. The great temptation with virtual work, therefore, is to simplify expectations. The problem? Work that lacks stretch is every bit as stressful as work that is misaligned with the employee’s ability to deliver. Constantly look for ways to ensure the work people do: (1) is unambiguously defined by way of goals and responsibilities; (2) is aligned with the individual’s capability; and (3) evokes stretch and challenge. If not, expect to spend a lot of time hiring.
48. All change starts with challenging what is. Create an environment where challenging the status quo is the natural way to think and act. A mindset that leads people to believe “we have arrived” is a precursor to a conversation about the competition that starts with, “If only we had thought of that.”
49. Change the patterns of play. Virtual teams that stay together, play together. Stress is amplified when every day is the same, when people have little to look forward to and humour is pushed aside. Mix up regular video meetings with a dress-up evening with drinks. Have participants bring something that means a lot to them to meetings and say why. Organize a quiz session. How about a team wager on an upcoming sports event? Continue to mix it up by inviting a customer or supplier to the meeting, introduce assessment tools into key sessions and/or use video to bring ideas to life.





50. In your ongoing dialogue with members of your team, emphasise and support leadership of self. In particular, expose them to an assessment of personal resilience. We can learn to be more resilient but people need to know where to start. Make resilience a team discussion. The traditional definition of resilience emphasises the capacity to spring back. It's a definition born out of a steady state world. A more apt way to think about resilience is by both adapting to the challenge **and** adopting new behaviour. Resilience devoid of the capacity to learn and grow from the experience is a mandate for mediocrity.

**See the Assessment of Resilience at the end of the book.**



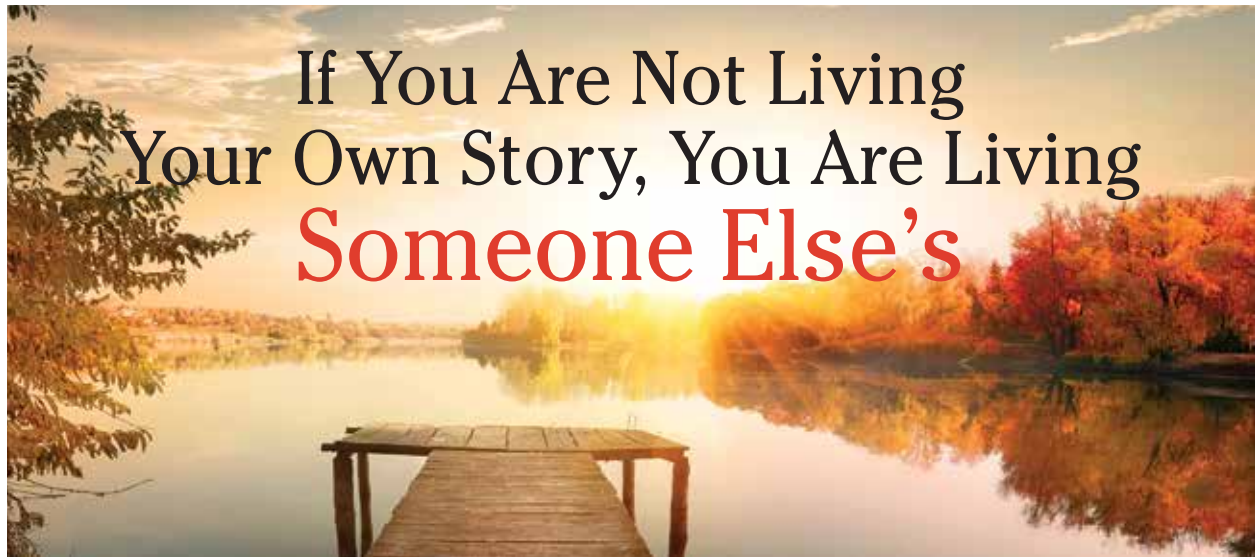
A close-up photograph of two hands, one from the left and one from the right, reaching towards each other to form a heart shape with their index and thumb fingers. The hands are silhouetted against a bright, warm sunset or sunrise over a body of water. The sun is a bright yellow circle in the center of the heart formed by the hands. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. The water in the background is calm and reflects the light from the sun.

## Chapter Four

If You Are Not Living  
Your Own Story, You Are  
Living **Someone Else's**







## The Golden Thread

A good deal has been written about career planning over the years. Much of what has been suggested makes perfect sense. A key assumption that underscores this work is, however, open to question. The prevailing logic goes along the following lines. Step back, understand your strengths (essential), come to terms with what you are likely to be less successful at, define where you want to be and when and then develop the skills and experience needed to move step by step along the path to your career goal. An exercise in simply ticking the boxes. The career plan!

It all sounds like perfect advice. Except that when you interview those who have reached the upper echelons of top organizations it didn't quite work out that way. They had a plan; a way forward supported by ongoing coaching and, in many instances, career input from a seasoned mentor. What that thinking didn't factor in was the unexpected. The unanticipated disruption that derailed the plan. The opportunity that came from left field. Changes in the competitive environment that demanded new ways to think about resilience and risk.

On reflection, in discussing their success,<sup>1</sup> the executives I spoke to (on a number of occasions coached) suggested that there were three things that allowed them to successfully navigate the path they hadn't expected to travel.

1. Although they hadn't realised it, in many senses and in their own way they were ready. An openness to be coached. Disciplined reading habits. An unbridled curiosity. Comfort with ambiguity. And a willingness to challenge the status quo ... meant that preparation for the "next step"



<sup>1</sup> These conversations embraced leaders from many different countries.



became an ingrained habit. Being ready is more than simply a way to act ... it's a way to be.<sup>2</sup>

Being prepared: Leaders are readers! What do you read? People who don't read are no better off than those who can't read.

2. In a world shaped by an unprecedented level of change, those who grow and thrive **know** that tomorrow **will** be different. They don't think it might be different. They don't focus on being better today in the hope that, somehow, magically, it takes them to where they need to be. And they don't live with the naïve notion that they will be able to change when they have to. When, of course, it's too late. When you know (not simply think) that tomorrow will be different it redefines who you bring onto the team, the coach or mentor you choose to work with, who you build relationships with out of work (your network), the books that you read, and the investment you make in self-development. Being ready means skiing the black diamond slopes of resorts you haven't been to before, not skating round and round on the same rink ... one that you already know very well.

Being prepared: Was the most recent person you brought onto the team hired (1) to fill a gap that had opened up (replacement); or (2) were the criteria that defined success framed three to five years out (hired with tomorrow in mind)? When did you most recently attend a learning event, workshop, seminar, coaching session or experiential experience that took you to the very edge of your comfort zone? What have you read recently that forced you to challenge what you are currently doing? How and with whom have you shared that reading with? What have you/the team changed as a result? Not what you have talked about doing ... what have you actually done? Can you outline, with great clarity (this implies measurement), the organization culture you need three to five years out?

3. Risk tempered by what's important in our life. Opportunity shaped by our values. We understand what's possible by working from the outside-in. We define our priorities from the inside-out. We stumble, we lose touch with our story, we become less than the best version of who we are capable of being if we subvert or pay less attention to either of those two themes. The relationship between knowing that you have tapped into your potential and emotional well-being is well established. You never work a day in your life if you love what you are doing. On the other hand, no one on their deathbed has ever suggested that they wish they had spent more time at work.

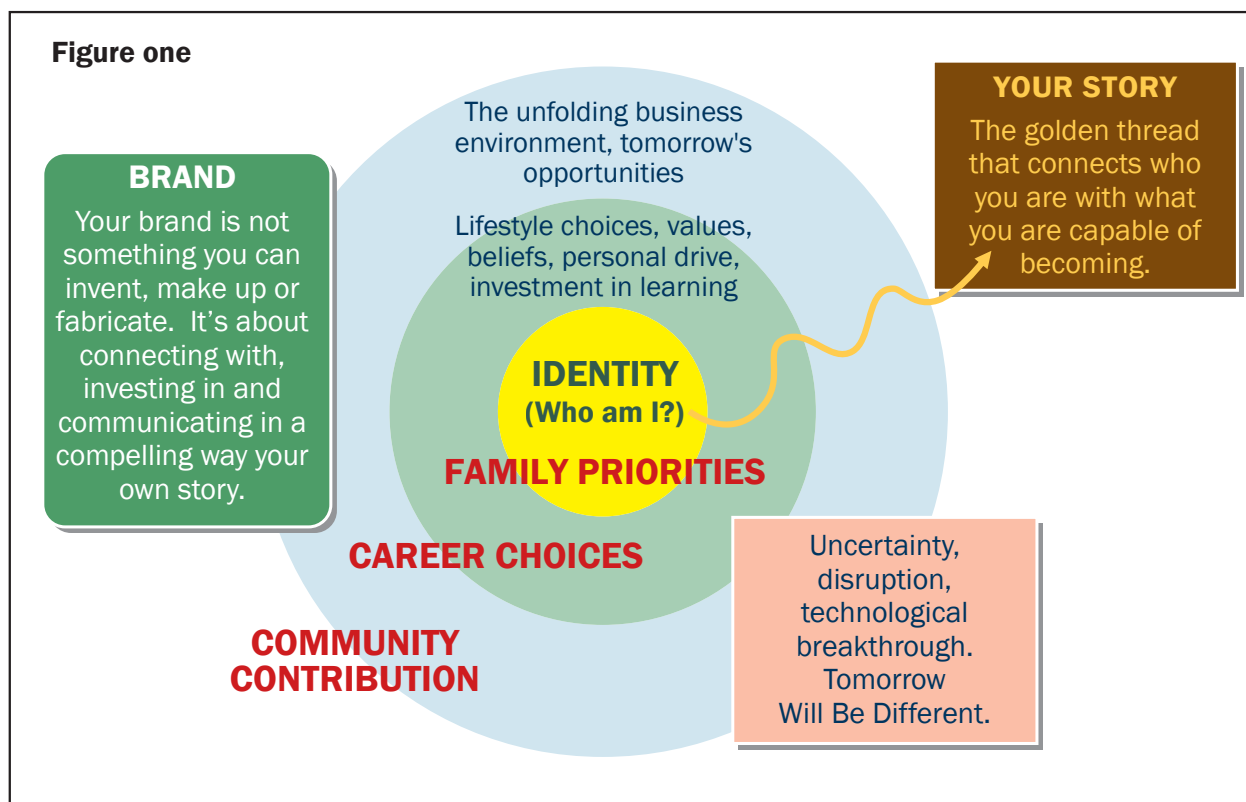
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2 Boston Consulting Group studied 4,000 major businesses and discovered that 58% of those organizations suggested that there was a significant gap between their leadership development and longer-term strategy. Rosalinda Torres, *Ted Talk*, February 2014.



The way through a minefield of competing interests lies with connecting with what is referred to, in **Figure one**, as “the golden thread.” Think of the golden thread as your unfolding story. A story full of meaning can’t be static. Nor should it be self-centered. And without risk we are defining a life that is imprisoned by the status quo. The tragedy for many – and it is a tragedy – is that they have lost touch with their own story. And if that’s the case, by default, you must be living someone else’s story.

Being prepared: When everything is stripped away, career planning can be translated into one compelling question, “Am I living my own story?” Are YOU living your own story?





## The power of a positive script

To connect with your own story is to walk your own path. It's to see each twist in the road not as a problem ... but as a way to better understand who you are. It's to know that without facing the challenges you have already overcome you would be less than who you are.

Becoming the best version of yourself is to take pride in what you have achieved. It's to think of yourself – not as getting older but getting better. Success isn't a destination. It's a state of mind. Take joy in the belief that the best thing you have ever done lies in the future. Know that tomorrow will be different. Be prepared. Above all else, don't get in your own way.

Empirical evidence suggests that success is far more about building on strengths than it is about avoiding weaknesses. The sense of self-confidence drawn out of a focus on strengths provides the emotional energy to face up to our performance blind spots.

Sustainable success also demands that we discover what sort of track suits us best. It means drawing out and learning how to play to those strengths. My own experience is that those who fail to reach their potential don't lack information and/or capability. Their shortfall is that they create self-imposed limits drawn out of a mindset that continuously poses the question, "How can I avoid failure?"

When the conversation we have with ourselves is dominated by the negative, we form the self-fulfilling belief that being a casualty is our destiny. A good example: the response to 360° feedback.<sup>3</sup> The warning sign that we are thinking like a victim: when we ignore the positive comments and put all our emotional energy into the one negative remark half-way down the second page.



Playing not to lose is an inevitable outcome for those who see the glass as half-empty. The result? Catching a peer or, even better, a rival doing it wrong becomes the highlight of the day. And when "gotcha" becomes a way of life know that resilience is spelt "resistance." Meanwhile, those who wallow in their own sense of mediocrity have little choice but to mask their true self. Conversely, when we start to listen to our own positive self talk, when we start to think about where we need to be and not what's holding us back, we condition ourselves to draw out the

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3 Because 360° feedback is invariably based on "what's happening today" it, all-too-easily, can provide false positives.





best in others. And nothing is more impactful and enriching than “to catch those around you doing it right.”

If your thinking tends to be skewed to things that aren’t working, don’t be hard on yourself. All of us have been trained to solve problems ... it’s what leaders do. And in solving problems – the first thing we invariably ask is, “What’s wrong with this?” It has been thus since the 17th century when we were introduced to the “scientific method.”

In seeking to grow as leaders it’s important to know what we have to stop doing and what we have to do differently. If we stop there, however, if we don’t seek to make a step-change based on what we excel at, we trap ourselves in a cycle of activity where more of the same is the best we can hope for.

When we seek excellence, we have to focus on excellence ... we have to recognise when we are in flow ... we have to discover how to put ourselves in that situation more often. In Spanish there is a word drawn from Flamenco, *duende*. It describes the moment when the dancer loses him/herself to the rhythm and passion of Flamenco. It means being at one with the dance. It is being the dance. *Duende* is when the self within the self is who we truly are. We do our best work when we touch *duende*. We thrive when the challenges we take on allow us to express who we really are.

And it starts with the conversation we have with ourselves. It starts with listening to our own story. When we lose touch with our own story we lose touch with who we really are. When we lose touch with our own story we ignore that which drives us on ... our own intentions. And when we lose touch with our own story we follow a script written and narrated by someone else.



## Listening to your own story

Charles Handy makes the point that all learning starts with a question. Such it is with surfacing your own story. What follows is a simple activity designed for you to draw out and listen to your own story ... an engaging conversation where you will be asked to surface where your real strengths lie. It will also provide you with a unique sense of your potential as a leader.

### Director's notes

Invite a colleague or a friend to work with you. Your colleague's role as facilitator is to ask questions that allow you to better understand your personal journey: to probe without pushing, to challenge without forcing, to inquire without intruding. Your challenge as the storyteller is simply to be yourself, to be authentic. To truly touch the essence of who we are is, of course, at the heart of what it means to be a successful leader. Welcome to your story.

### Rapport

Sit facing each other. Push any physical barriers out of the way, e.g., a desk. Sit comfortably. Empty your mind. Know that how you listen will shape the outcome at least as much as, if not more than, the questions asked. Get to know each other. Build rapport by sharing something about yourself (to each other) and generally share where each of you are in your life.

### Tips on asking questions

- The questions outlined later are suggestions only. Choose the questions that best fit the conversation. Create your own questions. Draw on the moment. A great question makes the silence louder.<sup>4</sup>
- Keep the questions simple. Simple means that each question has a single topic.
- Avoid, "Why?" It tends to make people defensive.
- Wait two or three beats after the speaker has finished before asking the next question. It reinforces the fact that you are listening. Listen. Be there!
- Practice good eye contact which, in turn, provides positive reinforcement.
- Follow up. Pay special attention to those events and decisions that moved the story in a new direction (transition points).

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<sup>4</sup> Japanese proverb.



## Your Story

### Setting the stage:

- Where did you grow up? Tell me briefly about your schooling.
- What are your values?
- What are the top three priorities in your life?
- In terms of how you live your life, what do you not want to let go of?

### Scene one: apprenticeship

- What were your expectations as you entered the world of work?
- What was your first position? As you look back, do you feel you made the right career choice? What would you change?
- In what ways do you think that first organization shaped your thinking/standards about work? How have you built on that ... changed?
- Talk about your first boss. What was he/she like? What qualities did he/she bring that you admire to this day?
- Describe other early work experiences. If you moved to a different organization, why did you move? What was different? What aspects of the new organization did you admire? Who did you admire?
- What personal experiences, life challenges, family and/or societal responsibilities shaped your apprenticeship?

### Scene two: early development

- Describe your first important/significant organizational position. If you were given the responsibility to be in charge of people, how did you adapt to that challenge? What aspect of leading others did you instinctively feel you were good at? What did you take from that first role of significance that you draw on today?
- As you started to grow, what were you engaged in when you felt that you were at the top of your game?
- What coaching and/or guidance did you get from your team leader at that time? How did that change you? Describe the single most important person to you in your early career. What contribution did he/she make?
- Describe a time when you stumbled. What did you learn about yourself from that experience?



- What personal experiences, life challenges, family and/or societal responsibilities shaped your early development?

### **Scene three: hitting your stride**

- When did you start to feel that you were hitting your stride? When did you start to feel that you could really handle the responsibilities being thrown at you? What was the role?
- Talk about the teams you have been part of. What marked the good teams from those that struggled? What role do you tend to play in a team? What sort of people do you tend to partner with most easily on the team?
- Describe the best team leader you have worked for. What made him/her special? What do you take from that experience that you use today? How are you like him or her?
- Looking back over your career, talk about the positions where you feel you made the greatest contribution. What did you take from those situations? What risks did you take? What did you learn about yourself? What feedback did you receive that you can look back on with pride?







- Who did you build into your network? If you were to go back who would you, ideally, build a relationship with? Greater diversity? People who challenged you?
- What personal experiences, life challenges, family and/or societal responsibilities shaped your early development?

#### **Scene four: bridging yesterday with today ... and looking forward**

- As you look back on your career, what three or four critical decisions (transition points) brought you to where you are today? What lay behind those decisions?
- Who were the three or four key players that influenced how you came to be where you are today? In what way did each of them inspire you? Who do you admire today? In what ways are you like – want to be like – that person?
- Describe your present role. What aspect of that role do others suggest you excel in?
- Capture a “golden moment” in the past few weeks when you were truly in flow. Describe a time when your performance was so effortless (*duende*) in its execution that time seemed to stand still. What personal qualities/strengths underpinned those golden moments? What have you learned about how you learn?
- What personal experiences, life challenges and/or responsibilities shape where you want to go from here? What is your compelling purpose?
- What changes do you see on the horizon – emerging technology for example – that will have a significant influence on your story?
- What do you need to let go of? Start to do? Do more of?
- How would you describe your “brand?”
- What and how do you give back? Do you need to do more?



## Reflection

### Facilitator

- Without reflection there is no learning.
- What do you understand are the storyteller's values, lifestyle choices and priorities?
- How did the storyteller's apprenticeship shape who he/she is today?
- What feedback (affirmation) can you give to the storyteller about his/her **strengths**? Avoid generalizations. Be as specific as possible. As you go through the conversation, giving affirmation at each stage, or as and when appropriate, is extremely helpful.
- Please note the difference between praise and affirmation. Praise tends to be a general, often all-encompassing, statement about someone's qualities ... "You seem to be good at managing people." Affirmation (reinforcing strengths) describes feedback that is totally authentic, highly specific and grounded in easy-to-identify performance situations ... "Your ability to deal as quickly as you did with the marketing problem Tony brought up shows you are an outstanding listener."





- Determine what pivotal issues (work and non-work) appear to have been influential in determining where the storyteller currently is in his/her life. What should he/she be proud of?
- Brainstorm with the storyteller on how and in what ways tomorrow will be different.

### **Storyteller**

- What significant life events have shaped your career choices? What are your personal/family priorities moving forward? As you continue to grow and develop, what aspects of your personal/family life are you totally committed to?
- If you “derailed” at any point in your career ... how did you get back on track?
- What do you currently need to let go of? Think of both work and personal issues.
- What strengths have brought you to where you are? Identify three or four “special” capabilities that resonate with how you see yourself.
- Suppose you were fully utilizing those strengths. What would be happening that isn’t happening today?
- In making better use of your identified qualities (when you are in flow), what can you do more of?
- What do those qualities mean to your future career direction? How can you build on them? What do you need to do to become the best version of yourself?
- What’s possible? When you look back a decade from now, what do you want to have achieved?

Note to the storyteller: If you don’t have “a facilitator” you feel comfortable with, find somewhere quiet and become your own facilitator. The conversation does not need to be completed in one session.



## Conclusion

In making career decisions there are clearly a good many factors to consider. The timing, family responsibilities, emerging technology, the state of the economy and location, for example, obviously loom large.

As pointed out, successfully navigating the challenge of personal growth, development and transition means managing opportunity from the outside-in but, at the same time, recognizing that to meaningfully exploit our potential lies in working from the inside-out. The good news is that at the centre of this “storm” lies an area of calm ... a golden thread that we can draw on to better make career decisions.

Although described as “your story,” it might well have been framed as the path to mastery or simply better knowing ourselves – “Who are we?” If you don’t know who you are ... if you are not connected to your story ... if your path to mastery is unclear ... you are, metaphorically, embarking on a journey without a map. In that case, getting lost is pretty nigh inevitable.

And it starts with the conversation we have with ourselves. It starts with listening to our own story. When we lose touch with our own story, we lose touch with who we really are. When we lose touch with our own story, we ignore that which drives us on, our own intentions. And when we lose touch with our own story, we start to live a story written and narrated by someone else.

What is your story? When do you experience *duende*? If you are not at one with your path to mastery ... if you are not living your own story ... you will always be less than you are capable of becoming. Nothing is more tragic. Go ahead, inspire yourself. Become the hero/heroine in your own story.







# LEADERSHIP *of* SELF

NUMBER	SECRET TO SUCCESS	WAYS TO ACHIEVE
1	<b>Put your family first</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No one on his/her death bed says, “I wish I had spent more time at work”</li> <li>• Know that work-life-balance is not only possible, it’s essential to your well-being</li> </ul>
2	<b>Your language shapes your perception</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrupt, and purge self-defeating language from the ongoing conversations you have with yourself</li> <li>• Go out of your way to be affirming of others</li> <li>• Spend time with positive people</li> </ul>
3	<b>Know that if you are not living your own story, you are living someone else’s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface your own story</li> <li>• Learn to build on what makes you strong</li> <li>• Never (ever) compromise your personal values</li> </ul>
4	<b>Work from the belief that action trumps strategy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set truly “stretch” goals - hold yourself and others accountable</li> <li>• Make collaboration central to what it means to be a “winner.” Know that the mark of a great player is that he/she helps those around him/her play up to their potential</li> <li>• Become a great coach both at work and at home</li> </ul>
5	<b>Be authentic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know that authenticity is the one thing you can’t fake</li> <li>• Listen to others in the way you have always wanted to be listened to</li> <li>• Always speak from truth</li> </ul>



# LEADERSHIP *of* SELF

NUMBER	SECRET TO SUCCESS	WAYS TO ACHIEVE
6	<b>Learn to access your non-conscious mind</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust your own experience</li> <li>• Be willing to take risks</li> <li>• Follow through on ideas that resonate in your “gut”</li> </ul>
7	<b>Know that meaning is the greatest motivator of all</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strive to find work that makes a real difference in people’s lives</li> <li>• Volunteer for a worthy cause</li> </ul>
8	<b>Learn to let go</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know that beginnings start with endings</li> <li>• Sit down regularly and uncover what you need to let go of. Wherever possible, include in the latter anything that harms the environment</li> </ul>
9	<b>Let others know that you care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start with those closest to you. Move on to the rest of those around you (including those at work) who make a positive difference in your life</li> </ul>
10	<b>Count your blessings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start every day by reminding yourself what you have to be grateful for</li> </ul>



# Resilience



Coming out  
of **COVID-19**  
**PERSONALLY**  
**STRONGER**



**TRANSEARCH**  
YOUR WORLD PARTNER IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

**John O. Burdett**

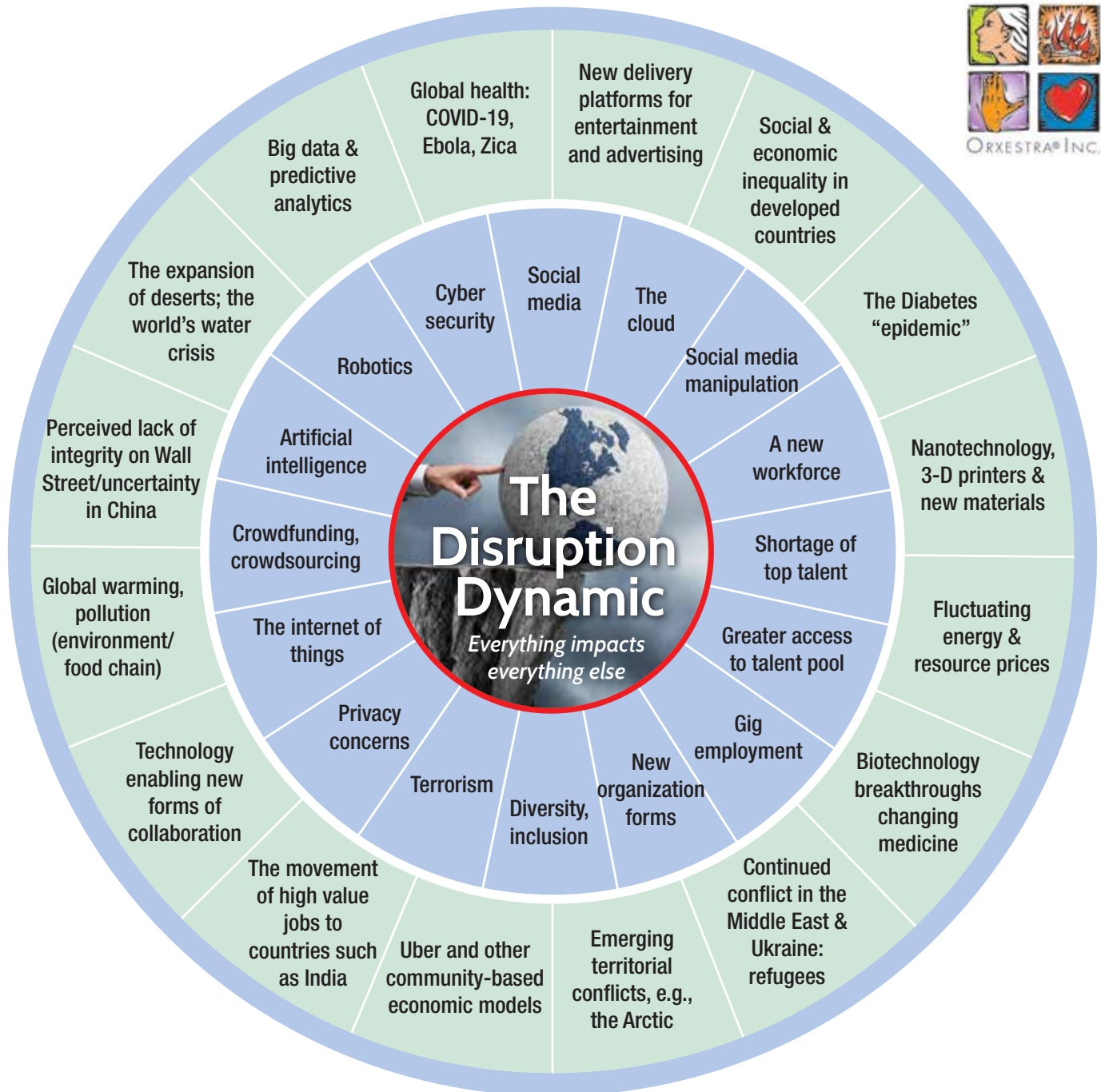






# Ongoing Disruption: the new reality

Tomorrow will be different, will you?



Even without COVID-19, the current and projected level of social and economic disruption dramatically changes, irrevocably, what it means to be successful both as an organization ... AND as an individual.





# Ongoing Disruption: the new reality

## What is resilience?

Traditional thinking around resilience defines it as “absorbing change and bouncing back.” It portrays the human spirit as a kind of behavioural elastic band – it stretches and then when the tension is released goes back to where it was.

In a steady state world, “bouncing back” is an apt description. Unfortunately, we don’t live in a steady, consistent, unchanging world. Today’s environment is marked by disruption, uncertainty and, where technology is involved, exponential change.

In any process seeking to bring about “change” ... self-reflection isn’t important ... it’s essential. Without reflection there is no learning. Meanwhile, with ongoing “black swan” events likely to become the new reality, resilience seen as a way to return to the status quo isn’t very helpful. Indeed, it’s misleading.

A more relevant approach presents resilience as pushing to the edge, being comfortable with being uncomfortable, adapting to the new state, reflecting on the experience and developing new ways to behave. It’s a dynamic rather than a static process. It’s about leading and learning; not absorbing and then acting as before. Resilience means not only weathering the storm ... but being strengthened by it.

Moreover, in assuming that resilience describes an individual’s personal resources – as is invariably the case – we miss an important piece of the puzzle. Context matters and the right network, a support system and being around positive people make a difference. Tomorrow’s successful leaders will surround themselves with people who are resilient.

Accepting the plasticity of the brain, we can learn to become more resilient. There is a link, for example, between resilience and the research on positive psychology. If you are overly anxious, risk-averse, trapped by yesterday’s success, have difficulty facing adversity or are overwhelmed by life, resilience is spelt “resistance.”





## COVID-19: coming out of the crisis stronger.

Think about how you adapted to the COVID-19 crisis. With that in mind, the questions, from an individual perspective become, not simply “How resilient am I?” but “What can I do to become **more** resilient?” The assessment builds on four aspects of resilience:

1. Mental toughness
2. Leadership of self
3. Flexibility/adaptability
4. A passion to learn



The questions that follow will allow you to step back and better understand how you deal with disruption. You are invited to go through the assessment with one or more of the following in mind: (1) as an exercise in self-reflection; (2) to provide personal input into a coaching and/or mentoring conversation; (3) to facilitate supportive dialogue within a team working their way through a crisis; (4) because our most meaningful learning happens as we make our way down the mountain, to reflect on and, thus, come out of a crisis, stronger.

**The best way to complete the assessment is through the eyes of someone who knows you really well: your spouse, a coworker, your team leader, a best friend. In stepping outside of the “self-talk” – the conversation we have with ourselves to protect our own sense of self – we bring a refreshing honesty to the assessment.**

**Note: this approach to resilience is not suitable for third party assessment, as part of the selection agenda and/or any process where the underlying rationale is anything other than self-reflection.**

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# Resilience

Respond not as you would like them to be, but how you perceive things happen now. Answer all of the questions.	Never.	Occasionally.	More often than not.	Nearly all of the time.	Always.					
1. I excel when working with people who are very different to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. When given something new to do, I love painting outside of the lines.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. I have a healthy diet, exercise regularly and always get a good night's sleep.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. When bumping into a new idea, I always ask myself, "How can we do this?" ... rather than saying... "This would be difficult to do because...!"	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. I am tough-minded in the way I assess my strengths. I am creative in the way I build on those strengths.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. I wait for others to challenge the status quo before I voice my concerns.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. I have very clear – short and long term – career objectives. I regularly review how I am doing against those objectives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Rather than step away from or avoid conflict, I embrace conflict as an idea being born.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. For some reason, I am slow to ask for help.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. The bigger the challenge, the greater the potential gain ... the more optimistic I become.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11. When faced with something I have never done before, I let what could go wrong limit what is possible.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. Away from work, I find it difficult to disconnect from what is going on in my job.	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Add the score for this page



# Resilience

Respond not as you would like them to be, but how you perceive things happen now. Answer all of the questions.

Never. Occasionally. More often than not. Nearly all of the time. Always.

13. I feel my life is on track and moving in a direction I can take pride in.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. In confronting COVID-19, my first thought was, “How do we get through this?” I am now asking, “How can I come out stronger?”

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

15. If I disagree with a decision, regardless of the status or position of the individual making the decision, I am quick to speak out.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

16. In meetings, I shut out all distractions and, as a result, listen not only to what is said but what isn’t said.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

17. I am a reader. Faced with a new challenge, I read about who or what organizations have excelled.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

18. Rather than being proactive and asking to be coached, I tend to wait for my team leader to approach me.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

19. I have a strong mentor outside of work who I can, and do, turn to.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

20. I come up with innovative ideas and suggestions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

21. When working with a new team or project and before jumping into the challenge/goals ... I deliberately set time aside to get to know those involved.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

22. I go out of my way to look for ways to affirm others (team and peers) doing it right.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

23. I excel in projects where managing conflict is the hallmark of success.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add the score for this page





# Resilience

Respond not as you would like them to be, but how you perceive things happen now. Answer all of the questions.

Never. Occasionally. More often than not. Nearly all of the time. Always.

24. I have a strong network of people I can go to if I want advice, guidance or simply someone to talk to. It's a network I take full advantage of.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

25. I am fully conscious of the extent to which the language shapes a common mindset around what is possible. As an example, I am especially cognizant of the metaphors used both within the team and in discussions with others.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

26. I know how important trust is in team success. I go out of my way to win trust. In meeting someone new, extending trust is my default position.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

27. In the way I communicate, I take account of multigenerational differences (e.g., with customers, peers, suppliers and/or front-line employees).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

28. When people describe me, they say that disappointment or an early setback only make me more determined.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

29. Although incidents and comments at work sometimes upset me, my first question is always to ask myself, "To what extent was I responsible for that conflict?"

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

30. When the unexpected derails carefully developed plans, my first response is always to ask, "What can we learn from this?"

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

31. I wait for others to adopt new technology (e.g., using speech and video platforms) before I jump on board.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

32. I take time out for reflection. I consider the challenges faced, the arguments made, what actually happened and what I can learn from it.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add the score for this page



# Resilience

Respond not as you would like them to be, but how you perceive things happen now. Answer all of the questions.

Never. Occasionally. More often than not. Nearly all of the time. Always.

33. I can be counted on to ask questions that change the way things are done around here.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

34. When a tough decision has to be made, I find my own emotions can get in the way.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

35. Self-confidence is born out of getting it right. Character is moving beyond the fear of getting it wrong. I am comfortable making bold decisions.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

36. Counting my blessings is part of my daily routine.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

37. I am remarkably well organized. I border on the “ruthless” in the way I set priorities. This can mean saying “No” to activities that are immediate but less important.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

38. I am a storyteller. I collect stories. I use stories to get my ideas across, to bring strategy to life, to make presentations memorable, to leave a lasting impression with the customer (internal/external).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

39. When faced with a new challenge, I deliberately seek out others with a very different perspective.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

40. It's very easy to fall into the trap of living through someone else (e.g., spouse, children). I can put my hand on my heart and say with total confidence, “I am fully living my own story.”

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



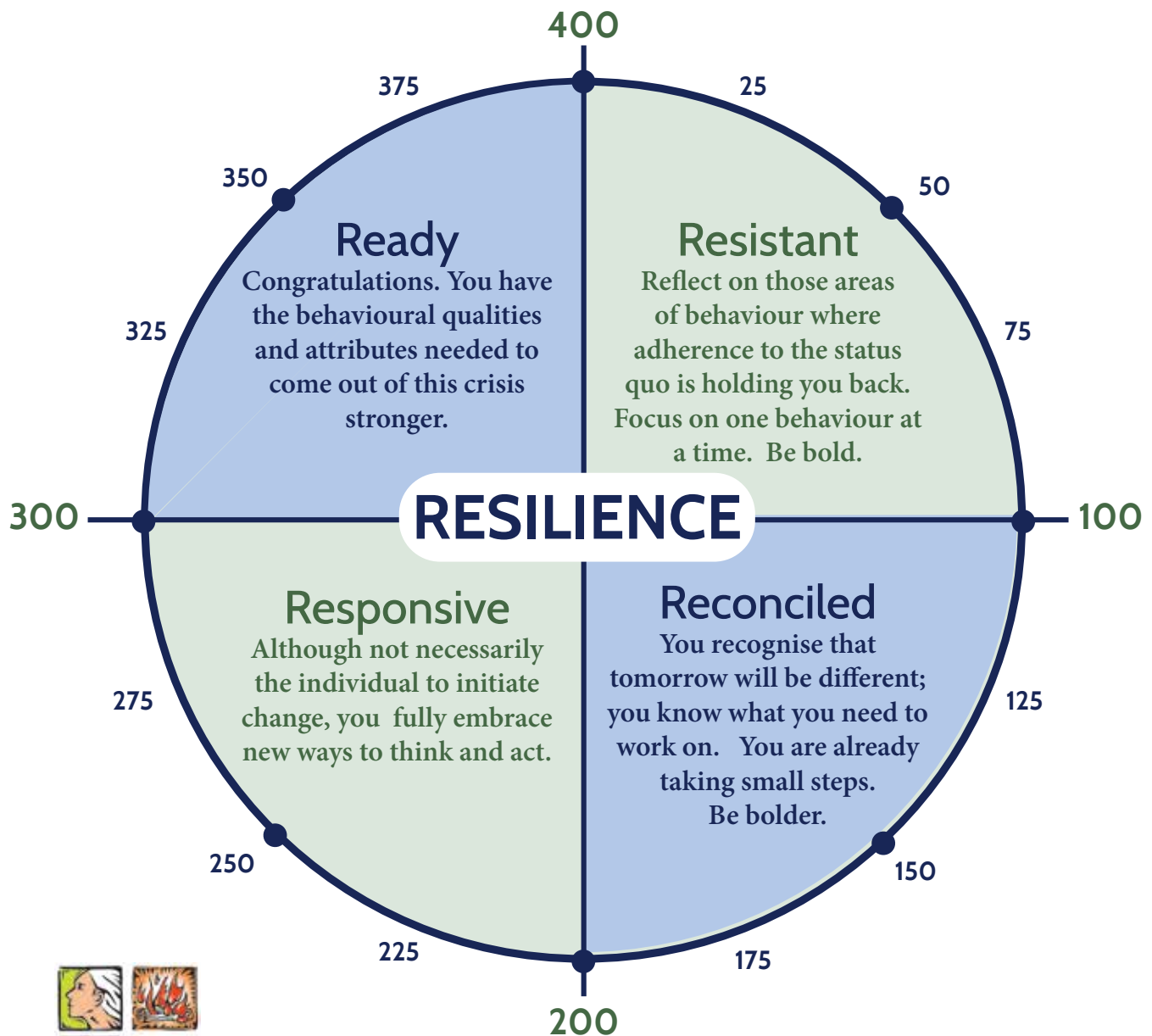
Add the score for this page



# Overall scoring

1. Go through the assessment and total your score on each separate page
2. Total the scores for pages 71, 72, 73 and 74.
3. Write the total score in the box below

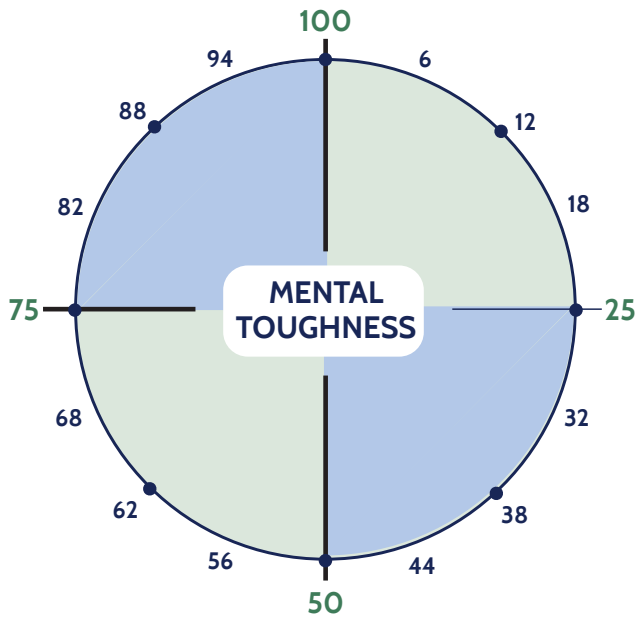
Total out of 400



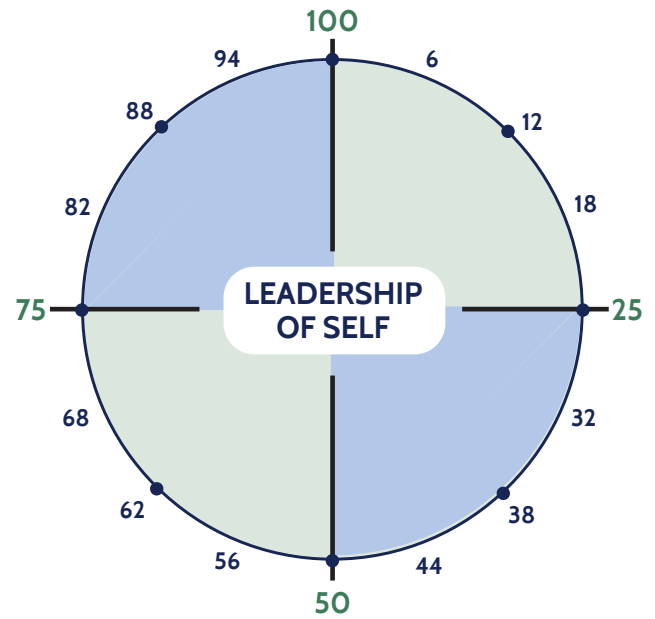
## Stages of resilience



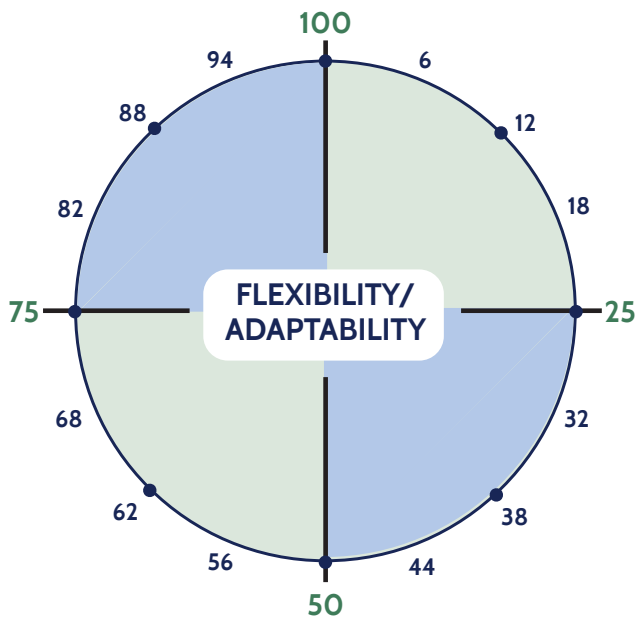
# Domain scores



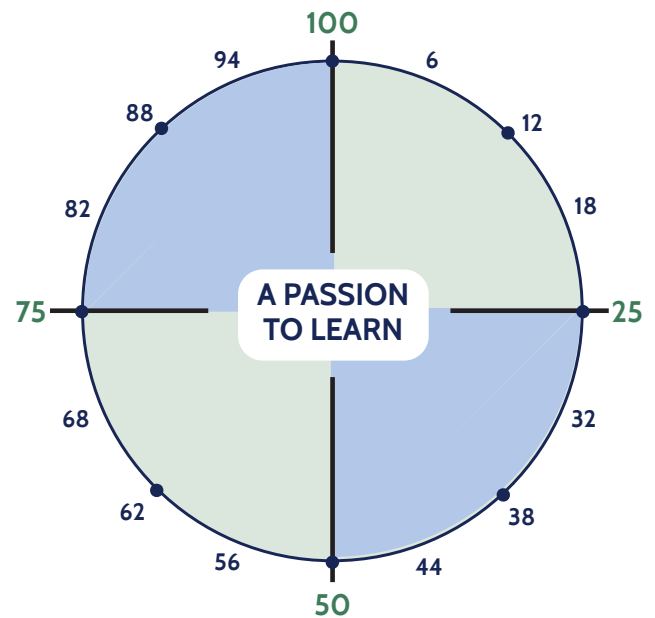
6, 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 28, 34, 35, 37 =



3, 7, 9, 13, 14, 26, 29, 36, 38, 40 =



1, 2, 8, 10, 18, 21, 23, 27, 31, 39 =



4, 5, 17, 19, 20, 24, 25, 30, 32, 33 =

In that resilience is ultimately a blend of different characteristics, the overall score is perhaps the most helpful. That said, in working on resilience it can be extremely helpful to understand if there is one domain, in particular, you should focus on. Adding your scores (from the assessment) as indicated above will give you your domain scores.





# Building resilience

**Notes:** in reflecting on how you adapted to the COVID-19 crisis – and having been through the assessment – what three or four adjustments in your approach to life and/or work would build your resilience quotient? Going through the domain scores will be very helpful.

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John Burdett has worked in over 40 countries as an executive and as a consultant for businesses that are household names. He has worked on and continues to work on leadership development and organization culture for some of the world's largest corporations.

His ongoing partnership with the Bedford Consulting Group and TRANSEARCH INTERNATIONAL means that his proprietary work on talent acquisition, in any one year, successfully supports many hundreds of top leadership appointments on six continents.

He holds a doctorate in management development and since 2000 has published more than a dozen books (a number of them best-sellers) on various aspects of leadership and organization culture. His Talent Trilogy was completed in 2016. The first in the series, *Attract, Select, Develop & Retain TALENT*, was published in 2013. The second, *TEAM: Align, Build, Connect and Develop*, came out in early 2015. *The Empty Suit*, in 2016. *The A-Z of Organization Culture* came out in 2017. *Tomorrow Will Be Different – Will You?* was published in 2020.

John has a number of books available for download. Go to any of the major, online bookstores. Access using author's name: John O. Burdett



